

Far Beyond Bingo

Promoting whole health with wholly engaging connection



By Wendy McMillan
for Aging at Altitude
Photos courtesy: Frasier

Retirement isn't what it used to be, folks — and that's great news. If your vision of senior living consists of shuffling between Bingo and shuffleboard, it's time to reframe. More than ever retirees are looking to fill their days with robust, enriching activity, and that's reflected in care communities. To see what this looks like in exceptional style, just head on over to Frasier.

Founded in 1960 to serve and enrich the lives of

Boulder's seniors, Frasier is a Life Plan Community offering a continuum of care that allows residents to live their lives fully with the care they need, when they need it. Located on 20 sprawling acres in residential Boulder, the beautiful campus consists of three central neighborhoods, each with a unique focus-- independent living, 'The Meadows' assisted living and memory support, and 'The Summit' skilled nursing/ long-term care. At the heart of these three levels of care is a resonant dedication to ensuring residents enjoy

authentic, meaningful connection, with one another and with staff, and it shows.

"Social engagement is so important for our health," says Stephanie Lynn, Community Life Director at Frasier. "Opportunities to connect with one another impact us hugely, mentally, emotionally, and physically."

In fact, research increasingly emphasizes the importance of being meaningfully socially active, for seniors in particular. Alongside diet and exercise, social engagement is associated with better brain function as we age,

enhanced self-esteem and mood, increased longevity, better sleep, and overall improved physical wellbeing, among other benefits. "One takeaway from the pandemic was the incredible value of social interactions," Lynn says. "I think as a society, we'll be seeing repercussions from the isolation people experienced during that time for years to come."

Of course, a hallmark of Frasier, its staff, and its residents, is resilience. When in-person contact was limited, Lynn and her dream team turned creatively to technology. "If there's a silver lining to 2020, it's the enhanced technological savviness everyone embraced," she says. "Zoom and other platforms opened up worlds of museums and other opportunities that we continue to incorporate in fun, dynamic ways."

Endless memorable events demonstrate how Lynn and her team keep the world at Frasier fingertips. One of the favorites was held last spring, in partnership with the Titanic Museum Attraction in Missouri. "They were wonderful," Lynn says. "We were given a presentation from Missouri, and it was as if we were right there. We had a tour, with our host dressed as Molly Brown, in honor of the Colorado connection." Alongside the museum presentation, the Frasier

team put together a luncheon of food actually eaten on the Titanic itself.

It's not every day one finds oneself entertained to a titanic degree, but at Frasier one could be, if desired. Opportunities to be seen, heard, to effect change and to simply have fun together abound. At the same time, there is always space to be reflective and find quiet, in good company or in comfortable solitude. "If you want to be with people, you can," Lynn says. "We have resident guides to help newcomers get integrated, and choices for everyone."

By choices for everyone, Lynn means there is an ever-evolving, thoughtfully tailored, vibrant lineup of choices, for everyone. One look at a monthly activity calendar and it's clear, residents may find themselves busier than they've ever been

in retirement, if that suits them. Yes, there is Bingo — there are also Mahjongg evenings, cake and song jam circles, coffee hours, card making classes, craft hours, poetry gatherings, cribbage, word games, meditation groups, a whole host of discussion groups, movie nights, concerts, stimulating and thought-provoking educational presentations, and so much more...all with residents' interests in mind.

Everything is elevated at Frasier, in the best way. An ice cream social is more like a social ice cream extravaganza, for example, one that feels like a great big hug for all. At Frasier, musical events pair perfectly with twilight ice cream parties, Lynn says. Held in the central courtyard area, entire communities at all levels of care participate.

How does Lynn and



her team do it? Without question, they put in a great deal of time, ongoing, into planning. But what makes the plans successful comes down to something more simple and wholehearted. "One of our biggest strengths here is that we really listen to our residents,"

Lynn says. "We have a great administration who gives us the freedom to explore activities, to be innovative. Combined, this has served to really build trust, and genuine connections, for everyone, and that's what it's all about. That's what we're here for."

