



Gardens staff has offered support for technologies with which residents are not familiar, such as helping set up Zoom accounts and doing FaceTime with family members.

Residents Hanne, right, and Ed Ansell, on the screen, enjoy their daily visit through the use of a mobile robot carrying an electronic tablet for communication via FaceTime. Gardens Life Enrichment Coordinators Marcy McCallister, left, and Lauren Flores provide encouragement and technical support to many residents who would otherwise not be able to see their loved ones.

## Leveraging Technology

From Zoom and FaceTime to emails and texts, Gardens residents have learned to use technologies that just a few months ago were not a part of their lives.

During this time, Gardens staff has offered tech support for technologies with which residents are not familiar. Staff can help set up Zoom accounts, FaceTime family members and provide instructions on how to email and text.

"FaceTime is truly an important part of my life right now," said resident **Hanne Ansell**. "My husband is in skilled nursing, so we've been physically separated. FaceTime has made it possible for us to see each other through a screen."

Residents have used new technology to communicate with their family and friends and attend previously in-person club and committee meetings.

"I chair the Gardens Dining Committee," said Lee. "When we started meeting virtually on Zoom, everyone did online tutorials or called me for guidance and quickly learned how to do video calls for our meetings."

Residents have also had to add new technologies to their skill set for their jobs. Gardens resident **Helen Hines**, a high school chemistry teacher, had to transition her in-person classes to a remote environment. "Transitioning to a virtual classroom was challenging," said Helen. "This has changed my way of life, my students' way of life and their parents'."

The transition was especially challenging because it was her retirement year and she had to spend the final months of her career adjusting to a new style of teaching without her students physically present.

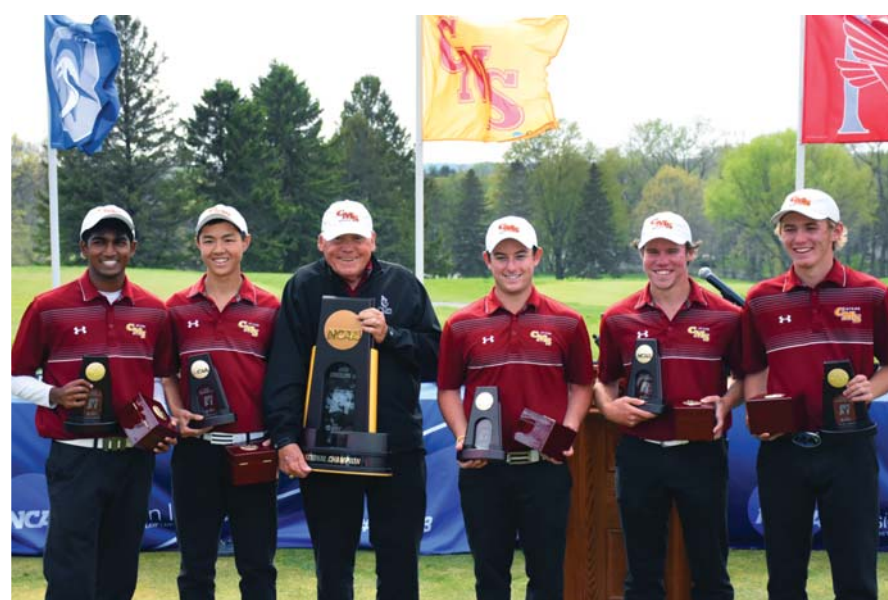
"I've felt very supported and understood by residents," said Helen. "Many of them are retired educators who knew that it was my last year teaching. I've received a lot of well wishes."

Like Helen, resident **Bim Jollymour** faced a career challenge due to COVID-19, when his final season coaching men's golf at Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Colleges (CMS) was cancelled. Bim retired this year without being able to complete his 20th season as head coach.

"The most difficult part of this pandemic has been giving up the golf season," said Bim. "The athletes worked so hard."

After unexpectedly learning that he couldn't return to campus, Bim had to say goodbye to his student-athletes via emails and phone calls. "I wish I could have seen them together in person one last time," said Bim.

Despite the disappointment of the lost competition season, Bim's leadership of the CMS golf program was celebrated in a virtual event this summer. His former players, CMS colleagues, and parents of the young men Bim coached since 2001, gathered to honor and thank him for his positive influence in their lives.



Resident Bim Jollymour, was celebrated this summer for 19 years of leadership as coach of the highly-ranked Claremont-Mudd-Scripps men's golf team. Bim retired without being able to complete his 20th coaching season. He is pictured above with his national championship team in pre-COVID days.

