

Life Enrichment Team Fights Pandemic Boredom Together

When the coronavirus outbreak first hit, the Kingsley Manor life enrichment team knew they had to quickly find ways to help residents stay engaged and connected while following important safety measures.



Shrimp cocktail and sliders prepared for outdoor dining.

“We had to hit the ground running right away to find innovative ways to do things we used to do in-person but now, needed to be done virtually or socially distanced,” said Raymond Ruiz, Kingsley’s life enrichment director. “That’s where my team shined. We put our heads together and came up with some ideas.”

Among those opportunities were educational lectures, current event discussions, book clubs, tea parties, music appreciation, fitness classes, and mindfulness exercises - all done virtually. During times of relaxed restrictions, the team brought in entertainment that residents enjoyed from their balconies or from a distance.

The team, comprised of Raymond and Life Enrichment Assistants Carlina Burgos and Marco Hernandez, each bring specific skills to their jobs. Marco has nursing experience, and has a passion for working with older adults, including those with dementia. Carlina loves technology and art and is often found tutoring residents in both. Raymond brings the team together through his leadership and encouragement.

“I facilitate regular Zoom meetings with residents and their families,” Marco said. “Since the pandemic hit, I have encouraged family members to try new technologies so they can communicate with their loved ones. Here. It’s important that we see each other’s faces. We are doing a lot with video chat inside of Kingsley so it was a way to get family members involved.”

“No doubt about it, the biggest challenge is social isolation,” Carlina said. “But we ask residents what they want and focus on their suggestions. Those suggestions bring a lot of value to what we do each day.”

One of those suggestions was to expand the walking paths throughout the community.

“We have a lot of walking paths here but very few of them connect,” Raymond said. “When residents said they wanted more exercise, we made some modifications and created a loop by connecting some paths. Now, residents have a more enjoyable time walking around the campus.”

“Every week is different,” Raymond said. “Our day-to-day is constantly changing, and it’s important to stay flexible and open to new ideas while also remaining cautious to protect our residents. I’m proud of my team. We think of new ideas every day with resident focus as our priority.”