

Friends Elmo and Richard Take ‘Cues’ From Each Other During Billiards Games

Billiards: It's a sport of agility and strategy that involves keeping the mind active and focused - and it's fun!



Richard, left, and Elmo.

Just ask Claremont Manor resident Richard Montes, a retired judge, who has been dabbling in this sport of men, women, kings, commoners and presidents, since high school and his frequent pool partner, buddy and one-time billiards novice, Claremont Manor dining room host Elmo Fernando.

The two play at least twice a week in the resident lounge, mostly during Elmo's lunch hour on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when they manage to get in three or four games. Elmo has worked at Claremont Manor for around four years. About two years ago, a group of residents that included Richard, asked him if he wanted to join them in a game of billiards.

Elmo had little experience with the game except for playing the similarly played carrom in his native country of Sri Lanka. The resident players taught him the basics as well as the finer points of the game: how to best hold the cue, keep score, improve his stroke and speed, get the best angles and keep a winning attitude.

"It is so much fun playing and learning and socializing with residents," Elmo said. "Everyone at Claremont Manor makes it a point to get to know residents on a personal level. It helps us serve them better. This was my way of getting to know our resident pool players, including Mr. Montes."

"Elmo is not just a staff member here, I also consider him my friend," Richard said. "I love how this game has brought us together."

Elmo and Richard remain regulars each week playing games like "eight ball," "numbers," and "straight pool." In addition to competing in games, the duo like to set up difficult shots for each other and see who comes out on top. They, of course, disagree about who is the better player. The two love to engage in a gentle and humorous "trash talk" with each other but in a friendly way. Richard has the reputation around the community as somewhat of a jokester by his fellow residents

and staff.



Richard lines up a shot.

“Let’s just say we use our words to inspire each other to get better,” Richard said with a laugh. “I like to beat Elmo in all different ways.”

“You, my friend, make a lot of lucky shots,” Elmo countered with a grin. “It’s not all skill.”

Studies show that playing pool hones good hand-eye coordination, sharpens the mind, enables stretching and balance, helps build focus, burns calories and is a great way to socialize.