



Resident Marj Jollymour helps as the children cut their own bouquets in the residents' cutting gardens.

Summer Camp

An inter-generational multi-faceted learning experience that brings tremendous rewards to children and residents alike...



A young camper is full of wonder as he learns about friction in the Gardens science class.

more than 100 Gardens residents volunteered to organize and run their fourth annual summer day camp for children who are served by Claremont After-School Programs (CLASP). Residents welcomed 24 children, entering second through fifth grades, to the eight-day program incorporating music, art,

story-telling, science, math, crafts, and games along with special activities like swimming, bird watching, and woodworking. Each day campers have lunch and conversation with a Gardens resident "buddy" in the campus dining room. The idea for the camp was first conceived in 2015 by resident **Carole Harter** and Gardens CEO **Maureen Beith**. Both will be honored this November by CLASP for their vision in creating a truly inter-generational program that brings tremendous rewards to children and residents alike. During the school year, CLASP provides homework help and tutoring along with recreation and enrichment activities to elementary students in the Claremont Unified School District.



The Gardens pool is a great place to cool off while learning the basics of swimming.



A small gathering of the more than 100 resident-volunteers who helped out at the two-week camp. Left to right: Jan Bush, Ada Mok, Roger Heymann, Doreen Maas, Ellen Heymann, Conrad Maas, Marj Jollymour, and Paula Ray.



For their grand finale, on the last day of camp, the children performed and sang for the residents in the Gardens dining room.



Gardens residents designed and built Magnolia Grove's beautiful new entry doors in the residents' woodworking shop.

Magnolia Grove Doors

A stunning set of sculptural wood entry doors now welcomes residents and visitors to Magnolia Grove, the Gardens' skilled nursing facility. The doors were designed and handcrafted by Gardens resident **Ken Brown** (second from left), with assistance from his friend and fellow resident **Roger Heymann** (right), pictured with their wives, **Marian** and **Ellen**, who contributed to the project's completion. The design was inspired by one of the beautiful magnolia trees that adorn the Gardens campus. The labor of love, which took more than nine months from concept to completion, was entirely built in the residents' woodworking shop.



The tree that inspired the doors


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The New Leaf

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Tech Geeks at the Gardens

Tech Geeks at the Gardens

new and evolving technologies affect every aspect of our lives. So, what better way for the Gardens to navigate and leverage the shifting landscape than with the guidance and experience of our very own cadre of resident "geeks." From hands-on "doers" who aren't afraid to push buttons or pull plugs, to career techies who've spent their professional lives pioneering new technologies, these residents, unfazed by change and eager for a challenge, are helping us discover, evaluate, enjoy and adapt to new and better ways of doing things.

"It's interesting," says Gardens CEO **Maureen Beith**. "We're between the 'now' and the 'not yet' with the three generations of residents who are living at the Gardens currently. Residents are really helping each other make the transition, and we're all sensitive to the different levels of comfort they have with these changes."

Resident **Rob Kurtz**, who started using computers in the 1970s as a financial manager in the manufacturing industry, chairs the residents' Computer Administration Committee, which oversees the Gardens' computer lab. "I preside over a dinosaur!" he laughs. The lab, which once was a well-used campus amenity has fallen into disuse over time as residents acquire and become proficient with their own computers, tablets, and smart phones. Concurrent with the proliferation of personal technology on campus, internal IT support resources have also grown. "When I first moved in, IT was handled by two maintenance people," says Rob. "Now we

have a staff of four IT pros who support the needs of residents as well as the Gardens administration."

Marida Slobko understands the opportunities created by new technology. She launched her career working as a scientific computer programmer on the hypersonic SR-71 spy plane project, which was the first airplane Lockheed designed on a computer. Describing herself as the first female nerd at the Gardens, Marida says, "Just look at computers and smart phones today. They have so many features and functions that can be useful to older adults."

