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MEDIA ADVISORY

PINECREST COMMUNITY RECEIVES GRANT FOR INNOVATIVE ALZHEIMER'S COMMUNICATION PROJECT "COLOR ME A MEMORY"

For Immediate Release Mt. Morris, IL – (November 17, 2014) – Pincrest Community, a pioneer in elder and memory care in Northwest Illinois, has received a foundation grant to fund a specialized pilot program that seeks to help those with memory loss remember better through watercolor painting.

This memory-care residents' activity — called "Color Me a Memory" — at Pincrest Terrace, will be guided by a specially-trained art docent, Susie Frey, B.F.A., of Boulder, Colo. In addition, Roger Goodspeed, M.D., retired, of Freeport, Ill., an accomplished watercolor artist, is one of the several volunteers who will be working in the Pincrest pilot program. Ms. Frey is trained to teach those stricken with memory issues and will lead the project. The program is one of the first of its kind in Northwestern Illinois.



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"With Alzheimer's much has been lost, but much remains," Frey said. "The process of painting a picture leads to reminiscing and stories. Often, out comes a memory such as 'the time I took my scout troop to visit the liberty bell' or 'oh yes, we made May baskets every year, filling them with candy and delivering them to all the neighbors,' " she added. "The weekly art group is an amazing experience both the art facilitator and the Alzheimer artist share. The process of creating can take the artist to a place beneath the dementia and express a piece of who they are."

The A. Charles and Lillemor Lawrence Foundation, based in Chicago, committed to fully funding the pilot in October.

"We have all directly or indirectly been affected by Alzheimer's, either through a family member, good friend, co-worker, next door neighbor, or a casual acquaintance," said Ron Bry, a director with the funding foundation. "The A. Charles and Lillemor Lawrence Foundation is honored to help launch the 'Color Me A Memory' pilot program at the Pinecrest Community memory care center."

The grant was sought upon the request of Michelle DeArvil, the Terrace's director.

"This is something I always wanted for our residents. We want to do everything we can to help them retain their memories," DeArvil said. "We are grateful to the foundation for their funding."

The pilot's success will be determined by residents' indications of interest, joy and participation as observed through a variety of cues and it is hoped that the pilot will result in a publishable study. Jamie Mayer, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Associate Professor, Northern Illinois University's School of Allied Health & Communicative Disorders, is working on the pilot study which will be the best way to know if the program is beneficial. If it is, Pinecrest hopes to help facilitate the spread of the program to other memory care sites in Northwest Illinois.

"What I find so exciting about this type of research is that it dovetails with the strides rehabilitation professionals have made in the last decade or so regarding therapy possibilities for those with Alzheimer's disease and similar dementia types," Mayer said. "We now know that there are a number of activity-based protocols that can positively impact quality of life for individuals with dementia and encourage maintenance and utilization of cognitive and communicative skills," she said.

The Freeport Art Museum, where Dr. Goodspeed is affiliated, is watching the pilot with interest, said Jessica Modica, its executive director.

"We are very interested in the success of this program not only because one of our community's talented artists is involved but also because this is an exciting new project that we would be thrilled to help bring to Freeport," Modica said.