



Left: Oak Tree Lodge staff members smile with their eyes as they pose with the four beautiful umbrella designs. From left: Marcy McCallister, Alicia Vidana, Yvette DeLeon, Alexis Aguilar.



A colorful sea of umbrellas floats through the Gardens.

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Gardens residents and staff—masked and physically distanced—spent the day moving in tandem, dancing, swaying and spinning their umbrellas at campus venues while music played.

The Gardens becomes living art in Project: Look-Up

With a fanfare of color and joy, the Mt. San Antonio Gardens community brings to life artist Elizabeth Turk's moving art installation, Project: Look Up, designed to inspire hope, strength and resilience.



"You're like the canvas and the umbrellas are the paint."



Photos from top left, clockwise: Elizabeth Turk directs the Gardens residents and staff during the event; One of many kaleidoscopic images that became a culmination of the artistic vision of Elizabeth; Aerial drone photography gives a sense of the scale of the day's activities including dancers on the patio at the Gardens beautiful Terrace homes, the swimming pool located in the heart of the campus, and the flowering cutting garden; Resident line dancers add to the action as Project: Look Up unfolds.

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together," said Gardens resident Ken Brown. "It's hard to measure, but I think you could say this event has made our community even stronger." "Residents light up when they talk about the event or see their umbrella, which brings back happy memories," said Gardens Oak Tree Lodge Medical Technician **Yolanda Barela Zepeda**. The Gardens community continues to face the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, but Project: Look Up has left an ever-present sense of hope that has made it easier for residents and staff to look toward a better tomorrow. "Our communities need joy right now," said Elizabeth. "I wish I could've bottled up the energy at the Gardens on that day and sprinkled it across the country."

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Planting Seeds of Hope and Resilience



Planting Seeds of Hope and Resilience

Residents collaborate with Artist Elizabeth Turk on an immersive art installation

With a fanfare of color and joy, on November 12, 2020, the Mt. San Antonio Gardens community brought to life artist **Elizabeth Turk's** moving art installation, Project: Look Up, designed to inspire hope, strength and resilience.

Project: Look Up began to emerge during a conversation between Elizabeth and Gardens' Marketing Associate **Denise Stevenson**, who had been inspired by the artist's lecture, "Finding the Contemporary in the Traditional," at the Gardens in February 2020. Denise pitched the idea of inviting the artist to design a custom umbrella for the campus gift shop to Vice President of Marketing & Community Outreach **Mary Jean Neault**.

"I reached out to Elizabeth," said Denise. "What transpired was a meaningful, heartfelt conversation about the pandemic's impact on our residents and staff, and how our community aspired to maintain hope and optimism."

This conversation inspired Elizabeth to create something that far surpassed the single umbrella design Denise imagined. "The pandemic has changed everything," said Elizabeth. "When I noticed that people were facing a new lull of depression, I looked for leadership out of the feeling. When Denise called, I thought, 'what a perfect community with which to collaborate.' The Gardens residents know how to thrive in the face of adversity. That foundation became a hopeful seed with which to begin a new project."

Elizabeth's idea was to capture an aerial view of moving, multi-colored umbrellas to create the illusion of a stained-glass window. Gardens participants would carry the umbrellas while Elizabeth's video production team filmed them with drones from above.

"With two sides, windows present the possibility of reaching through," said Elizabeth. "It is a beautiful metaphor: When you encounter a hurdle, you must reach through and move forward."

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Through the multiple layers of Project: Look Up, Elizabeth hoped to inspire positivity and to help instill a sense of strength, hope and resilience in the face of the adversity caused by the pandemic.



Elizabeth Turk is known for marble sculpture and participatory immersive art experiences. A MacArthur Fellow and a Smithsonian Art Fellow, Elizabeth received her BA from Scripps College and her MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. She is represented by Hirschl & Adler Modern in NYC. Elizabeth launched ET Projects, a non-profit organization, to develop art experiences like Project: Look Up.

The New Leaf

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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.

Katherine Juhl Griffiths & Karen Villaseñor, Tripepi Smith, Writing

ET Projects, photography, aerial & ground

Sioux Bally-Malooof, Heartstone Arts, Art Direction

1-909-624-5061
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THE CEDARS at Mt. San Antonio Gardens

What do you tell yourself in the face of adversity?

In the weeks leading up to Project: Look Up, Elizabeth asked residents to respond to the question, "What do you tell yourself when you face adversity?" Participants recorded their answers on post-it notes and stuck them on the wall of the Social Center for their neighbors to see. "The power of the answers to the adversity question can truly affect a person's response to a real-life traumatic experience," said Elizabeth. "During vulnerable moments, these words really help. No matter how simple, words can really help transform feelings of disillusionment."

