

A Milestone Birthday Parade

On June 14th, VIVA Oakville celebrated a Community Member's 95th birthday with a birthday parade of friends and family right outside the Community with vehicle drive-bys, music, dancing, and cake (of course)! Happy Birthday, Paul; and thank you to all who attended!



Driving by with a birthday message.



Waving hello to the parade.

Knitting for a Cause

As English writer John Heywood once said: "Many hands make light work!" VIVA Oakville's Knitting Club did just that, and gave back to those in need at the same

time. Each member of our Knitting Club crafted a single square and affixed them together to make blankets for those in need. Thank you for your dedication!



V!VAoice

VIVA Retirement Communities
OAKVILLE

July 2020

Your VIVA Community Newsletter

Due to the ongoing pandemic, there is no events calendar. Please speak to your Community's Lifestyles Team to learn more about what's happening at your Community this month!



Pints! Pub Now Open!

It's the moment we have all been waiting for and it did not come a moment too soon. VIVA Oakville has officially acquired its liquor license, meaning our on-site Pints! Pub is open for business! Our Community Members joined us for the first drinks on June 1st, and we have been enjoying Happy Hour ever since. Drop on by for our specialty drink, *the Quarantini*, in this beautiful sun filled space. Please sign up with Concierge.



Snacks, cheers, and cold beers, are ready and waiting for you at Pints! Pub.

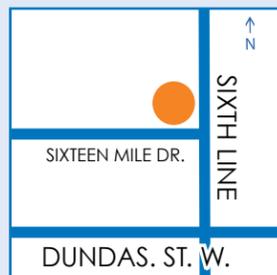
Big-screen BEANO!

After a several month hiatus, VIVA Oakville is excited to be able to offer our BEANO program yet again. Keeping a physical distance, Community Members were excited as they lined up to grab their spots.

No one cared whether they won, lost or tied; what mattered is we were all able to participate together. If you are interested in joining in BEANO games, please sign up with Concierge.



BEANO in the V!VAp!ex Theatre.



Making Today Great!

VIVA Oakville Retirement Community
1 Sixteen Mile Drive, Oakville, ON L6M 1P3
vivalife.ca (289) 725-6000 Find us on



Copyright VIVA Retirement Communities Corporation 2020



The Benefits of Gardening for Seniors

Summer is here, and so is gardening season! Our Community Members couldn't be happier to get their hands dirty again, because the Victory Garden is a big part of *Making Today Great!* at VIVA Retirement Communities. We sat down with Laura Moon, the Lifestyles Manager at VIVA Whitby Shores, to chat about the benefits of gardening for seniors, and VIVA's pioneering Victory Garden concept.

Hi Laura. What are the benefits of gardening for seniors?

Gardening is great for many reasons. Physically, gardening is beneficial for everybody, but particularly for seniors. It keeps fine motor skills honed. Digging, pulling weeds, and opening packages are great tasks for certain types of arthritis to reduce inflammation in your knuckles, and throughout your hands. Those fine motor skills also keep fingers nimble, which is particularly important for what we call 'Activities of Daily Living' such as doing up the buttons of a shirt, using zippers, or opening cans or jars. Also, reaching and bending over those garden beds helps with flexibility. We sweat a little, too, which means the blood is pumping, so gardening is good for circulation and our cardiovascular system. And finally, there can be a little lifting too when safe, with bags of soil.

Wow, that sounds pretty intense!

Not really. Gardening is a gentle activity that isn't as overwhelming as an exercise class. When I ask new Community Members what they've done in the past to stay active, many will tell me 'taking care of my yard and garden'. It doesn't feel like they're working out, but they really are. They'll be out in the garden for a little bit every day, getting their recommended 30 minutes of exercise. At the very least, they're getting their vitamin D from the sun!

So, those are the physical benefits. What other kinds of benefits for seniors does gardening provide?

There are mental and emotional benefits as well. Watching something grow that you've planted and nurtured can provide an individual with a renewed sense of purpose, responsibility, and accomplishment. There is also a social aspect that brings people together, particularly when it comes to VIVA's Victory Gardens.

Can you share a bit more about those Victory Gardens?

Sure! The name Victory Garden is borrowed from the efforts of civilians in Canada during World War II to help with food supplies while the battles were taking place overseas. VIVA has taken this idea of gardening for the common good and designed each of its Communities with a Victory Garden as the focus of the outdoor space. The gardens are built to be senior-friendly with raised garden beds and built-in areas for seating. This allows for easier, ache-free access to the plants and vegetation. Community Members work together to grow flowers to decorate their suites and our amenities, while the fruits and vegetables grown are shared with our Culinary Team to use in their VIVALicious recipes.

The entire Community gets to enjoy the literal fruits – and veggies! – of their labour!

Yes, exactly! It helps us follow through on VIVA's mission to create a place where people can live, laugh, and love. People have connected who otherwise might not have. I've seen Community Members who, since they've moved in, haven't really spoken to one another, but now that we all garden together, we'll end a day of planting or pruning at *Perks!*, our Community's Bistro Café, chatting over a coffee or tea. It's a lot of fun and very rewarding.

How does the Victory Garden address those physical challenges that come with aging?

The Victory Garden brings our Community Members back to something that they used to that perhaps became too difficult in their house. Perhaps the yard wasn't level posing a slip, trip or fall risk. The Victory Garden is paved and flat, which makes it easier for our Community Members to walk on, or use their wheelchair or walker. Perhaps bending over, crouching or kneeling is difficult. The Victory Garden has raised garden beds so if Community Members had vertigo or back issues, they no longer have to worry. We even have garden beds at a few different heights to accommodate Community Members in walkers and wheelchairs.

That sounds like it ties in to the emotional benefits you mentioned.

It sure does. Many Community Members go from missing the ability to do something they loved, to being overjoyed. That is one of the best parts of what the Victory Garden can offer: enabling people to do what they love. Recently, we had one Community Member share that she dearly misses her garden at her old house. She had not yet attended one of our gardening programs, so upon hearing this, the other Community Members invited her to join them and she was thrilled.

The social benefit of gardening manifested itself right away.

Exactly. And now she comes out at 4:30 every afternoon to water the garden. She hasn't done that in years. She has regained her sense of purpose. And that's important, especially to Community Members who are in Assisted Living who may love gardening. Nobody is excluded.

You're adding a whole new meaning to "all-inclusive" retirement living!

[Laughs] But it's true! For example, some Community Members who might not enjoy gardening can't leave the building for specific reasons. They might no longer drive or have family nearby to take them on outings. And some don't always come out on our shuttle bus. So, we offer a wide range of on-site events, programs and services. The Victory Garden stands out, however, because those Community Members can still enjoy the beauty of nature, and the sense of peace and calm that inevitably comes with simply taking a stroll through the garden.

That sounds delightful. Thanks for taking the time to chat, Laura!

You're welcome – and thank you!

To learn more about VIVA Retirement Communities or our Victory Gardens and gardening programs, please contact the VIVA Lifestyles Manager at your Community.

