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Summer House Residential Memory Care Communities Introduce PARO Robot Therapy

Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing Releases Results of Largest

Effective Use Study of PARO to Date

Glendale, Calif. March 23, 2016 – [Front Porch](http://www.frontporch.com) today announced results of a six-month use study of the therapeutic, socially assistive pet robot PARO (www.parorobots.com) with residents at Summer House memory care neighborhoods within seven Front Porch retirement communities in California. The study demonstrates the efficacy of PARO and its benefits to residents. PARO, a therapy robot created in the likeness of a baby harp seal, was invented by Japanese engineer at AIST and MIT AgeLab research fellow Dr. Takanori Shibata after years of research. Socially assistive robotics is a growing area for geriatric research, including dementia and memory care.



“Front Porch has been using PARO very effectively at their Summer House memory care neighborhoods,” Shibata said. “Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing documented 920 instances of PARO intervention and the resulting therapeutic effects on older adults with dementia. This is the largest quantitative evaluation of PARO so far and the outcomes show the benefits of PARO for improving the behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia and reducing the usage of psychotropic medications.”

The study data demonstrated positive impact among the residents; specifically, PARO:

- Produced calming effects for residents, in 73% of wandering and 59% of anxious behaviors
- Helped increase social behavior by 97% among isolated adults
- Helped 153 out of 193 residents (79%) stay alert from initially sleepy behavior, resulting in improved moods, socialization, and appetite
- Was used to avoid psychotropic medications in 61% of cases when medications were considered

“We continue to be astounded by the impact on mood, social interaction and communication,” said Davis Park, director of the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing (FPCIW) who led the six-month study at Summer House memory care neighborhoods at seven Front Porch retirement communities in California: Claremont Manor in Claremont, Fredericka Manor in Chula Vista, Sunny View in Cupertino, Vista del Monte in Santa Barbara, Villa Gardens in Pasadena, Walnut Village in Anaheim and Wesley Palms in San Diego. During the six-month study period, the FPCIW organized training sessions for caregivers and therapists to understand and utilize PARO. Staff used tracking surveys for every resident and corresponding intervention, and, as a result, collected 920 tracking surveys.

"Front Porch is exploring creative solutions to address needs for which we currently don't have an easy solution: agitation in the middle of the night, sundowning, engaging withdrawn or isolated residents," said Kari Olson, Chief Innovation and Technology Officer, Front Porch and President, [Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing](#). "PARO is one example of our continuing efforts to work with thought leaders and implement various modalities to bring greater wellness and quality of life to our residents based on leading edge innovations in the areas of adaptive technology, music therapy, telehealth and more."

About PARO

PARO is a therapeutic, socially assistive pet-type robot with an appearance of a baby harp seal, as people are generally interested in interacting with robots modeled after non-familiar animals. Equipped with different kinds of sensors, including tactile, light, audition, temperature, and posture, it can respond to different stimulations given by the users, or recognize the direction of voice from them. PARO was designed by Dr. Takanori Shibata, and has been used with positive and promising results since 2003 in many countries including Japan, Denmark, Canada, Italy, and the United States. PARO is certified as a type of neurological therapeutic device by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States and includes a caregiver's manual for robot therapy to achieve effective therapy.

About Front Porch

[Front Porch](#) is a not-for-profit 'human serving' organization based in Glendale, California, that serves individuals and families through full-service retirement, active adult communities, affordable housing communities and related management and development services. Front Porch retirement and active

adult communities offer options ranging from independent living to skilled care, including assisted living and memory care. Founded in 1999, Front Porch embraces a leading-edge approach to enhance wellbeing with innovative communities and programs that meet the changing needs of people as they age. Front Porch serves more than 2,000 people in 10 full-service retirement communities in California and two adult living communities: one in Louisiana and one in Florida. Summer House memory care neighborhoods are located in seven Front Porch retirement communities in California.

[The Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing](#) is part of Front Porch, and strives to harness technology solutions that support and enhance wellbeing in older adults. Core initiatives focus on how technology can: assist in maintaining brain health; enhance social connectedness; promote engagement and growth; empower control over health and wellness; prevent emergencies or serious events; and increase resources and support for formal and informal caregivers. It is the winner of the Bronze Award for the Dignity category in the 2015 McKnight's Technology Awards and the Aging 2.0 Pilot Pioneers 2015 Innovation Award. More information can be found at www.fpciw.org.

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