"But technology can be baffling and frustrating," acknowledges **Lynn Bush**, who first discovered computers back in grad school. He then utilized them in his psychology practice before eventually obtaining a computer science degree and working for Motorola. Technology was never his primary focus, but he understood its value as a tool. "If older people are willing to learn, technology can be a real benefit," he says, citing the settings on smartphones – like large type – that can help people with various kinds of deficits, and reminder functions that can help supplement your memory. "Using technology can amplify your life."

Helping residents make the transition

For those who need help, there's a plethora of options. "Sometimes residents like to get help from a peer; other times they use our service portal to request assistance," says **Amy Fabela**, who heads the Gardens' four-person IT department. "When you're in a jam, you appreciate

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The New Leaf

Mt. San Antonio Gardens is a nationally accredited Life Care senior community in Claremont and Pomona, California.

The New Leaf is a newsletter for friends and family of residents, board and staff, as well as individuals who have inquired about life at the Gardens.

- Penny Maines, Writer
- Sioux Bally-Maloo, Heartstone Arts Art Direction and Photography


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The Road Ahead
 You're invited to lunch and a look at... Please join us as we explore the paths available to us as we age.

The Road Ahead

See invitation on back page.





Amy Fabela, who heads the Gardens’ four-person IT department, is seated in the department’s specialty tool-laden campus cart. She is flanked by her technical support team; Left to right, Frank Salas, Steven Barnes and Mike Sanchez.



Tech Geeks at the Gardens

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Resident Marida Slobko launched her career working as a scientific computer programmer on the hypersonic SR-71 spy plane project, which was the first airplane Lockheed designed on a computer.

the help, wherever it comes from.”

With a background in electronics, **Harvey King** has been helping residents for the past 13 years and is indisputably the original Gardens geek. “I don’t do anything complex, but I’m not afraid to pull plugs out!” he says. And sometimes that’s all it takes. When the Gardens recently migrated its television service to an in-house, self-managed system, Harvey supplemented the community’s responsive IT staff in helping residents adjust to the changes. He is quick to note that new arrivals are increasingly self-sufficient.

Bob Rogers, who started working with mainframe computers in the 1960s and eventually served as technology coordinator for

Azusa High School, agrees. “The younger people coming in are very computer savvy,” so the time he spends going to people’s homes to help – with TVs, computers and printers – has gradually diminished. Good thing, since he also manages the residents’ website and helps the IT staff with technology needs in the Gardens’ Assembly and Social Center.

Others contribute by sharing their expertise and insights, cultivated over long careers in tech-related positions, as members of various Gardens committees. **Jan Bush** spent her career in environmental planning, applying evolving technologies to collect and analyze data, develop plans and understand their impacts, and compile and synthesize public comment. As a

resident, she now serves on the Gardens Sustainability and Conservation Committee and co-chairs a study group on transportation issues. “Some of the technologies I used as a planner are just about upon us at the Gardens,” she says. “There are lots of implications for our infrastructure – such as water supply issues, electric vehicles, solar array monitoring, and soil moisture tracking.”

The transportation study group is looking at how to better move people on campus and off. The group envisions a pilot program to circulate an electric cart around the grounds at lunch and dinner times to transport residents to and from the Social Center. “Our intent is to ease congestion and add to social time for residents,” says study group member **Diane Stielstra**, who authored technical manuals, books and online help systems for companies like Microsoft and Aldus (purchased by Adobe).

The in-house IT staff manages the Gardens’ IT systems and supports the technology needs of residents. “If residents know they can get help, they will be more likely to use technology,” says Amy. Residents can also turn to the IT staff for advice when it’s time to upgrade or replace equipment. “Because we get to know our residents well, I can tailor my recommendations to what I think the resident will be comfortable with and what they’re willing to try,” says IT staffer **Mike Sanchez**.

Providing residents with access to information and communication

Communications-central for residents is the community’s internal website. “I want to make sure this is the go-to source for resident information, and I

Voice activated systems have huge potential to assist residents with limited mobility, and smart speakers, like Alexa, are one of the fastest adaptations of technology, with many potential benefits for older adults.



