

Transforming care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias

seeds



Residents enjoy participating in the lively drum circle. Left to right: Jay and Barbara Rittenberg, Debbe Johnson, and Stephanie Freudenthal. Photos by Lori Latusek

A GENEROUS GIFT IS MUSIC TO RESIDENTS' EARS

By Lori Latusek

New philanthropic partner funds beneficial music and dance programs at Abe's Garden

The health benefits of music and dance are evident throughout Abe's Garden. Lively tunes motivate our older adults to cut loose, stretch muscles and get their heart pumping. Reminiscent songs enliven spirits of nonverbal memory care residents, who remember or learn steps and rhythms. Familiar tunes calm those who are agitated, anxious or in pain. Peaceful music soothes the soul of those transitioning from this life to the next.

Thanks to a recent anonymous philanthropic partnership, Abe's Garden will experience the power of music more than ever before. A magnanimous gift of \$250,000 will support the expansion of music and dance-focused initiatives throughout campus.



A resident shows off her skills on a violin.
* Photo by Susan Burdorf

By expanding music and dance engagement opportunities, Abe's Garden will explore collaboration with universities to establish a practicum and internship site for those studying to become music and dance therapists. The plan is for these students to gain valuable experience and develop skills for assisting senior adults, particularly those who are suffering from physical pain, coping with grief or depression, receiving hospice care or living with dementia. As a result, residents and day program participants will benefit from the latest, cutting-edge, evidenced-based therapies.

Music and dance have been staples of events, activities and daily life at Abe's Garden for years. We are thrilled this philanthropic partnership is allowing us to amplify these beneficial offerings.



Ballroom dance instructor Vickie Oates guides resident Julia Evans.
Photo by Dan Heller*

**THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
TO FRAN SHMERLING,**

wife of Abe's Garden's namesake, Dr. Abram Shmerling. Fran passed away on January 20, 2021, at the age of 88 following a brief illness. She had been a Park Manor independent living resident since 2008.

We Feel Like Dancing

“Throughout my professional career as a dance/movement therapist, I’ve seen the impact dance has on an array of special needs populations,” says Judy Shmerling Given, Abe's Garden Sr. Director, Campus Development. “Having spent the last 13 years working with seniors as well as living through my father's Alzheimer's journey, I've imagined creating a program to bring dance experiences to those with Alzheimer's disease and other neurocognitive disorders. Ideally, with the help of this special gift, we will design and implement a dance program that could be replicated in other memory care communities.”

**Photos taken prior to COVID-19 protocols*



Troy Castellano (second from left), Founder of Instruments For Education, delivered violins to the very appreciative Abe’s Garden life engagement team.

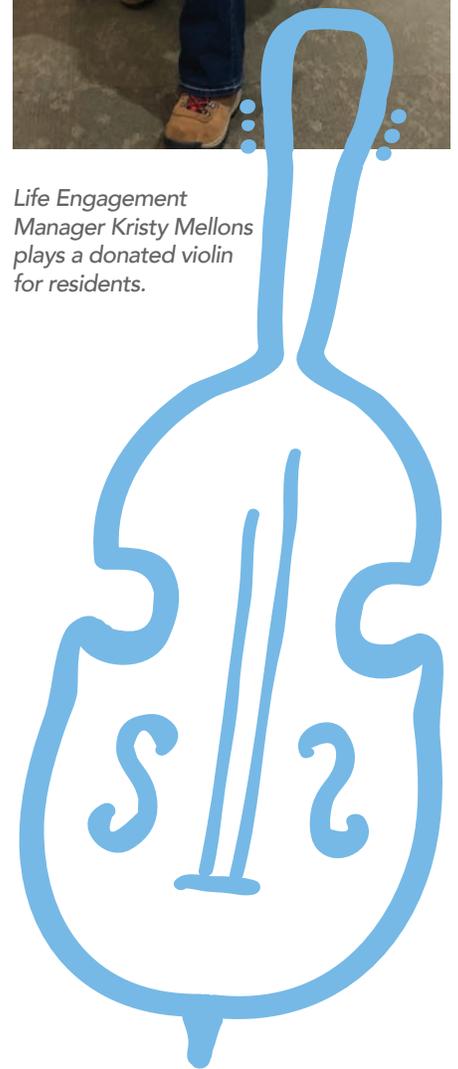


Life Engagement Manager Kristy Mellons plays a donated violin for residents.

A String of Good Luck

Recent in-kind donations are supporting our efforts to boost our music programs, too. Abe’s Garden received three violins from *Instruments For Education*. The violins are greatly appreciated, and are being used by our life engagement team for community performances and to offer residents one-on-one lessons.

