

Transforming the care of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias

# seeds

## WHAT WE DO

Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> is establishing a model of residential, day, and community-based programs for those with Alzheimer's disease. The goal is to transform care for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias throughout the United States by providing an unprecedented level of care for individuals diagnosed with these disorders. Equally important, it is a site of research and teaching, setting a new standard for other programs and residential communities devoted to caring for our nation's rapidly expanding senior population.



While on vacation, Katie Gillis connected with her mother, Marcia Beranek, via Skype.

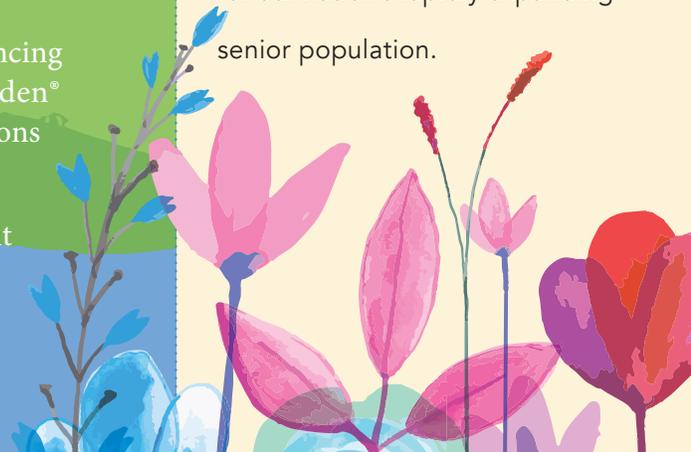
## VIDEO CHATS BRIDGE FAMILIES' SOCIAL DISTANCE

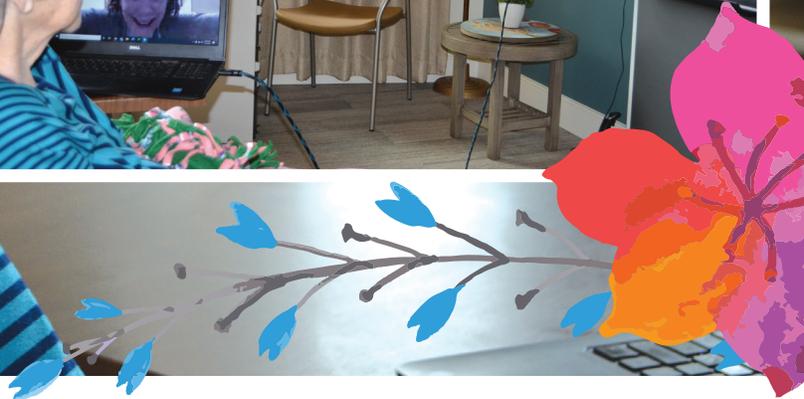
Photos and article by Lori Latusek

Maintaining connections with loved ones is important, whether they live down the street or in a different country, whether they have no signs of neurocognitive impairment or no longer recognize their closest family members.

Immediately following Tennessee Department of Health's social distancing recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> enhanced resident and family member digital communications options to maintain valued connections.

For years, select family members who live in locations that limit frequent visits have utilized video chat apps, such as FaceTime, for virtual face-to-face conversations with their loved ones residing at Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> or Park Manor Assisted Living. Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup>





*A video chat with her mom Edith gave peace of mind to Chris Follansbee when she was unable to visit in person.*

Director of Nursing, Donna Finto-Burks frequently uses FaceTime to connect resident Dr. Willard Emch with his wife Ve, who resides in Florida. Donna has also facilitated FaceTime chats between Dr. Emch and his son, Dr. A.W. Emch, Jr., who lives in Washington, DC.

This technology is especially useful when visits are limited due to health precautions. Recently, a team was established to schedule and facilitate a significantly increased number of video chats between residents and their loved ones. The Abe's Garden® Club is a comfortable, beautiful space that's conducive for one-on-one calls. The large-screen TV helps residents, who are frequently visually impaired, see their loved ones during their video chat.

Resident Edith Hudson's daughter Chris Follansbee has visited her mother several times a week since she moved to Abe's Garden®. However, these visits were put to an abrupt halt when COVID-19 resulted in precautionary efforts limiting family member visits. Chris was most appreciative when Abe's Garden® team members compensated for the precautionary efforts by arranging her first Skype call with Edith; and Edith was

overjoyed to see her daughter on the large screen. It was an adaptive solution that benefitted both mother and daughter. "It really gives me peace of mind to be able to see her often," Chris beams. "Hopefully, my mom seeing me helps her know I haven't forgotten about her!"

When Finto-Burks reached out to Katie Gillis, who was on vacation in Virginia, to see if she wanted to video chat with her mother Marcia, Katie was enthusiastic about the opportunity. "This is perfect," she said. Marcia was able to see her daughter and grandchildren, and Katie was able to blow her mom a kiss from afar. "It's so great to be able to check in on her while I'm away, see how she's doing, and tell her I love her."