## Bound by Community *Continued from page 4*

wanted to be," said Robin. "They know that I'm being taken care of at the Gardens. I'm happy to be here. This is a strong community and everyone cares about each other."

"The Gardens is a gift," said Tom. "We have peace of mind knowing how well taken care of we are."

"Besides marrying my husband and having children, moving to the Gardens has been one of the best decisions of my life," said resident **Myrlie Evers-Williams**. "If there were ever a place I'd want to shelter in place, it would be at Mt. San Antonio Gardens."

The Gardens is a community made up of people who genuinely care about each other. The difficult times caused by the pandemic have made that more evident than ever before.

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Myrlie Evers-Williams enjoys gathering with fellow residents for physically distanced get-togethers.



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The Power of Community



This group of Gardens residents started sewing face masks in the early days of the lockdown and very quickly had produced more than 1,000 masks to share with their neighbors and staff. First row from left: Roberta Dumas, Diane Schuster, Nan Maples; Second row: Paula Hui, Marilyn Dale, Ahlene Welsh; Third row: Sharon Hightower, Susan Moncrieff, Rita Krieger, Peggy Spear

# The Power of Community

Mt. San Antonio Gardens culture shines during a time of crisis.

"The most difficult challenge during this pandemic has been holding the community together while we're all physically isolated..."

Since March, the Mt. San Antonio Gardens community, alongside the rest of the nation and the world, has faced a public health challenge unlike any in over a hundred years. The coronavirus pandemic has forced a new normal as people adapt to living in ways that will ensure the health and safety of our communities.

With seniors being at higher risk for severe illness from coronavirus, the Gardens, as a Continuing Care Retirement Community, has faced this challenge with even higher standards than the general public.

From adapting to technology to adopting hobbies in order to fill time previously taken by social activities, the Gardens' residents are finding creative ways to keep themselves busy at home. But, more than individual entertainment, they have focused on their community and engaged with their neighbors more than ever before.

## Engaging Creatively

In the early stages of the pandemic, residents began working together to plan new, imaginative activities and entertainment for the community.

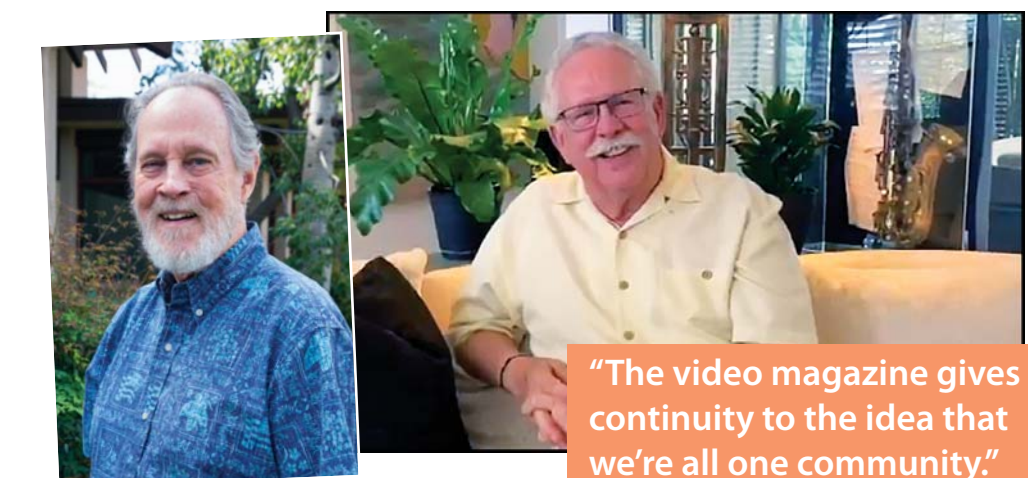
**Bob Rogers**, Gardens Club Council President, initiated a video magazine for residents. The Mt. San Antonio Gardens Video Magazine airs on the Gardens' internal TV channel, featuring videos of residents' news and stories that Bob assigned to **Tom Beal**, **Ethel Rogers**, or took on himself.

"The most difficult challenge during this pandemic has been holding the community together while we're all physically isolated," said Bob. "The video magazine gives continuity to the idea that we're all one community."

To launch the magazine, Bob learned how to edit video in order to piece together the many stories he captures out in the community. Some residents help him with the video content. Tom, for example, acts as the news anchor in the videos, narrating the stories that Bob records.

"We're all in the same boat," said Tom. "Having a video magazine that everyone has access to makes us feel united."

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"The video magazine gives continuity to the idea that we're all one community."



