

Claremont Manor Life Enrichment Specialist Says Boredom is not Allowed

30-year employee Albert Mambou uses multiple skills to keep social opportunities fresh for residents during pandemic

If there is one thing Albert Mambou does not like to be is bored. Nor does he want any Claremont Manor resident to be either. That's why serving as part of the community's life enrichment team for the past 30 years, has been Albert's dream job.



Albert Mambou entertains residents (photo pre-Covid).

"Every day I get to use the skills I have to create meaningful and fun opportunities for residents," said Albert, who is trained in filmmaking, video production and sound engineering. He also plays multiple instruments and is an accomplished artist. "I hope residents have just as much fun participating in all we do here as I do coming up with the activities. That's what motivates me every day."

When Albert was first hired as a part-time activities assistant in 1990, he remembers the activities calendar consisted of little more than Bingo, a few current events discussion groups and an occasional art class in the dining room after dinner.

"That was about it, but since the Internet and other technologies arrived everything changed," said Albert, now a full-time life enrichment specialist who spends most of his time working at the community's skilled nursing Care Center. "Staff and residents have access to more resources than

ever. We now have a dedicated activities center with interactive technologies like iN2L, our giant touch screen monitor that residents love.”



“Christmas Around the World” tree.

iN2L gives residents access to games, puzzles, virtual travel, music programs, and more as well as offering social, intellectual, physical, and spiritual enrichment in both socially distanced group and independent settings.

“The technology here is incredible and particularly useful during the pandemic when most of our activities are virtual,” Albert said. “If this virus hit 20 or 30 years ago, it would have been tough to keep residents engaged, but not now.”

But not all of Claremont Manor’s social opportunities rely on high tech. Albert can often be heard playing the piano during socially distanced music appreciation classes or concerts.

In 2019, Albert came up with “Christmas Around the World,” a Christmas tree featuring ornaments representing various countries and cultures. “We encouraged our residents and staff to contribute an ornament that represents their country or culture,” Albert said. “I don’t know how many are hanging on tree but I do know we are well represented.”

For 2020, the theme of the Care Center Christmas tree will be “Our Heroes,” a tribute to front-line

workers and others who have made a positive difference during the pandemic.

The pandemic has also forced Albert to think “out of the box” more now than ever when coming up with activities. That’s when he came up with “The Sunshine Dance” last spring during National Nursing Week, which featured masked Care Center staff paying tribute through dance to Hindi cinema, popularly known as “Bollywood.”

“I don’t really know how I come up with these ideas,” Albert said. “I think after 30 years, wild and crazy ideas are just my specialty.”