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Elizabeth was influenced by painter Henri Matisse, who at the end of his life and in the face of illness created colorful, joyous paintings, as well as environmental artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, who created The Gates in New York, an installation designed to help inspire the city to move forward and find joy following the September 11 attacks.

Project: Look Up also borrowed elements from Elizabeth's 2018 Shoreline Project, a similar moving art installation carried out in Laguna Beach with 1,000 volunteers moving illuminated umbrellas along the shore.

After extensive discussions about safety logistics and approval from Gardens Chief Executive Officer **Maureen Beith**, Elizabeth and staff prepared for the installation by sharing a series of weekly videos on the Gardens internal TV channel that explained her concept and vision and included detailed instructions of what the residents would do on the day of the event.

"It was important for us to actively reinvent community in safe ways," said Elizabeth. "I'm so appreciative that the Gardens community let me bring this project to campus."

The Day of Project: Look Up

Resident **Dick Newton** woke up on November 12, 2020, the day of Project: Look Up, eager for the art experience to begin.

"I had been looking forward to the event for a long time," said Dick. "I had watched the training videos, and I couldn't wait to see our campus and our community."

Anticipation grew exponentially as the residents picked up their beautiful umbrellas and face masks, designed specifically for the project by Elizabeth Turk and gifted to all participants by her non-profit, ET Projects. Each of four designs incorporated images of flora that blossom after times of stress, representing strength and fortitude: fireweed, poppies, lodgepole pine, ginkgo and coneflower.

Gardens resident **Anne Henley** also felt hopeful: "I was eager to get started, knowing that we had something different and unusual to do." "Elizabeth said, 'You're like the canvas and the umbrellas are the

The four umbrella designs were based on images of strength and fortitude.

Fireweed Plant: The fireweed plant is often the first colonizer in the soil after a forest fire.

Poppy: The poppy flourished in the most devastated battlefield regions after World War I.

Ginkgo and Lodgepole Pine: The Ginkgo tree, which can live for a thousand years, is a symbol of longevity and endurance. The Lodgepole pine cone requires heat and fire to melt resin and release its seeds to reproduce."

Coneflower: The coneflower, also known as echinacea, is said to ease maladies and to keep spirits strong during turbulent times.



Gardens residents Grace Clark, Doreen Maas, and Martha Lewis meticulously manicured the cutting garden for Project: Look Up. Their selection of plants and tender, daily care produced an explosion of complimentary colors on the day of the event. The finished product in action is shown on the right.



Elizabeth's idea was to capture an aerial view of moving, multi-colored umbrellas to create the illusion of a stained-glass window. Gardens participants would carry the umbrellas while Elizabeth's video production team filmed them with drones from above.



The putting green was magically transformed into a beautiful dance floor. Resident line dancers cast dramatic shadows as they moved in unison to "Heard it Through the Grapevine," while participants on the sidelines moved their umbrellas to the music.



Ten couples, each sharing one umbrella, danced to "Unchained Melody" and "Imagine." The moving lyrics of "Imagine" added to the warm and welcome sense of community.

surface. Other residents encircled the pool while opening and closing their umbrellas, creating the illusion of flowers blooming.

"I wanted to experience every part of the project, so I signed up to participate at every venue," said Gardens resident **Tom Henley**. "My favorite location was the swimming pool. I enjoyed seeing the shadows and designs that were cast inside and outside of the pool. It was beautiful."

The putting green, transformed into a dance floor, created a color visual from above as couples moved to the music of "Unchained Melody" by the Righteous Brothers. The dance floor was framed by scores of participants, sitting and standing in the surrounding meadow, moving their beautiful umbrellas to the music.

"The putting green was my favorite venue," said Gardens resident **Ethel Rogers**. "The couples danced so well, and I loved seeing how excited everyone was to be together."

On the Terrace patios residents and staff danced on the light pink concrete, creating beautiful combinations of umbrella colors. Couples danced on the ground floor to "Can't Help Falling in Love" by Elvis Presley while participants on the patio line danced to "Elvira" by the Oak Ridge Boys and "Sugar, Sugar" by the Archies. The warm sunlight and beautiful umbrellas combined with the music to produce an electric sense of joy and freedom among friends.

"My husband, **Ken**, and I couldn't miss the line dancing at the Terraces," said Gardens resident **Marian Brown**. "We were so happy to share that

paint," said Gardens resident **Judy Whiting**. "When the day came, that's exactly how I felt."

Dressed all in white, Gardens residents and staff—masked and physically distance—spent the day moving in tandem, dancing, swaying and spinning their umbrellas at six campus venues.

Elizabeth had loosely choreographed the movements to be performed at each location. Throughout the day, resident "Black Cap" volunteers, named for their black baseball caps, guided residents and staff on the venue-customized motions.

At the cutting garden, accompanied by "March of the Toy Soldiers" from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker, participants marched, proudly holding their umbrellas, in a single-file line between the rows of flower beds lovingly tended by the Resident Cutting Garden Committee. From above, the residents' unified movements created a colorful, serpentine design.