Resident Bob Rogers, above left, initiated the Mt. San Antonio Gardens Video Magazine for residents. Tom Beal, above right, became its news anchor, and together with Bob's wife, Ethel, began producing a variety of entertaining stories and interviews.

## The New Leaf

Mt. San Antonio Gardens is a nationally accredited Life Care senior community in Claremont and Pomona, California.

The *New Leaf* is a newsletter for friends and family of residents, board and staff, as well as individuals who have inquired about life at the Gardens.

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Gardens resident Chuck Kerchner

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# The Power of Community



Marketing Associate Denise Stevenson originated a weekly gnome hunting game. Gus the Gardens' Gnome became so popular that he was featured in an interview for the Gardens Video Magazine. Resident Joe Kelly, shown holding Gus and Sydney, became the good-natured voice of the elusive gnome.



"It's a fun, silly activity. That's exactly what we need right now."

## Engaging Creatively *Continued from page 1*



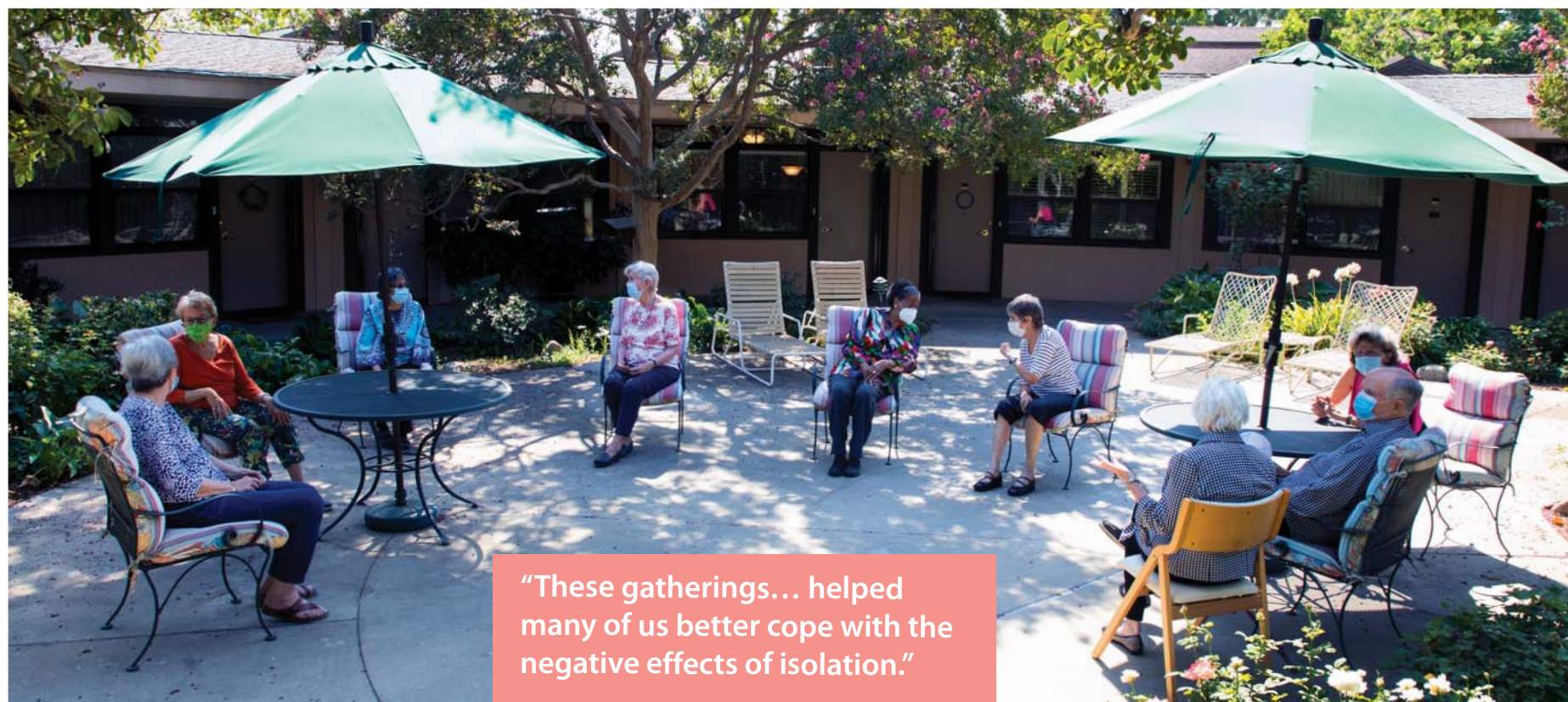
In the spirit of having some fun while helping unite the community during tough times, Marketing Associate **Denise Stevenson**, an avid collector of gnome figurines, suggested a weekly gnome hunting game. Denise provided the gnome that was quickly named Gus the Gardens' Gnome, hid him on campus and sent out a clue as to his whereabouts. Residents have made it a daily challenge to find Gus on their walks. He has been spotted beneath bushes, beside benches, next to walkways and in trees around the Gardens. Residents report Gus' location to Denise and are entered in a drawing for a weekly prize.