The classical violin is frequently played, which prompts discussion about composers and other string instruments in the orchestra. “Providing learning opportunities to every resident is part of the Abe’s Garden mission,” says Kristy Mellons, Life Engagement Manager. “We know that people have the ability to learn new things at any age. Our team happens to be musically talented, so we’re thrilled to have these instruments to be able to teach independent, assisted living and memory care residents how to play. It is wonderful to see the joy and sense of pride it brings them.”



Volunteer Spotlight: MUSICIANS ON CALL

By Kristina Krawchuk

Like a melodious Ltime machine, music instantaneously transports us back to another time and place, evoking a wave of memories and emotions. Music has been proven to calm anxiety, elevate moods, lower blood pressure and reactivate areas in the brain associated with memory. The extraordinary effects of music make it a powerful healing modality and the inspiration behind Musicians On Call (MOC), a nonprofit organization that provides unique volunteer-driven music experiences to the Abe's Garden / Park Manor community.

When most human connections went virtual and COVID-19 restrictions prevented the typical flow of musically gifted volunteers from performing live at Abe's Garden and Park Manor, MOC stepped in to provide intimate virtual performances to fill the gap. They have arranged recorded concerts and weekly 30-minute shows for our assisted living, independent living and memory support residents via Zoom.

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– Kristy Mellons,
Life Engagement Manager



Abe's Garden nurse Connie Dotson virtually met Kelsea Ballerini and Morgan Evans, thanks to Musicians On Call.

says Kristy Mellons, Life Engagement Manager. "The performances have been enjoyed by everyone. Best of all, these performances are provided at no cost, due to the artists graciously volunteering their time and talent."

Thanks to MOC, residents and team members have witnessed some especially inspirational volunteer artist performances. Tony Memmel, who was born with one hand, played guitar and sang. Krystelle performed a beautiful American Sign Language interpretation along with her songs.

MOC also orchestrated an unforgettable moment for Abe's Garden nurse Connie Dotson. Prior to country artists Kelsea Ballerini and Morgan Evans performing a virtual holiday concert for caregivers and residents, Connie excitedly participated in a virtual meet and greet with the dynamic duo.

When it's safe to do so, Abe's Garden and Park Manor look forward to incorporating Musicians On Call's in-person programs into life-enrichment opportunities on campus, including live performances and Project Playback, during which a volunteer will write and record songs with residents.



Bob Bowers and care partner Ada Knight



Care partner Felicia Osborne and Nancy Fleisher



Roger Osborne and care partner Michelle Williams



Life Engagement Coordinator Mallore Grimes and John Simpkins



Life Engagement Coordinator Valerie Snider and a resident

Photos by Lori Latusek

THE POWER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

As the world navigated through unprecedented challenges in the last year, Abe’s Garden and Park Manor residents and families helped inspire our dedicated team members to be brave, persevere and continue to do what they do best – provide loving care to our residents.

MEMORY CARE

“January marked five years since Dad moved into dementia care at Abe’s Garden. It has been challenging, inspiring, happy, and sad; I have experienced all of the emotions the last five years. But above all, I feel blessed and thankful. Blessed and thankful that I found a home for Dad where he is loved and cared for, where he has friends in the staff and other residents, and where he is treated with dignity.”

– Bernadette Osborne Tucker,
Daughter of a Memory Care Resident

INDEPENDENT LIVING

“The whole family appreciates all the care the whole [Abe’s Garden / Park Manor] team has taken of the residents during this very lengthy and stressful time. I think you all have all done a remarkable job under, what has to have been, enormous pressure. We certainly appreciate it, and hope many, many other families have expressed that to you as well.”

– Lee Blankenship,
Son of an Independent Living Resident

ABE’S GARDEN AT HOME

“We are so grateful for the kind care that you provide to our father and mother. Just wanted to express how much it means to us that you provided them with the attention and TLC that we were unable to provide due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Thank you for all your efforts and for being such loving people.”

– Daughters of Independent Living Residents Receiving Supplemental Home Care Support via Abe’s Garden at Home

ASSISTED LIVING

“Congratulations to the team for all the efforts to keep everyone safe. I’m wowed by the dedication of the assisted living staff!”

– Becky McGonagil,
Daughter of an Assisted Living Resident

board of directors spotlight

Board members share a passion to help other families on the dementia journey.