Resident Bob Rogers began working with mainframe computers in the 1960s. Today he manages the residents’ website and helps the IT staff with technology needs in the Gardens’ Assembly and Social Center.

also want the website to create a sense of family for residents,” says webmaster Bob Rogers. Along with ever-increasing interactivity and the continual addition of new online information, Bob is also making the “soft” side of the site more compelling by beefing up resident bios and adding photo albums that tell each resident’s story. He’s also eager to facilitate chat rooms that will keep residents connected even if they can’t gather in person, and bulletin boards that will help them keep track of their friends’ whereabouts and well-being.

The internal website isn’t the only campus technology that residents help to keep current. Bringing the audio visual equipment in the Gardens’ Assembly (auditorium) up to date to provide quality programming output for HD TVs and computers is a constant challenge. The goal, according to **Tom Beal**, is to create a sound and video system that is 21st century. Tom spent a career in broadcast equipment sales, where he says, “the speed of change was almost impossible to keep up with.”

Meanwhile, Bob is working to make the Assembly presentations more accessible by creating a digital library of programs and community “chats” which residents can access like Netflix. The next step, brainstorms **Joe Kelly**, who also worked in broadcast, as a graphic artist, would be to expand the Assembly programming to include remote users via a Facetime-like application. “I’d love a way for those at home to interact with a speaker in the auditorium,” says Joe.

The residents’ Library Committee is also putting technology to work, bar coding the entire collection in preparation for a new computerized check-out system.

Leveraging administrative and infrastructure technologies

“The Gardens’ management team is doing lots of stuff that’s making administrative functions work better,” says Rob, who serves on the Grounds and Emergency Services committees. “A lot of these enhancements are not visible to residents,” but they’re creating operational efficiencies and enabling data analysis that is helping the staff manage more effectively. Beyond recordkeeping and accounting, he points to the software employed by the Maintenance department to track the health of each of the Gardens’ 900+ trees. “As the supervisor walks the campus, if he sees a plant that looks thirsty, he can control the irrigation right there on his iPhone. As a result, they can take better care of a valuable asset.”

“We’re even looking at improving our package delivery service,” says Amy, envisioning a system that sends alerts to residents when a package arrives so that they can retrieve it from a secure locker 24/7.

The Gardens has also adopted technologies related to resident safety and security. “There’s a whole world of new devices and software related to fall reduction and prevention, security related to residents with neuro-cognitive impairments, and technology that enables people to function more independently,” says Maureen. The Gardens also recently upgraded its emergency call system.

Some technology upgrades have been precipitated by government mandates, like the use of electronic health records and reporting. “To some degree, we’re really in new territory,” says Maureen. “Adopting these technologies is no longer just a choice.”

The possibilities for technology that could impact community infrastructure and operations seem endless. The advent of ride- and car-sharing models and the prospect of autonomous vehicles “could obviate the need for auto infrastructure at the Gardens,” Tom speculates. “I can even see the transformation of personal mobility devices,” says Jan. “Could we customize for height, width, depth, and ease of rolling based on the needs of an individual user?”

How about robotics? “Robotics could be totally cool,” says **Grace Clark**, who developed cash flow analysis software during her corporate lending career and taught seniors how to use computers at a time when most were still receiving “hand-me-up” equipment from their kids! “I volunteer at the

“There’s a whole world of new devices and software related to fall reduction and prevention, security related to residents with neuro-cognitive impairments, and technology that enables people to function more independently.”

Botanic Garden and think it would be ingenious to have a robot ‘guide’ that could be programmed to individual botanic tastes,” says Grace. “There are possibilities beyond today’s imagination!”

Protecting privacy and security

A big part of the technology discussion at the Gardens, as elsewhere, is around security and privacy. Educating residents and staff about cybersecurity risks, ensuring that communications systems are secure and that any information sharing meets HIPAA privacy requirements, keeps staff and residents on their toes. Those considerations sometimes throttle the pace at which new technologies are introduced on campus.

