



# Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 1

Spring, 2005

## Special points of interest:

- Adaptive Gardening
- Kids and elders find common ground
- The latest on enhancements in North Carolina
- Aviaries aren't just for the birds

The Newsletter is a project of the N.C. Coalition for Long-Term Care Enhancement. To respond to articles, contact the editor: Kaye Brown, Ph.D. at Duke University, (919) 668-3348 or the Coalition at <alice@ltcenhance.com>. 1,150 copies of this public document have been printed at a cost of \$281.25 or \$0.24 per copy.

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## On Having Kids Next Door

By Jim Kempe, Ph.D.

My involvement with the kids began when I was the first new resident in Building 7. In fact, I chose the room to live in because it was adjacent to the garden and backed up to the kids' "racetrack". Before I committed to moving, I heard that others at Carol Woods were skeptical that this project would be successful. "What's a retirement community doing in the child care business?" residents asked. But I have learned from living here that many at Carol Woods disprove the myth that seniors fear new stuff. For every person here who was skeptical of the child-care center, there were others who looked forward to this new adventure, especially to having children next door.

The very young kids racing at breakneck speed on their tricycles around their race-track that backed up to my room intrigued me. For hours every school day, I would watch them from my patio. One day the kids were baking cookies and cakes in their building. I ventured over to see what they were doing. I parked my scooter in a corner and just sat and observed the kids and their teachers. After quite sometime, the kids became interested in my "racecar" and how it worked. I delighted in showing them how I could race just like they did and I took off around their dining room where they had been making cookies. And this was how we became fast friends.

At the center, the kids aren't really playing as much as they are interacting. All are young, from 3 to 5 years old, and many come to the center for their first away-from-home experiences. But even those who are incredibly shy watch others who aren't and it didn't take long for me to know all of them. The best part of having kids in your life is the spontaneous interactions that always seem to happen. I never really knew many kids before and though I'm a psychologist, I worked my whole life with corporate executives. But nothing can

compare as an ego-lift as when a young friend seeks you out just because he wants to see you.

Sometimes, it was my racecar that attracted them. Other times they would visit my room and ask for another picture show from the thousands of slides I have taken from all over the world. At times like these, I had a hard time remembering these were just kids. They had developed such close bonds with each other and strong group identifications that I concluded they were led, not taught, by their teachers.

At the start, the center had two male teachers, both well versed in early childhood education, and I think this unique arrangement contributed to the kids' amazing acquisition of social skills. These leaders accelerated the kids' growth into junior adults, I am convinced, and helped form them into real groups with a rich group culture.

Carol Woods contributed to this process because most residents and staff are constantly seeking new experiences for enrichment and are usually ready for anything new and novel. Now no one regrets having the kids next door. The kids have no fear of us, which is a big positive, something they will take with them forever. And I got the best gift of all, an endless supply of hugs. Without kids next door, how can you get one of life's greatest gifts – namely, the spontaneous expression of affection from junior adults who seek you out because you are their friend? ?

Jim Kempe, Ph.D. lives at Carol Woods. He is a retired psychologist who traveled the world photographing little known peoples living in out of the way places. Today, when his young friends visit him in the Health Care Center, they delight in showing him they know how to operate his racecar. You can reach Jim at Carol Woods Retirement Community, 750 Weaver Dairy Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

## The Energy of Intergenerational Programs

By Becky Springer, BSN

Kids, kids, kids!!! Or should I say students, students, students??? There is no better way to energize and enhance the lives of residents in long-term care than through intergenerational activities. Twin Lakes Community Health Care in Burlington, North Carolina has several programs for forging links between the generations with one of the most popular being Elon University's Service Learning Program.

Operating through the Kernodle Center for Service Learning at Elon, students meld workplace experience with classroom study. Through internships and course assignments, Elon University students come and work with our staff for months at a time. We all seem to benefit enormously from this working partnership.

The students provide opportunities for life enhancements through their participation in the activity programming. Service Learning students also help plan and implement many of the activities. Our residents have given interviews about their lives to the students and these one-on-one relationships have greatly enhanced the residents' lives.

But the students benefit as well from the service learning experience. We have reports from several students over the years that being with us gives them home-away-from-home experiences, especially at Christmas. They also report that the relationships they have with our residents help them see elders in a new light, especially the

elders' strengths and their value as irreplaceable resources.

