

Legally Blind Casa de Mañana Residents Ron and Alicia Inspire Others With Their Art

It could be said that although Casa de Mañana residents and legally blind artists Alicia Haughney and Ron Landells may have lost much of their sight, they have never lost their vision - or their passion for painting.



Casa de Mañana residents Ron and Alicia

“To me, art is making something better,” Alicia said. “Not being able to see well presents challenges but that just means embracing larger canvases and more vibrant colors. I love experimenting with them and putting them together.”

Alicia, a retired nurse, moved to Casa in 2016. Ron, a retired pharmacist, followed in 2018. Like many residents, they found creative inspiration from the breathtaking ocean views just outside their door. They were drawn to art classes in the nearby village and at Casa, where they found a mentor in art teacher Deron Cohen who has been creating and exhibiting for the past 25 years. He encourages residents to find healing through creative self-expression and hone in on their unique artistic vision.



Painting by Alicia Haughney

"He gives us suggestions and teaches us techniques, but he usually lets us do our own thing," Ron said.

But as the couple's eyesight began to fail they realized they need to adapt if they wanted to continue to express their creativity.

"We still love the classes. The difference now is that when Deron shows us something I need to put my nose right next to the canvas to see what he is talking about," Alicia said with a laugh. "And sometimes what we paint are just blobs of color. I may not put those out for exhibit but they definitely make a statement."

Ron and Alicia bring that inspiration back to their home, hanging their new works of art outside of their front door every week to encourage residents who walk by. "I don't believe in selling any artwork," Alicia said. "If someone really enjoys what they see and it brings them joy, I just give it to them."

Seeing first-hand how art can contribute to residents' happiness, Alicia has been going through a list of residents who have birthdays and creating a custom birthday card for each one. "Birthdays are special. I want to help everyone celebrate the occasion in my own way." The residents love bringing these original works of art back to their own homes.



Painting by Ron Landells

“It’s fun,” Alicia said, “to see what the other students do. We all interpret photos and pictures differently. It’s nice creating something and bringing it to life.”