

Delta variant

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example, if they're pregnant — who don't want to get vaccinated. We have one employee who refused on a religious basis," she said. "Fortunately they are not someone who interacts with our residents. In California, you can't require (vaccines) or discriminate based on it. All you can do is try to address the conditions that lead (employees) to say no."

The March 2020 outbreak at Cedar Crest came after an asymptomatic but infected nursing assistant reported to work. Cases went from zero to 38 residents in 12 days, peaking at 44, Murray said.

The outbreak hit early in the pandemic — even before the Santa Clara County mask mandate — when precautions were not well understood, Tracie Murray said in an interview last year with the insurance risk-management firm Health-Cap. One-third of residents who tested positive were asymptomatic and half of the positive staff members were asymptomatic.

Murray said her mother engaged a construction team to build a temporary wall, creating an isolation unit containing a nursing station, break room and staff bathroom. She rented an RV so staff members could

shower before going home. She posted signs inside the building to ensure that food and laundry from the COVID-19 unit did not come into contact with the rest of the floor.

"Mom was very smart to ask the county if COVID-19-positive staff could work in the COVID-19 unit if they didn't have symptoms. They said yes, and later suggested it to other facilities," Murray said.

A single person was tasked with communicating with families so clinical staff could focus on patient care. A simple binder system was established to quickly record and track any and all coronavirus-related events, including test results, communication and guidance.

Seven weeks after the first reported coronavirus case at the center, Cedar Crest was declared coronavirus free.

"We were asked to run a COVID-19 unit for other facilities in the county that had outbreaks but could not manage their own COVID unit," Murray said.

Though still under significant COVID-19 precautions, Murray said things have "relaxed a lot from where we were at the height of the pandemic when we couldn't have visitors and residents couldn't be in the hallways."

The California Department of Public Health issued new guidance in March allowing

vaccinated nursing home and long-term care residents to receive indoor and in-room visitors following a yearlong lockdown.

"From a residents' perspective we've definitely come a long way to have activities and communal dining," she said. "Most facilities are even letting residents go out on a pass if their loved ones want to take them to dinner or something."

The lockdown took a particular toll on long-term residents who were not even permitted to leave their rooms to go into the hallway or visit with a neighbor, she said. To try to keep them "oriented to reality and to time passing," Murray said she solicited photos from families and brought them to the residents' rooms along with balloons or flowers.

And while COVID-19 cases in long-term care facilities are at historic lows since the start of the pandemic, many providers are struggling to recover from the economic crisis the pandemic has induced.

According to a national survey released in June by the American Health Care Association, a Washington, D.C., advocacy group for thousands of for-profit and nonprofit facilities, only a quarter of nursing homes said they're confident they'll make it through to next year.

More than half said they're

operating at a loss due to fewer residents as well as extra expenses, including additional staff pay because of COVID-19.

Murray and Heap said their nursing homes will survive. Both said they are now especially focused on helping their staff feel supported after the crisis.

"I know our ability to care for patients is good," Heap said. "Our motto is to uplift, nurture and heal, and we believe if we do that first, success in other ways will follow." ■

Email Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick at ckenrick@pawekly.com.



With no uniform response in place for skilled-nursing centers at the start of the pandemic, Cedar Crest Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Sunnyvale developed its own walled-off COVID-19 unit and was later asked to run a unit for other facilities in Santa Clara County.

Grand Re-Opening Celebration!

Saturday, August 28, 10am-2pm

Please join us in our newly refurbished Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center and see where we put our day-caring skills to work.



- Enjoy refreshments
- Entertainment
- Facility tours
- And a chance to win door prizes

Admission is free but RSVP required. To reserve your spot, schedule a specific time for your tour or ask any questions about the event, please email Susan Lam at slam@avenidas.org or call (650) 289-5499.

Avenidas
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Quality day-caring for Your Aging Loved One!
For everyone's safety, social distancing and masks are required (masks will be available).

For complete schedule or info about Avenidas events, call 650-289-5400

Living Well

AUGUST

2021

Calendar of Events

Aug 2
Tech and Innovation Discussion Group via Zoom
12-1pm, on Mondays. For info or to register email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

Aug 3
Apple Tech Tutoring
1:15-3:30pm, on Tuesdays. RSVP required. Email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

Aug 4
Mindfulness Meditation
Every Wednesday, 2-3pm, via Zoom. Visit www.Avenidas.org for log on information. Free.

Aug 5
Avenidas Village Coffee Chat
10am via Zoom. Email dgreenblat@avenidas.org to register. Free.

Wonder Women Lesbian Social Group via Zoom
3-4pm via Zoom. Email jenn@seniorshowerproject.com for info and to register. Free.

Aug 6
Avenidas Rainbow Collective presents: AARP Brain Health Workshop
Learn the Six Pillars of Brain Health and Learn About Music's Relationship with the Brain via Zoom, 12-1pm. Email lgbtq@avenidas.org for info and log on information. Free

Aug 9
Bilingual Workshop: Know the 10 Signs – Early Detection Matters presented by the Alzheimer's Association via Zoom
1-2pm. Presented in English and Mandarin. RSVP for log on info ACCC@avenidas.org. Free.