Residents at Oak Tree Lodge, the Gardens assisted living community, walked a path half-way around the treasured 300-year-old oak tree while Pharrell Williams's "Happy" played. For those who preferred to remain seated, staff set up chairs along the sidewalk.

At the pool, participants stepped into the water while carrying their umbrellas, creating a sharp contrast between the canopies and the turquoise

John Whiting (left), one of sixteen "black cap" volunteers, guided participants with instructions for safety, physical distancing, and umbrella movements. The swimming pool venue included "Bolero" and Charlie Parker jazz by live saxophone.



The open collaboration of ET Projects with Gardens staff and resident volunteers helped make Elizabeth's idea a reality.

ET Projects Team, Above left: Elizabeth Turk with ET Projects Operations Manager Jillian Gabrielli and Drone Videographer Erik Thiens. Above right: The Gallery Exhibits Committee took the lead in coordinating the first art immersion exhibit on the Gardens campus. Front row seated: Ardy's Hunter, Jane Park Wells, Jeanne Kennedy, Judy Whiting; Back row standing: Donn Fry, Lola Taylor, Connie Black, Kitty Schulte, Joe Kelly; Not pictured: Chuck Kerchner



experience with each other, our friends and our neighbors."

At the end of the day, residents and staff gathered at the circle parking lot for the grand finale. Participants, initially grouped by umbrella color, wove in between umbrellas of other colors while Frank Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night" and "New York, New York," "Happy" by Pharrell Williams, "Empire State of Mind" by Alicia Keys, "Uptown Funk" by Bruno Mars and "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong played.

"Thinking about the end of the day, when we were all at the parking lot, makes me tearful," said Gardens resident **Jane O'Donnell**. "People were joyful and at the same time couldn't hold back their tears. At one point, Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" began to play and stirred many memories. It was hard to say goodbye."

Collaboration

The open collaboration of ET Projects with Gardens staff and resident volunteers helped make Elizabeth's idea a reality.

"Everyone involved was an incredible partner," said Elizabeth. "Their level of commitment was tremendous and really touched my heart."

"The Gallery Exhibits Committee made significant contributions to the project," said Kitty Schulte, Gardens resident and chair of the Gallery Exhibits Committee. The committee, which met regularly to discuss logistics and complete critical tasks, was instrumental to the success of the project.

Enthusiasm grew each week as Elizabeth created videos for residents that explained project logistics and other details. Gardens Club Council President Bob Rogers added to the anticipation by featuring the upcoming project in the weekly airing of the Mt. San Antonio Gardens Video Magazine.

Safety considerations were a team effort as well, from the initiation of the event through the day of the event.

Sixteen residents participated as "Black Cap" Volunteers to guide and ensure participants remained six feet apart at all times.

"Participating as a Black Cap volunteer made the event that much more special," said resident John Whiting.

"Our priority for the event was safety," said Gardens Director of Facilities Will Levitt who, with his team, assisted in preparing the campus,



Oak Tree Lodge resident Helena Kooiman and staff member Yolanda Barela Zepeda are ready for the big event. Helena is using the umbrella attachment that was specially designed so that residents with limited mobility could participate with ease.

Project: Look Up left a sense of hope and joy that made it easier for residents and staff to look toward a better tomorrow. The Gardens community was delighted that Elizabeth Turk would be sharing what she described as a "bouquet of positivity" with the world.

controlling traffic and supporting the film crew.

To ensure that residents with limited mobility could participate, Marketing Associate Denise Stevenson reached out to her family's local company, F-D-S Manufacturing Co., which generously donated time and materials to design and produce attachments that could secure the umbrellas to wheelchairs and walkers, allowing residents with limited mobility to participate with ease.

Life Enrichment Directors Lauren Flores and Marcy McCallister helped residents, who live in the Gardens skilled nursing and assisted living communities, participate in the project by scheduling photo shoots with their umbrellas and masks for Elizabeth to incorporate into her final production.

"The project created so much excitement and anticipation. It was wonderful to see our residents so happy," said Marcy.

Impact

Through the multiple layers of Project: Look Up, Elizabeth hoped to inspire positivity and to help instill a sense of strength, hope and resilience in the face of the adversity caused by the pandemic.

"I wanted to create something that could help lessen the disillusionment many of us had been feeling," said Elizabeth. "I wanted to help people look up."

Following the event, residents expressed feelings of happiness and bliss that many said flowed into the following days and weeks. Months later, the memory of the day still brings pure joy.

"The day of the event ended up being as uplifting and happy as I had imagined," said Gardens resident **Sharilyn Morell**.

Spirits lifted, residents express that the experience provided a welcome boost that has helped the community maintain hope during the pandemic.

"When you share an experience with others, you're bonded closer

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