

A Summer of Simplicity at Ferris Hills

Ferris Hills residents are indulging in simple pleasures, such as birdwatching, during a summer like no other.

A Perfect Pen Pal Pair-Up



Sybil Amico

When schools closed, visitor restrictions were imposed at retirement communities and all but essential workers were staying home, Ferris Hills Resident Services Manager Claire Watson brainstormed ways to keep residents entertained.

One was to send out a Facebook request to anyone who might be interested in becoming pen pals with residents. A number of letters came in, but one in particular was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

A first-grader from Naples began corresponding with retired first-grade teacher Sybil Amico, and the two remain pen pals, exchanging letters every week.

"This was a good idea Claire had, and I was really happy to do it," Sybil said. "He's delightful."

The boy draws pictures for Sybil and answers her questions regarding everything from his favorite subject in school to his favorite food. "He must love ice cream because he writes in great detail about the sundaes he has," she noted.

Claire knows the boy's mother and assures Sybil that once things return to normal, the two pen pals will meet in person. One thing is for sure – there will be lots of ice cream involved!

FERRIS HILLS & CLARK MEADOWS

Independent and Enriched Senior Living
One Ferris Hills, Canandaigua, NY 14424

Keep Calm and Garden On

At a time when restrictions are in place for the health and safety of all, many of those who make Ferris Hills at West Lake their home are blooming where they're planted.

The grounds are dotted with residents who are digging in the dirt, planting, weeding and watering as they make the 54-acre campus their canvas and indulge in what philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon once described as "the purest of human pleasures."

"From the hanging baskets on balconies to the raised beds and garden boxes, all are well kept and flourishing," said Resident Services Manager Claire Watson, noting that a bird sanctuary recently planted by residents will take time to establish "but the array of wildlife it already attracts is remarkable and is such a pleasure to sit by."



A gardener since she was a child, resident Muriel Coleman has lived at Ferris Hills for nine years. This summer, she's working with a Ferris Hills friend and fellow green thumb on maintaining five flower boxes as well as a large garden located along a

walking path on the west side of campus and created a few years ago by a fellow resident. The two women recently transplanted violets, buttercups, daisies and ajuga there.

"It gives you something to do and it gets you out in the sunshine," Muriel said.

While Muriel and her friend normally go out and personally select the items for their flower boxes each summer, this year they relied on others and "planted whatever we could get our hands on." Those kinds of disruptions to their familiar routines are something Muriel and fellow residents are taking in stride, however.

"It's like World War II: this too shall pass," said Muriel, who remembers helping with her family's victory garden during the war while her father – a physician – served on hospital ships.

And no matter what the circumstances, she added, "If you're a gardener, you want to garden."

"We might think that we are nurturing our garden, but of course it's our garden that's nurturing us."

- Jenny Uglow



A classic car cruise made its way through the Ferris Hills at West Lake campus on June 6, and on June 20 – the first day of summer – socially-distanced residents were treated to New Orleans-style jazz in the courtyard, courtesy of a band called Dixieland.



For more information about Ferris Hills at West Lake, call (585) 393-0410 today.