In her evaluation of the Service Learning program at Twin Lakes, Tammy Cobb, the outreach coordinator for the Kernodle Center wrote:

"As student services and learning are the highest priority for the Kernodle Center for Service Learning, we have observed many connections students have made to their academic courses after having this opportunity to volunteer. Students performing required service hours in courses such as Ethical Practice, Business Leadership and Introduction to Human Services, among others, have benefited. In addition, we consistently have student volunteers who enjoy their experiences interacting with the residents at Twin Lakes Community."

One student in the program, Ronetta Walker, apparently found her niche during her internship with Human Services. The residents were very responsive to her. Ronetta found the experience very beneficial because it helped her redefine her focus on options for graduate school. While with us, Ronetta was introduced to issues associated with aging and the need for enhancing long-term care and has now decided to pursue gerontological counseling in her graduate studies.

Enhancing the lives of our residents is the main reason Twin Lakes Community participates in the Service Learning Program at Elon University. In addition to the involvement with the local university, Twin Lakes also participated in the North Carolina



Unusual sight? Not anymore. Check out the latest on the state's enhancement figures.

Campus Compact Service Learning Conference at Elon on February 16. The purpose of this conference was to learn more about Service Learning. But it also gave us an opportunity to brainstorm with faculty from many universities about how to enhance the Service Learning program. The techniques that our attendee learned hold promise that we can improve this program for both residents and students alike. ?

Becky Springer, BSN, is the activity director at Twin Lakes Health Care in Burlington and can be reached at (336) 538-1400.



At Friends Homes at Guilford, you never know what you might see! This curious baby piggy goat finds a wheelchair too interesting not to follow.

## On Designing an Accessible Garden

By Kim Andrews, CTRS

There are many ways to make a garden more accessible. But the first step to design modification is to evaluate the existing garden, looking closely at accessibility, storage, and watering sources.

Begin your evaluation by looking at your existing garden space. To be accessible, garden beds should be placed near the facility, the driveway, and the storage sheds to minimize distances needed to transport supplies such as plants, soil, mulch, or rocks. Sheds needed for tool and supply storage should be close by to help gardeners maintain their independence and sense of ownership over the garden space. This autonomy will only take place if the sheds are properly sized for tools as well as the gardeners.

Shed doors should be at least forty-eight inches wide to accommodate wheelchairs or walkers. Once inside, gardeners should be able to access tools independently. Pegboards make for easy tool storage and can be adjusted to accommodate any height requirements. To determine appropriate tool height placement, measure from the floor or bottom of a wheelchair to the top of the gardener's head. This will yield height at which gardeners can properly store and retrieve tools.

The third and final design modification to be evaluated is appropriate watering sources. Water is the source of life for plants and people. If a water source is not readily available, a large trash can or buckets filled with water can be moved to any area needing watering. Gardeners can then fill smaller containers such as cups, or small watering cans to successfully water their gardens.

If after your evaluation of existing garden space, you find the gardens need to be modified, there are three principal ways in which to accomplish this task. You can raise the garden beds, use containers, or create vertical gardens.

Raised beds are permanent garden structures that contain large amounts of soil. The great thing about raised beds is that it can be any shape, essentially bottomless boxes, built to contain soil. The basic design should meet the following height requirements: eighteen inches for people able to sit on the edge of the bed itself, twenty four inches for people seated in wheelchair, and thirty inches is the best height for the standing gardener.

Container gardening consists of any container that can hold soil and is large enough to support the healthy growth of a plant. Most plants successfully grow in soil eighteen inches in depth. Containers are a simple modification that raises appropriate height, offering access to gardening that may not exist any other way. They are smaller versions of raised beds that can be utilized in very small garden spaces. Just about anything that holds soil can be a container. They might include any of the following: whiskey barrels, window boxes, box-bench seating, table planters, recycled cans or hanging baskets. Hanging baskets are easily accessible on decks or inside if used with a pulley system so baskets can be raised or lowered for easy eminence. Baskets are one of several types of vertical gardens.

Fences, walls, arbors and trellises are other types of vertical structures used to support plants or hanging garden containers at an accessible working height. Vertical gardens are great for small garden areas with limited space. You can also combine vertical structures with permanent raised beds or containers to give added height and dimension to the garden. Raised beds, containers, and vertical structures are very important aspects to any accessible garden.

But perhaps the most important design element in an adaptable garden is the route the gardeners use, i.e., its paths and surfaces. People can only garden if they can get into and out of the garden. If gardener's use

assistive devices (walkers, wheelchairs), or have an unsteady gate, you must give careful consideration to your entire garden's paths and other surfaces.