Thanks to video chat capabilities on phones and laptops, the Abe's Garden® team is able to apply person-centered care principles when facilitating connections. They remain flexible, accommodating residents in the moment, whether they prefer to be in their residential suite, in a common area, or in The Club while communicating with their loved ones.



Susan Burdorf,  
Volunteer  
Coordinator

Photo by Dan Heller

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By Walker Duncan

Through interactions both large and small, and often in ways they might never have imagined, volunteers at Abe's Garden® positively impact residents, and vice versa. Helping to facilitate this symbiosis is the job of Susan "Sue" Burdorf, Volunteer Coordinator for Abe's Garden®.

"A volunteer is a light in a bleak day, a hand to hold when someone is afraid, a smile to remind us we are all human, and an ear to listen to our fears and worries," she says. "I see volunteers bring new things to the table with every conversation and often awaken something inside the residents that those who see them every day might miss."

It was that caring, loving embrace, from both volunteers and staff members that initially drew Sue to Abe's Garden®. "Every day, I see real respect and concern from staff toward the residents. I also see understanding of where they are in the disease process," says Burdorf, who came to Abe's Garden® from the hospice industry in 2018, adding: "a place where people work with this demographic and still keep smiling is a place I wanted to be."

Whether interfacing with the wider community or working alongside residents, as the shifting day-to-day responsibilities of her role dictate, Burdorf finds daily joy.

"Some days I lead multiple resident activities and some days I meet with a volunteer, talk to a potential new volunteer, or connect with a community member interested in giving a free concert for our residents."

Some of the best experiences she's had at Abe's Garden® have been working with the residents and volunteers on various projects. "We publish a quarterly resident newsletter, and we have a culinary club that makes amazing pizzas and other food for both staff and residents," she says. "The culinary club is working on a recipe book of foods we've created using herbs from our garden."

As anyone who has volunteered with Abe's Garden® can attest, the experience is already an amazing one. Still, Burdorf seeks to improve. "One of my top goals is to provide a volunteer experience that benefits the volunteer and the residents, encouraging the volunteer to talk about the amazing things we do at Abe's Garden®... I would also like to find more musicians to perform for our residents on a regular basis, as music is the last memory to go. And we all love a good show!"

# ABE'S GARDEN® COMMUNITY GROUP FORMS A SPECIAL BOND ACROSS THE POND

By Lori Latusek

Participants of Abe's Garden® Community Group (AGCG), Middle Tennessee's first early-stage dementia day program, were treated to an inspiring video call with Peter Berry, a 55-year-old British man diagnosed with early onset dementia at age 50. Peter is an Alzheimer's advocate who raises awareness and philanthropic funds through cycling, YouTube video diaries and speaking engagements.

AGCG participants watched several of Peter's videos prior to the call and were thrilled to connect with someone on a similar journey in another country. During the call, they asked thoughtful questions and absorbed his words of wisdom.

Notable insights from Peter include:

- An Alzheimer's diagnosis is for a family, not an individual.
- A key problem with dementia is that we look well, so people have this idea that we don't need support, or we can get along quite happily on our own, but the reality is quite different.
- With a diagnosis of dementia comes depression. The enormity of dementia and what's going to happen weighs heavy on our shoulders. But we have to live well.
- When I was first diagnosed, dementia started to take so many things away from me ... driving and various abilities. But I never realized that I would have the option to take away from my condition, which is what I've done. I found the ability to make something positive about something very negative by helping others. There are so many people out there who have been diagnosed, or are being diagnosed, who will be going through the same procedures as I did and getting very low and depressed about it. My idea was to help others live better. To think, "If that guy from England can do it, why can't I?" It's given me a sense of purpose, a sense of worth to know I'm helping others.

The group was truly thrilled about the call and hopes to connect on a regular basis. "It was wonderful to be able

to talk to someone who has the same issues and problems that we have," said one participant. "That was powerful stuff! He won't give up," exclaimed another.

To read more insights from Peter, including innovative steps England has taken to make life easier for those with dementia, please visit Abe's Garden's Facebook page.

View Peter's videos by searching for the "Peter Berry" channel on YouTube, or visit his Facebook page at [facebook.com/PeterBerryLivingWithAlzheimers](https://facebook.com/PeterBerryLivingWithAlzheimers).



*Peter connected with AGCG participants through Zoom video chat.*





Resident Emma Schwaber and Life Engagement Coordinator Genevieve Scott enjoy trying new wines. Photo by Dan Heller



Abe's Garden® Family Council hosts quarterly wine and cheese socials.

## OUR COMMUNITY MAY BE FULL, BUT THERE'S ALWAYS OPENINGS IN OUR COMPLIMENTARY FUTURE RESIDENTS CLUB

It's true. Since Abe's Garden® opened, our community has been consistently full; word quickly spread that what we do is setting new standards in memory care. Families throughout Middle Tennessee, as well as families from near and far states, are interested in moving their loved ones to Abe's Garden®.

Even though our residential suites are frequently fully reserved, there are many ways we can assist you and your loved one. You're eligible to join our *free Future Residents Club* and become a member of the Abe's Garden® family the moment your loved one is diagnosed (or earlier).

