

Creativity Under Quarantine at Claremont Manor



The creative process brings enjoyment, discovery, and self-expression to people of all ages. During the pandemic, creative projects such as painting, sewing, and writing poems have been especially important to older adults who want to maintain engagement while staying safer at home. Benefits include the potential to increase motor skills and coordination, enhance cognitive abilities, reduce stress and anxiety, and strengthen social connections (virtually or safely distanced).

At Claremont Manor, the Life Enrichment team celebrates our residents' creativity by sharing projects made under quarantine. We deliver *The Life Enrichment Newsletter* weekly to all resident mailboxes. It features community happenings along with various resident creative works such as in mixed media art and quilting. We also have a display cabinet in our lobby and a resident art wall next to our meeting room to showcase art and collections.

Sharing these projects sparks connections and brings people together through art. "It reflects our strong sense of community," said Life Enrichment Director Terralyn Hamlin. "We care about our residents and want to show off their works of art. It also provides an opportunity to inspire others to get creative."

For resident Mary Mitchell, art has always been a big part of her life. She received her master's degree in art therapy and was a graphic artist and then an art therapist for 18 years. Recently, she has enjoyed spending her time creating collages from materials she reads. "Collages are a fun form of art therapy," she says. "It is a nonverbal way of communicating and expressing myself. The best part of creating art is sharing your work with others."



“This collage is a tactile and creative art form,” Mary said. “My daily news source, *The New York Times*, was very informative on COVID. Daily papers provided charts and columns as the outburst of the infection took hold of the US population. The background of this picture is the number of cases and is up to date. Other images are from *The Atlantic*. The seriousness of the disease in the collage was tempered by the introduction of the monarch butterfly. In nature, it takes time for it to form from pupa to mature butterfly, where it can be free and fly off to Mexico. So, in my take from the shutdown, perhaps as with the monarch butterfly, we will be free too! The hopeful coming of the end of shutdown is fall and is represented by the rosy and rustic red leaf.”

“Here at Front Porch, we recognize the importance of creative projects and activities and how they positively impact our residents’ health and wellbeing,” Terralyn said. “It is Life Enrichment’s goal to have our residents live creatively with purpose and do what they love.”