

Testimonials about Senior Connections

From Residents.....

As one resident states, *"Videoconferencing at its best can be a first-class learning tool. I think it's amazing and enjoy videoconferencing with museum staff, scholars and experts in their field."*

In evaluations of the program, it was found to contribute to wellness for participating seniors and to encourage social activity. The typical elder in retirement communities attending the program is older than eighty, and 81% of residents surveyed attend the programs *"as often as possible."* They attend for a variety of reasons, including *"learning something interesting and new"* and *"as a social and learning experience."* 85% of residents *"love the convenience of having the programs delivered on-site,"* and about 50% of residents participate in the follow-up field trips. 98% would like to participate in the off-site trips, but at times are unable to because of mobility or health reasons.

From Marketing & PR staff.....

"Today's active retirees want to enjoy a healthy life span, and they're looking for retirement communities where they can continue to grow intellectually. That's why we have created a "virtual university" environment here at Laurel Lake, through a combination of stimulating lectures, professionally taught courses, and educational field trips focusing on the arts, current events, the sciences, religion, and other disciplines.

The centerpiece of our lifelong learning center, *Distance Learning with University Circle*, brings live, interactive videoconference programs to Laurel Lake in collaboration with the world-class museums and educational institutions of University Circle, Inc. From a marketing perspective, these programs are fantastic! Not only do they contribute to high satisfaction levels among our current residents, but they also provide a steady stream of diverse, fascinating educational content to share with our Discovery Club members and the general public. They help us build strong relationships with our client base, resulting in positive *"word of mouth,"* more referrals, and even move-ins. Opening these educational programs free of charge to the public also supports Laurel Lake's mission as a not-for-profit organization. This program has been a winner for Laurel Lake on so many levels!"

- Donna Anderson, Advertising/Public Relations Coordinator
Laurel Lake Retirement Community (Hudson, OH)

From Activity and Wellness Directors.....

Can you briefly discuss the benefits of bringing the life-long videoconferencing initiative from University Circle to your campus or facility? Why is life-long learning important?

"We strive to offer holistic learning opportunities on campus programming balanced with off-campus opportunities. Our residents have a desire to continue to learn and grow in intellect. Participation in lifelong learning is encouraged as one intervention for depression and loneliness and believe social learning contributes to a resident's overall cognitive health and their quality of life. We average 50 residents in attendance and the weeks we do not have a program the residents are very disappointed."

- Jackie Palmer, Activity Coordinator, Independent Living, Copeland Oaks (Sebring, OH)

“The video conferencing initiative from University Circle adds a dimension of learning to our campus that was not being addressed through any other means. The variety of programs and topics is appealing and attractive to our resident population who is well-travelled, had successful careers, is well-educated, and most importantly has never lost their personal quest for knowledge. The best part is having the ability to work closely with Distance Learning Manager to establish the best fit for our residents.”

- *Susan Busko, Director of Health & Wellness, Laurel Lake Retirement Community (Hudson, OH)*

“Videoconferencing allows our participants to gain a greater depth & understanding of the monthly topics presented. Having the opportunity to learn from the experts on-site is beyond the scope of our ability. Using this inclusive technology, we can bring the experts to the seniors. An added bonus of videoconferencing is to have two-way real-time communication, enhancing learning in real-time. Coupling this learning with a related field trip enables participants to apply what they have learned and feel that it is relevant in their personal lives and community.”

- *Jill Frankel, Executive Director, Solon Senior Center (Solon, OH)*

“Most of our residents are interested in learning about new things and enjoying new experiences. It keeps them informed, keeps their minds working and provides social opportunities for engagement. Our residents are able to participate in wonderful programming through University Circle without ever having to leave our campus. They are able to invite their friends and family members to attend these programs along with them. It is truly an added benefit to living at Rockynol, which makes it a great marketing tool for us. We are currently the only long term care facility in Akron utilizing this initiative.”

- *Debbie Collier, Wellness Coordinator, Rockynol, Ohio Presbyterian Retirement System (Akron, OH)*

Is there an experience with a resident or participant you could relate about a past program that was memorable you could share with us?

“There have been a number of programs where we have had residents attend who have personal experience with the subject matter. That greatly enhances the discussion and question/answer aspect of the program because of this connection. A number of residents have told me that they always learn something new from each presentation.”

- *Debbie Collier, Wellness Coordinator
Rockynol, Ohio Presbyterian Retirement System (Akron, OH)*

“The Silk Road Program this past fall was wonderful. We had a resident in attendance who had done extensive travel in the regions of the Silk Road. It was wonderful to see the resident sharing her experience with other residents following the program.

The Euclid Beach Program brought back significant memories for many of our residents. Following one of the programs, residents shared books, pictures and memorabilia from Euclid Beach.

Many of our residents enjoyed the programs presented about the Transcontinental Railroad. Because of the programming, we made a visit to a local Model Railroad Club. The residents really enjoyed their visit and have been invited to participate in the Club. Our male residents especially enjoyed this programming choice.”

- *Jackie Palmer, Activity Coordinator, Independent Living
Copeland Oaks (Sebring, OH)*

"Mrs. C., a regular attendee returned from concert, which was preceded by a video-conference session with a smile on her face. She informed me that she had been a season ticket-holder for many years but had never enjoyed a concert as much as she had that day. When asked what made the difference, she responded "understanding". She went on to explain that the video-conference prior to the concert gave her a depth of understanding of the composer and the concerto, helping her to understand why and what was occurring throughout the performance."

- *Jill Frankel, Executive Director
Solon Senior Center (Solon, OH)*

"One of our residents who was an avid adventurer for most of her life is still cognitively engaged, but unable to travel due to a chronic disease which has left her in a wheel chair. She loves any of the programs that go somewhere wild to tell a story. She is particularly fond of the animal programs we have done in Minnesota and Alaska with timber wolves and sea lions that include live web-cams. These educators give a true *Window on the World* to someone whose world is smaller and quieter in their 80's, but are still able to vividly remember their earlier times of adventure. Videoconferencing is the touchstone for them to recall that part of their lives."

- *Susan Busko, Director of Health & Wellness
Laurel Lake Retirement Community (Hudson, OH)*