Joining our **Future Residents Club** means your family member not only has **priority status** for a residential suite; it also means you enjoy the following benefits:

- Invitations to educational caregiver events, such as Live and Learn luncheons and webinars, which share best practice care techniques

- Invitations to quarterly wine and cheese social events
- Compass Club newsletter subscription
- Timely information regarding new programs

Becoming an "official" future resident means when you're actively seeking residential living for your loved one, they may not have to wait to enjoy the evidence-based, person-centered care for which Abe's Garden® is known.

"At Abe's Garden, our goal is to support family members and their loved ones wherever they are on their individual journey," says Judy Given, Director of Campus Development, "while living at home, as participants in The Club day program or our early-stage Community Group, or as residential members of our community."





Residents sold baked goods and crafts to raise money for new winter coats, benefitting students of Carter-Lawrence Elementary School.  
Photo by Lori Latusek



Titan, a full-sized horse, evoked joy and elevated reminiscence therapy when visiting Abe's Garden® residents. Photos by Robert Heller



Nashville Symphony members shared their instruments during an afternoon of musical exploration. Photos by Susan Burdorf



All represented events took place prior to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.



Ensworth's seventh grade students visited and interviewed residents for the fourth consecutive year, as part of the school's "Memory Project." Photo by Lori Latusek



Montgomery Bell Academy eighth through twelfth grade students cleaned residents' wheelchairs during a "car wash" volunteer event. Photos by Lori Latusek

## NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL THERAPIES FOR ALZHEIMER'S

To date, there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease (AD) and it's been approximately 15 years since a novel AD drug has been introduced. Therefore, many clinicians, researchers and stakeholders are shifting their focus toward non-pharmacological intervention to prevent or slow the progression of the disease.

UsAgainstAlzheimer's conducted an extensive survey of non-pharmacological treatments recommended for AD, Mild Cognitive Impairment, and normal aging. Each researched therapy was rated on an ascending five-point scale known as the Levels of Evidence (LOE) score. Notable findings in "Non-Pharmacological Therapies in Alzheimer's Disease: A Systematic Review" include:

### Exercise

Aerobic exercise – ★★★★★

### Modifiable risk factors

Body Mass Index, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Depression, Midlife Hypertension, smoking, physical inactivity, educational attainment, sleep-disordered breathing ★★★★★

### Overall diet

The Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet ★★★★★  
The Modified Atkins Diet (MAD) ★★★★★

### Specific foods

Cocoa/chocolate ★★★★★

### Vitamins, minerals and other ingredients

Bioactive Dietary Polyphenol Prep (BDPP) / Resveratrol ★★★★★  
B vitamins (Folic Acid, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B12) ★★★★★  
Essential Fatty Acids ★★★★★

### Prescribed nutrition

Souvenaid (Fortasyn Connect) ★★★★★

### Medical devices

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) ★★★★★  
Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) ★★★★★  
Transcranial Stimulation (tCS) ★★★★★

### Cognitive retraining

Computerized Cognitive Behavioral Therapy ★★★★★  
Traditional Cognitive Behavioral Therapy ★★★★★

### Multimodal interventions

Risk Factor Modification + Cognitive Retraining + Exercise ★★★★★

SUPPORT

Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> during



6:00 P.M., MAY 6 – 6:00 P.M., MAY 7



@abesgarden  
615.997.3030

Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

## volunteer spotlight **SANDY BIVENS**

By Lori Latusek



The central courtyard is an intentional design element that exemplifies a pillar of the Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> model – Connection to Nature. Sandy Bivens has devoted many volunteer hours since 2018 to enhance the natural habitat of this beloved area.

As lovers of the outdoors, Sandy and her sisters wanted their mother, Judy, to continue enjoying nature as her Alzheimer's progressed. "The garden and porches provide a great place to watch birds and butterflies, which was a big reason we thought Abe's Garden was the perfect place for mom to live," says Sandy.

While visiting Judy, Sandy and her sisters would routinely sit on a porch or walk the courtyard with their mom, identifying birds and listening to them sing. As Bird Education and Research Program Coordinator

at Warner Park Nature Center, it was natural for Sandy to want to set up hummingbird feeders in the Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> courtyard. She donated, filled, and installed three feeders (one outside each household), as well as donated and placed plants that invite more winged visitors.

Sandy also began leading educational programs for Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> residents, independent and assisted living residents, and Abe's Garden<sup>®</sup> Community Group participants. She speaks with residents about birds, flowers and insects that can be spotted in the courtyard. Additionally, Sandy leads resident field trips to the Warner Park Nature Center.

"My mom liked to walk from porch to porch and look at the feeders," Sandy smiles, remembering Judy, who passed away in October 2017. "They provided something nice for her to talk about with team members and fellow residents."

Sandy continues to manage feeder upkeep, water plants and lead educational programs. "It helps me remember my mom," she says. "It made a difference in my mom's life, and I hope it might positively affect someone else."