Aug 10
Techie Tuesdays Explore Tech Lectures
2-3:15pm, on Tuesdays. For information or to register email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

Aug 11
Book Club: Caste: The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah
2:30-4pm, Avenidas@450Bryant. Space is limited. RSVP required. Email register@avenidas.org. Free.

Aug 12
Info Session: ClearCaptions Advanced Telephone Captioning
11am-12pm via Zoom. RSVP for log on info to register@avenidas.org. Free.

Song Appreciation Group "Your Favorite Song to Make Love To"
4-5pm via Zoom. Email tkingery@avenidas.org for more info and to register. Free.

Aug 13
Blame Someone Else Day
(First Friday the 13th of the Year)

Aug 16
Webinar: New to Medicare with HICAP via Zoom
1:30-3pm. RSVP for log on info register@avenidas.org. Free.

Aug 17
Wonder Women Lesbian Social Group via Zoom
7-8pm via Zoom. Email jenn@seniorshowerproject.com for info and to register. Free.

Aug 18
Hosting A Zoom Meeting
11am-12pm, on Wednesdays, Senior Planet@Avenidas. RSVP to rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org for log on information. Free.

Aug 19
Avenidas Village Coffee Chat
10am via Zoom. Email dgreenblat@avenidas.org to register. Free.

Tinnitus Support Group
5:30-7:30pm via Zoom. RSVP for log on info to register@avenidas.org. Free.

Aug 20
Lemonade Day
Use fresh squeezed lemons and add some strawberries for sweetness!

Aug 23
Money Mondays Explore Tech Lectures
2-3:15pm, on Mondays. For information or to register email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

Aug 24
Getting Started on Zoom
11am-12pm, on Tuesdays. Senior Planet@Avenidas. RSVP to rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org for log on information. Free.

Aug 25
Wellness Wednesdays Explore Tech Lectures
2-3:15pm, on Wednesdays. For information or to register email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

Aug 26
Book Club: Couldn't Keep it to Myself by Wally Lamb
2:30-4pm, via Zoom. RSVP for log on info to register@avenidas.org. Free.
Song Appreciation Group "Your Favorite Song to Listen to in the Morning"
4-5pm via Zoom. Email tkingery@avenidas.org for more info and to register. Free.

Aug 27
Workshop series: Creating a Lasting Legacy, 3-part workshop with Liza Hanks
10-11am via Zoom. Dates: 8/27, 9/24, and 10/29. RSVP required for log on info. Email: register@avenidas.org. Free.

Aug 28
Avenidas Rose Kleiner Grand Re-Opening
10am-2pm. RSVP required. Call Email slam@avenidas.org or call 650-289-5499. Free.

Aug 29
Silicon Valley Pride meet up
RSVP required. Email lgbtq@avenidas.org for details.

Aug 30
Apple Tech Tutoring
1-2pm, and 3-4pm, on Mondays. RSVP required. Email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

Aug 31
Eat Outside Day
Enjoy an al fresco meal today!

Senior Focus

HIKING GROUP ... The Avenidas Hikers meet every Thursday for a **moderate hike followed by lunch.** Participants should be comfortable with hikes ranging from 3 to 8 miles on uneven surfaces with elevation gains between 300 and 1,000 feet. August itineraries include El Corte De Madera Creek Preserve, Pescadero Marsh and Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. For more information, go to avenidas.org (search for "hikes" under "Classes and Activities").

NEW TO MEDICARE? ... Certified volunteers with the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program will present **a free introduction for Santa Clara County residents entering the world of Medicare.** The Zoom presentation, scheduled for Monday, Aug. 16, from 1:30 to 3 p.m., will cover Medicare Part A, Part B, Medigap/Supplemental Insurance, Part D and Medicare Advantage Plans. Volunteers with the counseling program are not affiliated with any insurance companies and do not sell or endorse any particular plan. Pre-registration is required. To register for a Zoom link, email register@avenidas.org.

ALZHEIMER'S, DEMENTIA UPDATE ... The Community Conversation series at

the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center will sponsor a free, virtual talk on **research and advances in treatments for Alzheimer's disease and dementia** from 1 to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 24. Claire Day, chief program officer for the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California and Northern Nevada, will discuss the landscape of Alzheimer's and dementia science, clinical trials, lifestyle interventions, controversies surrounding the recently approved drug aducanumab and more. To register for a Zoom link, contact Michelle Rosengaus at mrosengaus@paloaltojcc.org.

RAINBOW COLLECTIVE ... The Avenidas Rainbow Collective will sponsor **many activities for LGBTQ seniors and their friends** in August. Events include a skin care presentation from a dermatologist, a lesbian social group, a gay men's walking group, a session on brain health and music, a song appreciation group and more. For information, email LGBTQ@avenidas.org or go to avenidas.org and search "events."

Items for Senior Focus may be emailed to Palo Alto Weekly Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick at ckerrick@paweekly.com.



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