Voice activated systems have huge potential to assist residents with limited mobility, and smart speakers, like Alexa, are one of the fastest



Will Levitt, Director of the Gardens Facilities and Grounds, utilizes software to track the health of each of the Gardens’ 900+ trees. Additionally, as he walks the campus, if he sees a plant that looks thirsty, he can control the irrigation right there on his iPhone.

adaptations of technology, with many potential benefits for older adults. “They can control home technology, but they can also be used to schedule appointments, make arrangements for transportation or remind you to take your medication,” says Gardens CFO **Patricia Williams**. “But they are always ‘on’ and so the question becomes, what can we talk about with ‘her’ listening? While an individual resident can make a decision for their own personal use, HIPAA mandates make it tricky for an organization to implement these technologies broadly.”

Even some of the seemingly innocuous features Bob would love to add to the residents’ website have privacy implications that have to be satisfactorily resolved before they can be introduced.

“You have to be careful,” says one prospective resident, who worked with emerging technologies throughout her career, and was on the frontier when many new technologies blossomed. “We are pioneers again with these technologies. Some of these applications start out pretty lean and clean, but

there is an inevitable push by tech companies to collect more data on users.” So we have to be careful, she warns.

Keeping community at the heart of the Gardens

“Things are changing so fast, it’s a real technological renaissance,” says Grace. “We’ll need Artificial Intelligence – perhaps brain enhancing implants – just to keep up with the advancements!” But the one component that technology still can’t replace, even our geeks agree, is the sense of connection and inherent well-being that comes from being part of a community. New devices and software will no doubt continue to facilitate unprecedented access to services, greater convenience and adaptive technologies that can enhance the quality of life, but for those who call the Gardens home, the personal relationships and engaging social environment will always remain at the heart of the community.



Claremont Grad students Yael Tirosh-Antebi, center, and Norah Alharbi, right, help resident Betty Naylor get set up with a gesture-sensing input system in her home. One of her grandchildren is on the TV screen.

Reconnecting



Recently, half a dozen Gardens residents took part in a month-long pilot program designed to connect residents with their families. Called “Reconnect,” the pilot program used Microsoft Kinect® technology – a gesture sensing input system originally created for Xbox game consoles – to enable participants to view and manage family photos and videos on their TV monitors with the sweep of their hand.

“We understand that not all older adults are tech savvy and that many can feel isolated if their family is not close by,” says **Hovig Tchalian**, Assistant Professor of Practice, Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University. “So, we wanted to use this technology as a platform for experimenting with a communication technology for seniors in retirement communities.”

“What’s better than turning on your TV and seeing and listening to your loved ones?” says **Betty Naylor**, after using the prototype. “This would be a great option for people who don’t have really good computer skills and don’t use things like Facebook, to enable their families to share photos.” **Sherri Bode** agrees. “This was a very nice way to view the photos,” and she thinks it would ultimately be a great way to stay connected with family. “The young women leading the program were just outstanding,” she adds. In fact, she enjoyed interacting with the two grad students as much as experimenting with the technology.

According to Professor Tchalian, the long-term vision is to use camera

technology to detect not just hand signals, but body movement so that it can be applied to things like fall prevention. “The computer would learn your gait and, by using artificial intelligence, understand how you normally walk. It could recognize an unusual gait – a stagger, for instance – and alert a caregiver in order to try to prevent a fall.” Looking much further down the line, he envisions applying the technology to create mixed reality environments that could enable residents to experience events like a grandchild’s graduation or family birthday celebration as if they were there in person, fully immersed in the event. “We’d capture an event in three dimensions, then beam the video back to the retirement community, where it could be projected and experienced by the resident,” he says.

“It was very helpful to test the technology with folks at the Gardens to gather real data and information about the process,” says Professor Tchalian. One of the most interesting and unexpected findings, he says, was the sense of independence that the technology provided to some residents who didn’t want to be seen as needing help.”

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