"It's a fun, silly activity," said resident **Joe Kelly**, who became the voice of Gus the Gardens' Gnome in the Mt. San Antonio Gardens Video Magazine. "That's exactly what we need right now."

Resident **Joan Presecan** has regularly organized physically distanced gatherings for her neighbors. The 30-minute events are limited to 10 people who remain at least six feet apart at all times while wearing masks.

"I miss the dinner table and our conversations," said Joan. "These gatherings are very small, but they've helped many of us better cope with the negative effects of isolation."

Residents also have led efforts to keep the community healthy and safe. Early in the pandemic, **Nan Maples**, along with several other



"These gatherings... helped many of us better cope with the negative effects of isolation."

In an effort to maintain a sense of community and reduce social isolation, resident Joan Presecan, above sixth from left, organized regular outdoor gatherings while following requirements for physical distancing and face masks.

residents, started producing masks. "In the first four weeks of the lockdown, it became apparent that we would have to wear masks and that we would probably need more than one," said Nan. "We got to work immediately." They produced more than 1,000 mask between March and May of this year.

## Welcoming Neighbors

Moving is always a challenge, but residents who moved into the Gardens in the midst of the pandemic seem undaunted by the unique challenges they encountered in their transition to a new home and community.

**Robin Leonhard** moved to the Gardens right before residents began to shelter in place. She enjoyed a month of normal activities at the Gardens before she had to abide by social distancing rules.

"When I first came to the Gardens, there was a short period of time where we were still dining together in the dining room and we could still go about normal activities," said Robin. "I had a chance to meet and socialize with residents. In general, everyone at the Gardens is always friendly, but in these difficult times, everyone has become even friendlier."

**Pat and Henry Stewart** moved from the East Coast to the Gardens just as shelter-in-place orders were beginning to affect residents.

"Our move to the Gardens was easier than expected," Henry said. "The



"I'm happy to be here. This is a strong community and everyone cares about each other."

As she knits on her patio in the evenings, Robin Leonhard's "artful hobby" has drawn the attention of fellow residents passing by on their walks. Their interest in her work has inspired her to plan a show to display her knitting projects when the pandemic is over.

staff is just dynamite. They helped us in so many ways, from hanging artwork and shifting furniture to cheerful delivery of delicious meals. Although many activities are on hold, we have found plenty to do. More importantly, we feel secure here, knowing that everyone, residents and staff alike, are doing all they can to keep us safe and healthy."

Along with Robin, Pat and Henry, **Chuck and Leanne Kerchner** also moved into the Gardens during shelter-in-place orders. "The quarantine period actually worked to our advantage because it allowed us to unpack comfortably after the hectic moving process. Having two weeks to unpack boxes was a great thing," said Leanne. "The nice staff from the dining room brought us meals every day. The tech staff made sure we had internet and cable from day one. There was not a single phone call that wasn't taken care of within hours."

## Adopting Hobbies

While quarantine has been a challenge because she likes to be out and about, Robin is thankful that she has more time for her favorite hobby: knitting. So far, Robin has knitted six sweaters, a baby blanket, a shawl and a poncho.

"I've been knitting since I was about 10," said Robin. "During the pandemic, I've sat outside to knit most evenings, and people see me while they go on their walks. They've become really interested in what I'm doing, so I plan to put on a show to display my knitting projects once the pandemic is over."

Eventually, Robin plans to display her projects on a rolling rack outside her apartment where residents can view her work. She loves baking and cooking as well, so she'll have plenty of treats for those who stop by.

Like Robin, resident **Lee Jackman** also has focused more on creative projects during the quarantine.

"Being at home," said Lee, "I've been freed from a lot of obligations and I've found that it's unleashed time for creativity. I've taken on a lot of projects during this time."

While in isolation, Lee has written a full-length play, "Bambi and

Reginald's Grand Adventure," to be performed by the Bonita-Harrison Taylor Unorthodox Players, a theatre group within the cottages of the Gardens. She also has written and composed a song about health rules and regulations for the Claremont After School Program. Additionally, she has arranged a whopping 27 shows in which she performs songs from singers of different eras, including Ella Fitzgerald and Judy Garland. Until recently, she performed two shows per week on Channel 8.