SCOTT P. BURNS

MANAGING PRINCIPAL AND
PORTFOLIO MANAGER,
WOODMONT INVESTMENT
COUNSEL, LLC

Scott's mother, his treasured confidant, is the third person in his family to be diagnosed with dementia. She has been living with Alzheimer's disease for 10 years. She currently forgets what time it is and how she spent the day. As he questions whether she remembers his frequent visits and calls, Scott knows what's coming; he recalls the sadness and confusion felt when his grandfather no longer recognized him.

"The fact that I'm in Nashville and my parents are in South Carolina causes me tremendous guilt for not doing more to help my mom or my dad, who is her caregiver," he shares. "It's a terrible disease for any family to experience. I feel the need to do something, which was my primary drive to join the board."

As an Abe's Garden board member since 2019, Scott enjoys problem solving to help the board predict and overcome obstacles while evolving the organization's strategic plan. "I'm happy to commit time and money to fight this disease and enhance the lives of those living with it," he says.



KATIE CRUMBO

NURSE PRACTITIONER AT
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Katie's mother Peggy was diagnosed with dementia in 2011. Overwhelmed by her needs, Katie searched for a senior community specializing in dementia care, only to find limited options. Armed with the support of friends experienced with navigating the dementia journey, Katie and her husband Kevin made the decision for Peggy to live at a care community near their home. The community provided professional care as her condition worsened, which allowed Peggy to be an integral part of their family as they balanced demanding work schedules and raising two young boys. For nearly five years, the family would meet Peggy at the community in the late afternoon and then venture to restaurants, ball games, and other activities.

"As a nurse practitioner and a daughter of someone with dementia, being asked to join the Abe's Garden board in 2019 was an honor and an opportunity to be a part of improving care for those with dementia and their family members," says Katie, who recently came out of retirement to work on the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. "We are fortunate to have this great resource in our community and the contributions Abe's Garden can make on a national level are boundless. I wish it would have been around for my mom and our family."



To learn about our other board members, log on to www.abesgarden.org/about/board-of-directors.



MARY KATE MOUSER, M.Ed.

OWNER & CEO, SIDEVIEW PARTNERS

Mary Kate first heard about Abe's Garden prior to it becoming a reality when the Shmerling family had a dream of developing a better senior living experience and elevating memory care. At the time, Mary Kate had no idea she would be personally impacted by dementia. It was prior to her mother's diagnosis of Primary Progressive Aphasia, a rare form of dementia that starts by attacking the portion of the brain that supports language.



The diagnosis pushed Mary Kate to learn more about the needs of older adults and to realize that this vulnerable population lacks sufficient resources and support. "I was really impressed with the innovation and progressive model of care being offered at Abe's Garden and wanted to bring my experiences to this organization," she says of joining the board in 2019.

Since her mother moved into Abe's Garden® Memory Care Center of Excellence in July of 2020, Mary Kate has been especially appreciative of the team's commitment to providing a unique experience for each resident based on their individual wants and needs. "Everyone is always ready to take my call, read my text or email and treat me as a partner in my mom's care," says Mary Kate. "They not only support my mom, but they also support me, too."

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Abe's Garden residents created portraits and landscape sketches for a virtual art show.



Barbara Curley and
Peggy Overbey

By Stephanie Freudenthal



By Debbe Johnson



By Peggy Overbey



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Abe's Garden[®] is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

“The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.” – Alan W. Watts

The same can be said of estate planning – you can't wait to make sense of all the changes around you ... you have to plunge into it. With new income and estate-tax legislation on the horizon, now is the time to review or create a plan to minimize taxes and maximize what you leave to your loved ones.

Abe's Garden is fortunate to be able to offer you estate planning consultation to help you navigate these uncertain times. This complimentary service is a gift to you provided by an Abe's Garden philanthropic partner.



Three generations of Lovells, Paula, Mary, and Jay, review estate plans with Paul Grassmann. Photo by Abigail Volkmann

After recently completing this process, board and resident family member Paula Lovell reflects:

“The Thompson and Associates process was a very valuable addition to my overall financial planning. I was impressed with the expertise of my advisor and his no-pressure approach to working with me. It cost me nothing and, as a result, I was much more knowledgeable about my own affairs. It is definitely an exercise worth the time, and I would strongly recommend it.”

Now is a great time to make sure your estate-planning partner leads you in the direction of your values and interests and provides flexibility to respond to change.

To learn more about this values-based estate planning process or to schedule an appointment with the Abe's Garden representative from Thompson & Associates, Paul Grassmann, please contact Donna Coleman, Senior Director, Marketing & Development at dcoleman@abesgarden.org or 615.490.6340.