

# Memory Care Neighborhood at Walnut Village Offers Unique Life Enrichment Opportunities

It's 9 a.m. on Monday morning at Summer House, Walnut Village's memory care neighborhood, and Life Enrichment Specialist Julie Rosenthal is excited for a new week of exploring possibilities with the dozen or so residents she engages with daily.



A Summer House staff member and resident enjoy making cookies.

For those living with, or caring for someone with memory loss, providing meaningful inspiration and joy is both a primary goal and an incredible challenge. Julie uses every bit of her 30 years of experience of caring for others to engage with residents each day. She and her colleagues at Summer House are constantly experimenting with unique ways to engage residents beyond traditional activities usually associated with memory care communities like bingo, crafting and puzzles. While those activities certainly have a place for those who enjoy them, days at Summer House at Walnut Village are also filled with events like trivia, vegetable gardening, flex and stretch classes, spa days, chair yoga and more.

"We work hard to modify everything we do to match the abilities of the residents who are participating," Julie said. "We've found that the key to an enriching experience is to focus on the event at hand, not the outcome. It's important to lose pre-conceived notions about how a particular activity should be done or what the end product might be. It's about creating a space and experience where as many residents as possible can enjoy the process and the current moment of doing!"

One of the primary benefits for residents at Summer House is how much training, strategy and care is put into the life enrichment calendar. The shared community space comes alive with laughter, movement and inspiration many times throughout the day and allows residents to be present and

experience joy and connection.

“My mom loves the exercise classes at Summer House,” said Mary Glaser, the daughter of one of the residents. “The various exercises often take different forms, which is really fun. They help keep mom fit. She also enjoys all the crafts. Julie comes up with very inventive ways for my mom to be creative.”

Technology also plays a key role in keeping residents engaged. Walnut Village was the first Summer House community within parent company Front Porch to incorporate “It’s Never Too Late (iN2L)” technology. iN2L features a large touch screen filled with activities, games, puzzles, music, virtual reality, entertainment, and other offerings that deliver entertainment and intellectual stimulation to residents. At Summer House, technology is a tool—a rich and modern complement to the staff’s brand of compassionate care that never goes out of style.

“Julie does a wonderful job with the Summer House residents,” said Pamela Lowe, Walnut Village’s director of Health Services. “She has a gentle way about her that residents respond to.”

Summer House is part of the Walnut Village campus, its home-like setting features 14 shared residences — each with modern comforts and classic styling. This specially tailored space offers quiet, sun-filled rooms, a wander garden, lush landscaping and beautiful design inside and out.