Paths and paved areas must be smooth, level, and firm and provide good traction at all times. These paths should provide direct routes through the garden and have a sharp textural contrast to the edge for people with sight limitations. For people with mobility limitations, paths, ramps and other grades should not exceed five percent. This means that for every one-foot of change in slope height, twenty feet of path is required. Path width is very important and design should be based on size of garden and number of people in the garden at once. Accessible path widths should be a minimum of thirty-six inches. At that width one wheelchair is able to turn 360 degrees. The optimal width of six to seven feet enables two wheelchairs to pass at the same time. This modification is not often seen due to the large amount of space needed to accommodate such path width.

A simple solution is to add small pockets called turnout spaces. Turnouts allow one wheelchair to safely move off the path so another wheelchair can pass.

These two elements allow most people with any kind of limitation to safely travel through the garden.

Remember that garden paths are important because they attract people into the garden. Paths need to be both inviting and safe. But they also need to convey a sense of security so your gardeners know they can safely leave the garden whenever they finish their work there. ?

*"...perhaps the most important design element in an adaptable garden is the route the gardeners use, i.e., its paths and surfaces."*

Kim Andrews, CTRS, is the assistant education specialist for the North Carolina Botanical Gardens Horticultural Therapy Program and can be reached at (919.962-0522). This is the second article in the two-part series Kim has written on adaptive gardening. See the Winter/Fall 2004 edition of this newsletter for Part One.

## The Simple Joys of an Aviary

By Sarah McElhone, TRS/CTRS

Our first experience with adding an enhancement has been well worth the time and effort it took to acquire it. In June, we placed a beautiful corner unit aviary with 10 birds in our dining room. Our aviary excites everyone at the Brian Center - Wallace. The benefits from such an easy intervention have turned out to be many. The aviary is relatively low maintenance. Before we installed it, we thought we had no space for an aviary. But all it took was finding a unit that worked in the only empty space we had in the dining room.

Since installation, the staff report that some of the residents with later stages of Alzheimer's or dementia appear to be more relaxed when listening to the chirping of the birds. More residents are willing to come out of their rooms and spend time in the dining room. The norm was that during down times, when no meal or activity was taking place, the dining room was empty. Today you are likely to find several residents, staff members or family members by the aviary at any time of the day.

As an activity director, I sometimes find it difficult to come up with new, meaningful programs. The longer we have had our aviary, the more programs we have created using this enhancement. The concept of therapeutic pet visitation has branched off from the aviary to now incorporate monthly dog visits as well as visits with more unusual companions like chickens, bunnies and horses. The interaction between residents and animals is always touching to see. We have also

begun to incorporate more intergenerational programming as a result of the aviary. We sent letters to the area schools informing them of our new addition and invited school groups to come and visit. This year we have more



Birds bring a unique experience to Brian Center/Wallace. Lillian Coyette is a regular visitor to the dining room aviary.

than doubled the usual number of intergenerational programs.

Originally we envisioned the aviary would provide positive benefits for our residents alone. But once installed, we realized it benefited the staff, visitors, and family members as well. The staff and the residents have now had time to become accustomed to the aviary and there seems to be more attention given to the birds. We formed a "birds of a feather" committee that monitors the well-being of our new baby birds. Several staff members have become adoptive parents.

We have watched in the past as some resident's family members sit silently with their loved one wondering what to talk about. They now take their loved one to see the birds and can talk about any new babies. Not to mention the excitement when grandchildren and great grandchildren come to visit now! During our holiday Open House we had a member of the community come to the event just because she wanted to see our aviary. Now, after

adopting two of our birds, we have no better spokesman for our enhancement program.

If you are considering starting an enhancement program, be advised that an environmental enhancement as simple as an aviary can provide a lifetime of positive benefits for all at your home. ?

Sarah McElhone, TRS/CTRS is the recreation therapist at Brian Center/Wallace.

In the Fall 2004 issue of Pioneer Networking, the history and mission of the N.C Coalition can be found spotlighted on page 10. The Coalition joined the Pioneer Network in 2003. Recently, their board recognized us this way: "Through its consistent outreach activities, the Coalition has grown to become North Carolina's principal organization for supporting long-term culture change within nursing homes." Congratulations to all our members for their dedication and years of hard work. To obtain your own copy of Pioneer Networking log onto their website: [www.PioneerNetwork.net](http://www.PioneerNetwork.net) and help support our culture change partners.



Here children learn the joys of gardening from elders during a session of the Learning Garden at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens in Chapel Hill. For more information, contact Nancy Easterling at (919) 962-0522.

# Latest Word on North Carolina's Enhanced Nursing Homes

By Kaye Brown, Ph.D.