"With so much research, the shows take a lot of time and effort," said Lee. "But I enjoy them and have received a lot of positive feedback."

Resident **Ruth Abel** also has dedicated more time to creative projects. Before the pandemic, Ruth was an active volunteer at her church, the local Meals on Wheels program and the Leonis Adobe Museum in Calabasas. Recently she has been focused on advancing a family biography that she started about six years ago.

"I began a family biography for my grandchildren," said Ruth. "I've worked on it slowly over the years, but now that we've been asked to stay home, I've had much more time. It's a meaningful piece that my grandchildren can use to learn about their family."

Ruth is the seventh member of her family to have experienced life at the Gardens. This legacy played a big role in her decision to join the community.

"Seeing six other relatives live here and enjoy the community so much, I always knew the Gardens would be part of my retirement," said Ruth.

Ruth enjoys being involved in campus activities and currently serves on the Gift Shop Committee. When the new pandemic restrictions were announced, Ruth quickly worked with staff to implement new gift shop operations to keep everyone safe.



New residents Pat and Henry Stewart, left, and Chuck and Leanne Kerchner, moved into the Gardens after shelter-in-place had already begun.

"...we feel secure here, knowing that everyone, residents and staff alike, are doing all they can to keep us safe and healthy."

Ruth quickly worked with staff to implement new gift shop operations to keep everyone safe.

When the new pandemic restrictions were announced, Ruth quickly worked with staff to implement new gift shop operations to keep everyone safe.

With new hours and new rules about who can be inside, the gift shop is now a place where many residents go to purchase essentials.

"I'm so grateful for the gift shop," said Ruth. "It has really helped keep me busy and engaged."

## Prioritizing Wellness

The pandemic has triggered programming and lifestyle changes among not only residents, but also staff. **Lauren Flores**, Director of Life Enrichment for Skilled Nursing, and **Marcy McCallister**, Director of Life Enrichment for Assisted Living at Oak Tree Lodge, have worked together along with other staff to ensure residents' needs are met above and beyond expectations during the pandemic.

"In assisted living, we have doubled our life enrichment visits to residents," said Marcy.

"The goal is to ensure all residents are participating in stimulating activities even when they're home alone, especially those who have memory loss issues," continued Lauren.

Residents have a wide variety of closed-circuit TV programming from which to choose. Wellness Director **Andrea Tyck**, who coordinates with Lauren and Marcy, as well as with the many resident committees, creates a weekly schedule that includes physical activities such as adaptive yoga and seated tap dancing, as well as wine-tasting, an interfaith gathering and other educational offerings by resident committees and the Claremont Colleges.

During this time, resident **Pat Pruden**, who lives in the Gardens' Oak Arbor Memory Care, has particularly enjoyed daily visits from staff who help her read the newspaper and assist with her TV.

"Whenever we get to talk on the phone or FaceTime, her favorite things to talk about are what she has read or what she's watched," said Pat's daughter **Hilary LaConte**. "It's great to know there are attentive staff members to help her through her daily activities, including calling me on the phone."

When the pandemic started, the Gardens marketing team also reached out to ask how residents were doing. "Amid the COVID-19 crisis, our team



Resident Ruth Abel, a member of the Gift Shop Committee, helped implement new hours and procedures for the Gardens Mt. San Antonio Shop so that residents could buy essentials, gifts, cards, etc., without having to leave campus.

began calling each of the 280 independent living households to check in on the residents regularly. Most residents, particularly the single residents, really welcomed the contact," said **Mary Jean Neault**, Vice President of Marketing and Community Outreach. "We felt fortunate to have many inspiring, and sometimes profound conversations. One after another the residents expressed how happy they were to feel safe and secure at the Gardens during these uncertain times. Because of our regular conversations, residents identified needs that staff were able to respond to in a variety of helpful ways."

## Bound by Community

Community becomes even more important in times of trouble. During the coronavirus pandemic, staff and residents alike have faced many challenges, but, nonetheless, they have come together to take good care of each other.

"Although I moved during the start of the pandemic, my family wasn't concerned because they knew I was moving to a place where I really

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After being freed from a lot of obligations Lee found that sheltering-in-place has unleashed time for a myriad of creative endeavors that she is able to share with fellow residents.

Resident Lee Jackman's creativity has been going full throttle since the pandemic restrictions. Shown here with Tache, Lee has been using her theatrical and musical talents to write a full-length play, a song, and perform classic songs for residents on the in-house TV channel.