

# VillaVoice

News for friends of Villa Gardens Retirement Community

SPRING 2021

## COVID-19 Vaccine Arrives at Villa Gardens *Residents continue safety protocols in anticipation of return to normalcy*

The big day had finally come! The COVID-19 vaccine arrived at Villa Gardens in late January and residents “took their shot” at stopping the virus in its tracks.

“The vaccines are a first step in moving our community back to a semblance of normalcy in 2021,” said Executive Director Paula Digerness. “We are surrounded by appreciative residents. I could not be happier with the large turnout of residents and staff receiving the vaccine. Villa Gardens prides itself on looking out for each other. We are a

community that loves, cares and actively lives life well even during challenging times.”

As Villa Gardens faces a brighter future, the community looks forward to re-opening many of its in-person social opportunities as well as indoor dining in its Craftsman-inspired dining room. Until then, the creativity, ingenuity and spirit of innovation of the Villa Gardens staff finds ways to

safely engage our residents. Villa offers dozens of life enrichment opportunities on a weekly basis

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*A resident receives her COVID-19 vaccine.*

## Limited Time Offer: \$15K Your Way!



If you reserve your new residence before June 30, 2021, we are offering you a **\$15,000 move-in incentive to use your way.\***

We offer month-to-month and entrance fee options for your new Villa Gardens home so you may choose one of the incentives below.

- **\$15,000 off your entrance fee**
- **\$1,500 off your monthly fee for 10 months**

You can even move in while your house is on the market. Ask us about our [Entrance Fee Deferral Program](#). Ask us for more information by calling **626.463.5300**.

*\*Restrictions may apply and this offer is only available for a limited time. Cannot be combined or replace other promotional specials.*

# Villa's Popular Read-Aloud Program Goes Virtual: *Residents video record themselves reading aloud to the delight of community*

A poem by Robert Frost, a grandfather's letters to his family, a children's book adults can enjoy, a family memoir, excerpts from a novel, the humor of Robert Benchley or the tales of Mark Twain. These are just a few examples of works residents have read aloud to each other.

Villa's traditional Read-Aloud events began more than a decade ago when a small groups of friends would occasionally meet in the Villa Gardens library and enjoy their favorite books. One day, resident Edith Grady posed the question to the group ... wouldn't it be fun to read aloud to each other? The group embraced the suggestion and enjoyed either taking a turn or just listening.

"There is something relaxing about hearing other people read to you and when it's people you know, it's an additional delight," said resident Winnie Reitnauer, who has chaired the Read-Aloud committee for the past three years. "It's exciting to learn new things, reminisce and just be entertained by good stories and storytelling. The variety of selections never ceases to amaze me. Our residents are interested in a variety of subjects so they just love it."

Soon, the "Read-Alouds," as residents call them, became so popular, a larger space was needed to host the quickly expanding group. The Villa Vista room, a large community room on campus, was able to host upwards of 40 residents who would

meet monthly.

Then in the spring of 2020, COVID-19 hit, and many of Villa's group activities transitioned to virtual or socially distanced events and the Read-Aloud program moved on to its next phase.

"We put our thinking caps on and developed a new way to keep the program going safely," Winnie said. "We decided to try something new with the help of the Villa Gardens staff."

"Villa residents have taken on the challenge that pandemic has brought to us and have adapted to changing conditions," Winnie said. "Adapting the Read-Aloud program is just one example of



Resident Lois Harrison records her Read-Aloud selection.

the spirit of our community." Visit the Villa Gardens website at [villagardens.org](http://villagardens.org) and click the YouTube icon on the top right to search for the Read-Aloud videos.

## Registered Nurse, Resident Ann Grant Impressed with Villa's Response to Pandemic

As a registered nurse and nursing instructor, who holds a Ph.D. in nursing science, resident Ann Grant is well versed in infectious disease protocols. And as a Villa Gardens resident, she understands how vital it is for continual engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"From what I have experienced here since February 2020 when I moved in, is that Villa Gardens is doing all the right things to keep residents safe *and* engaged," Ann said. "Staff are all very professional. I was particularly impressed with the Wellness Center's nursing staff and the support they give residents during this time. As a nurse, that made a big impression on me."

Ann is a very social person and when she moved in, she was looking forward to a full social calendar. But in less than a month, Villa, along with the rest of the world, "shut down" and had to creatively rethink the way it operated. Everything from delivering meals to residents' apartments to adapting popular in-person life enrichment opportunities to virtual or socially distanced events, were a challenge but something Ann appreciated.

"After the lockdown began, I soon realized I was so happy to be here," Ann said. "Sure, we do things a little differently but there has been no shortage of interaction. Unbelievably, it's been a very active time here, despite the pandemic. If I had to endure a pandemic, I'm very glad I could do so with the support of Villa Gardens where our healthcare is paramount, and where all our needs are supported. I'm confident in saying that I'm safer and happier at Villa Gardens than I would have been if I had stayed at my previous home."

While the world slowly returns to normal, Ann

is looking forward to picking up her social life where she left off. In the meantime, she continues to enjoy exercise classes from her balcony, Villa's closed circuit TV channel that offers an abundance of opportunities and meetings with Villa's in-house senior advocate group on Zoom.

Ann holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, a Master of Arts degree in education, a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing and a Ph.D. in nursing science from The University of Texas at Austin. And most recently she completed an Associate of Arts degree in art history. She enjoys writing, art, music and is a devoted supporter of the Villa Gardens library – one of the many reasons she made the decision to move to Pasadena's premier retirement community.

Ann has taught at private colleges, community colleges and public universities in the United States and in Europe, including teaching for more than 40 years within the California State University system, where she is currently employed. She is also a researcher and an author. Ann is currently teaching an online class on nursing research design.

Her daughter, Mary, and family live in Pasadena, and Ann looks forward to bringing her family to Villa Gardens for Sunday dinners in the future, as the slow journey to normalcy continues. She also looks forward to working out in the solarium gym, attending community concerts and continuing to edit the weekly *Tales from Fortress Villa* resident newsletter.

"I look forward to seeing my friends and neighbors without their masks in the future and I know Villa is doing everything they can to make that happen as soon as possible," Ann said.



Ann Grant applauds Villa's efforts during the pandemic.

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that nourish the body, mind and spirit, opportunities that may be difficult to find living in your current home.

“Art in Your Apartment” allows residents to remain in their homes and explore their inner artist. Balcony exercises keep residents fit and engaged but socially distanced. And Home-delivered meals provide joy even as residents look forward to getting together once again in the dining room when it reopens.

Residents enjoy quality entertainment through a variety of mediums. Recently, residents enjoyed performances by renowned pianists, a speaker series about the 19th Amendment (women’s right to vote) and Zoom discussions about current events.

Until the pandemic passes, Villa Gardens has adapted to a new community life that maintains safety while it continues to foster vibrancy. Staff takes all the necessary precautions to sanitize and effectively mitigate the risk that comes with



*Colorful flowers means spring has arrived at Villa Gardens.*

community living. Peace of mind is priceless for both residents and their families, especially during these challenging times.

Villa Gardens is open for move-in and offers virtual tours. Call **626-463-5300** today for more information. Or if you would rather keep up to date with Villa Gardens online, visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/Villa Gardens Retirement Community](https://facebook.com/VillaGardensRetirementCommunity), or [villagardens.org](http://villagardens.org).



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