If you have not started on your enhancement journey, you are now in the minority. From the license renewal applications just filed with the state, 212 of the 389 licensed nursing homes are committed to changing the way they deliver long-term care by incorporating residential elements into their designs and routines. This yields an overall enhancement rate of 54%. We believe this is likely to be the highest overall rate in the nation. Congratulations to all!!

Here's what you will find in our state's enhanced homes: plants (143 homes), birds (133 homes), gardens (117 homes), intergenerational programs involving children (115 homes), resident dogs (112 homes), empowered staff (78 homes), enhanced dining options (73 homes), animals others than dogs, cats and birds (67 homes), resident cats (65 homes), enhancements unique to a particular home (66 homes), staff organized into teams (53 homes) and enhanced building designs emphasizing residential environments (20 homes).

All these enhancement tools gained ground this year with the exception of homes housing cats. But the big winners for the year seem to be two markers of increased culture change (staff empowerment and teams) along with new innovative enhancements such as dining options, unique enhancements, and animals other than dogs, cats and birds. Of the 10 homes in the state that are the most enhanced (i.e., each having 10 or more enhancement elements in place), five do not subscribe to a given enhancement philosophy, three are Eden homes and two are affiliated with the Pioneer Network.

The 2004 and 2005 enhancement data demonstrate that the environmental enhancement movement is gaining new ground here in North Carolina through a greatly accelerated rate of growth. In addition, we are seeing an increase in the diversity of enhancement philosophies from previous years. When we began looking at the enhancement data over half a decade ago, the Eden Alternative philosophy was the standard for culture change. Today, most of our enhanced homes are finding their own unique solutions to maintaining their commitment to improving the quality of life for their residents, families, and staff. So catch the enhancement wave today and -- like others -- do it your way! ?

Kaye Brown is the Newsletter's editor. You can reach her at <kayeb@baa.duhs.duke.edu> or 919.668-3348

**LTC Enhancement Conference and Resource Fair**  
**June 22, 2005 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**  
**Carol Woods Retirement Community**  
**750 Weaver Dairy Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514**

**Registration begins at 9:30 AM**  
**Visit with Vendors 9:30-10:00**

Agenda	Time	Speaker(s)
Welcome Overview of Coalition	<b>10 minutes</b>	Susan Hollett
<b>Overview of Enhancement Philosophies</b>	<b>40 minutes</b>	<b>Coalition Members</b>
?Eden Alternative		Alice Carroll/Sandi Hargette
?Pioneer Network		Nadine Pfeiffer
?Green House Concept		Rhonda Lee/Kaye Brown
?Person Center Planning		Denise Rogers
?WellSpring		Ted Goins
<b>Best Practice Presentations</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>	<b>Selected Grantees</b>
		Maryfield-Eden Alternative Brian Center/Brevard-Snoozelen
<b>Lunch Visit with Vendors</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>	
<b>Best Practice Presentations (Continued)</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>	<b>Selected Grantees</b>
		Lutheran Home/Hickory-WellSpring Yancy Nursing Center-Dining Enhancement
<b>Empowerment</b>	<b>40 minutes</b>	Susan Dean
<b>Total: 240 minutes Participant receives 3 contact hours</b>		
<b>Optional</b>		
Participant may choose to tour an "Enhanced" facility		
<b>Tours (pick one)</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>	<b>Facility Personnel</b>
		Carol Woods Forest at Duke
<b>Register Now:</b> Attendee _____		
Facility _____		
Address _____		
Email _____ Phone _____		
Lunch Preference (choose one) Meat Cheese Vegetarian		
Complete this form and enclose a check for \$10/attendee made out to <b>NCAPA</b> with "LTC Enhancement Conference" on the memo line. Send both to: <b>The Oaks at Forsyth, 901 Bethesda Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27103, Attention: Susan Hollett</b>		
<b>(Make as many copies of this registration form as needed)</b>		

**THE NORTH CAROLINA COALITION FOR  
LONG-TERM CARE ENHANCEMENT**

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*Enhancing the lives of residents and staff in  
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*Adaptive gardening doesn't have to be rocket science. In this edition, Part Two of Kim Andrews' article on making gardens accessible provides more simple ways to make the experience something everyone can enjoy. Also enclosed you'll find the latest information on the Coalition's upcoming Resource Fair in June. And as always, please share this newsletter with everyone in your facility who may benefit from its information.*



**The North Carolina Botanical Gardens incorporates adaptive techniques in this Horticultural Therapy Demonstration Garden.**

The North Carolina Coalition for  
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