

suburban life

Carefully designed safety protocols and a little ingenuity enable residents of **Dunwoody Village** to enjoy days filled with beauty, camaraderie, and personal enrichment.
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Not Missing a Beat

The past several months have brought changes, both big and small, to all of us. Students, teachers, office employees, workers in the food and service industries, and health-care professionals have all had to reimagine life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Going about our daily lives has required a heightened degree of vigilance in order to protect others and ourselves.

Just like everyone else, residents at Dunwoody Village have had to adjust to a new way of life. As a continuing care retirement community in Newtown Square that provides independent residential homes, personal care, and skilled nursing, Dunwoody Village has many protocols in place to provide as safe an environment as possible for Dunwoody residents. Ingenuity on the part of both residents and staff has enabled Dunwoody Village to not only

by MONICA KNAUSS | photography by JODY ROBINSON

provide for the residents' needs, but also make life more meaningful despite the facemasks, social distancing, and sheltering in place.

"Our residents are among the most vulnerable with regard to COVID-19, and we take seriously our responsibility to provide as safe an environment as possible for our residents and staff," says Kathy Barton, Dunwoody's director of operations. "At the same time, we are continually looking at what we can offer in terms of programs and opportunities, while still maintaining that safe environment."

Residents have seen many changes since the start of the pandemic. Staff members are delivering meals to residents' homes. Exercise classes are being held in an empty auditorium and broadcast live over the closed-circuit channel. Library books are being distributed and retrieved

door to door. Residents' Association committee meetings are held via Zoom. Also, although visitation has been restricted, family members have been able to drop off items for residents that are then delivered by staff members, and window visits allow face-to-face conversation while maintaining a safe environment.

"Our staff have been tremendous about being flexible and finding creative ways to meet our residents' needs, both short-term and long-term," says Barton. "And although everyone would love to be able to go back to the way things were, our residents have, by and large, been understanding."

With the arrival of warmer weather, many residents have taken to the outdoors. Dunwoody's 83 acres provide an abundance of activities for residents to do while maintaining a safe physical distance. Hiking trails offer a quiet refuge for those who

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choose to meander off the beaten path. Pet owners congregate at the dog park. Golf putting greens have been reconfigured to enable two individuals to practice their swing at the same time.

“When everything seemed to be falling apart this past spring, and I felt totally stressed out, the one thing I could count on to calm me down was to take a walk outside,” says Dunwoody resident Stella Gabuzda. “Seeing our gorgeous big trees and lush green grounds and hearing so many birds chirping all around provided me with a reliable ‘reset’ button.”

Chairs have been strategically set in several areas so that residents are able to socialize in a safe manner, providing opportunities for friends to visit safely—to chat, discuss what they have been reading, or even do some yoga together.

“Joining with friends on a beautiful

day on a beautiful campus certainly does wonders to those of us who have been quarantined for so long,” muses resident Peggy McEwen. “Just listening to the birds and enjoying a cool breeze while doing our yoga is a wonderful distraction, and lifts our spirits as we connect and share fun and laughter for a few hours.”

Daily life may look and feel a little different at the moment, and that will likely remain the case for a while longer—but life goes on at Dunwoody Village. Whether they're taking regular walks, reading books in the shade, or tending to patio gardens, residents continue to enjoy active days filled with beauty, camaraderie, and personal enrichment. They can do so because they have the confidence of knowing they live in a close-knit community that places the highest priority on their health, safety, and peace of mind. ■



DUNWOODY VILLAGE

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