

ARARAT

H Y E L I G H T S

A Publication of Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc.®

Summer/Fall 2020

LIFE AT ARARAT HOME ADAPTING TO COVID-19

**Coronavirus - Safety - Guidelines - Restrictions - Uncertainty
Disinfection - Masks - Sanitizer - PPE - Distancing - Separation
Isolation - Loneliness - Video Chats - Window Visits - Commitment
Responsibility - Teamwork - Resilience - Togetherness**

These words have defined the norms of daily life at Ararat Home since March. The crisis that upended all of our lives at the beginning of this year presented extraordinary challenges to all long-term care facilities. And, Ararat Home's experience has been no different. From the initial scramble of implementing restrictions and operational changes, to securing supplies, disinfecting everything, and coping with uncertainty and anxiety, the early days were simply about survival.

Frequently changing industry guidelines and directives meant writing and rewriting facility-wide plans, implementing new protocols, training and re-training staff on new procedures, reporting constantly to federal, state and local public health agencies, and doing everything possible to prevent the coronavirus from entering the facilities; all, while explaining a difficult-to-comprehend situation to residents, maintaining



regular communication with their families, and finding ways to lessen the upheaval residents were experiencing in their lives.

The stringent measures put into action to protect residents'



physical health have consequently impacted their mental and emotional well-being. Restricted family visitations, halted communal meals and activities, the sight of caregivers donned in protective gear, and repeated room changes have disrupted residents' routines, isolated them from loved ones, separated them from each other, and created a loss of comfort and familiarity. Many have experienced confusion, fear, anxiety, loneliness and depression.

"From the beginning of the pandemic, with protecting the safety of residents and staff as our primary concern, our greatest challenge has been to adapt our operations and services without sacrificing the quality of care we provide to our residents," says Chief Operating Officer Derik Ghookasian. "Our entire Ararat Home team – activities,

administrative, dietary, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, nursing and support staff – has worked selflessly and tirelessly to ensure this."

The same quality of care, delivered differently

"Every team member has stepped up, cooperated with all types of new requirements, and gone above and beyond their duties to meet residents' needs," says Nursing Facility Executive Director Margarita Kechichian. For example, at our Nursing Facility and Convalescent Hospital, in the absence of in-person family visits, employees have stepped in to spend



more one-on-one, quality time with residents in their rooms. Whether it is to promote active engagement through playing games, reading, listening to music, and sharing stories or to provide reassurance with a brief chat or a touch of the hand, the bonds between employees and residents have strengthened, and the unique home-like environment that Ararat Home provides has solidified. At our Assisted Living Facility, with the discontinuation of residents' weekly





chapel prayer service

dining rooms closed, meals served to rooms

coffee hour

medication administration



bingo time



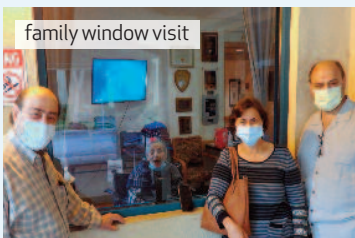
fun with masks

shopping trips, the *Ararat Home Marketplace* has been established. Stocked with residents' favorite items that are now shopped for by employees, the shopping experience many have missed has been brought home.

"Staff members have exhibited courage and grace and have most certainly shown what it means to rise to the occasion," says Assisted Living Facility Administrator Rita Noravian. As Ararat Home remains committed to the core value of providing care with compassion, employees have reaffirmed their commitment to residents with a renewed sense of purpose and sharing of responsibilities. This teamwork has been a collective effort toward one goal – ensuring the safety and well-being of residents. "The heroic efforts and exemplary dedication of our management and staff to the welfare of our beloved residents under these difficult circumstances has truly been commendable," says Board of Trustees Chair Joseph Kanimian, Esq.

A new sense of normalcy

Life at Ararat Home has surely been transformed. Smiles and love from family members are now delivered to residents through phone and tablet screens, care packages,



family window visit



family window visit



windows or from six-feet away across an outdoor table. Friends stroll together in the courtyard, sit spaced-apart at large tables, or meet at outdoor patios for physically-distanced group activities. The ballroom that used to host casual and formal community events now serves as a new dining room, bingo hall, social club and chapel.

With the easing of some restrictions on resident activities, the administration and staff remain proactive with preventive measures. Infection control assessments particularly focused on COVID-19 are routinely conducted by the California Department of Public Health and have repeatedly resulted in zero deficiencies showing compliance with all directives. Convalescent Hospital Administrator Christine Karapetian says, "This is a major testament to the diligence of our team and the ongoing effort we pour out each day to minimize risk."

Despite taking all possible precautions, Ararat Home facilities, like many others, have experienced several COVID-19 positive cases among residents as well as staff. This is the nature of this virus; very best efforts can only lower the risk of exposure and mitigate the spread, but cannot absolutely eliminate either. Nevertheless, with ongoing, regular, facility-



team spirit

wide testing of residents and staff and immediate isolation and quarantine of infected and exposed individuals, the facilities continue to work hard for best outcomes.

The challenges Ararat Home faces are eased by a spirit of togetherness, which has been made evident by so many expressions of support: blessings and words of gratitude from residents; cooperation, understanding, and messages of encouragement and thanks from families; and, from community members and organizations, notes of well wishes to staff and residents, sponsored lunches and care packages for employees, contributions of supplies, and much-appreciated donations to the Home that reaffirm the community's trust in our work.



"Thank you for your support!"

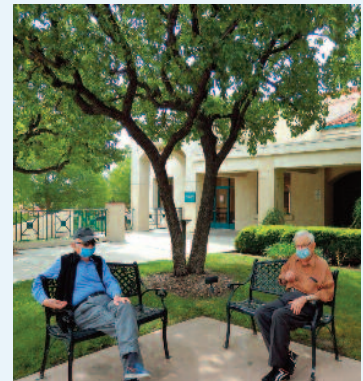
These past several months have reminded all of us that change is the only constant. We have become accustomed to frequent fluctuations in regulations and situations, and we have learned the importance of tackling challenges as they arise and then moving on. With help from the Ararat Home family and community, we have been building strength and resiliency.



prayer service and grape blessing



physically-distanced social hour



ARARAT HIGHLIGHTS

CO-EDITORS

DEBBIE AVEDIAN

ANI DIKRANIAN

DESIGN/LAYOUT

HOVSEP YERGATIAN



ARARAT HOME OF LOS ANGELES, INC.

15105 Mission Hills Road
Mission Hills, CA 91345

(818) 365-3000

info@ararathome.org
ararathome.org

Published by

Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc.®

© 2020 All copyrights reserved