

SENIOR LIVING

Your guide to
housing, health
and recreation



Courtesy of Marella and Luis Ayala
Residents in MorningStar at River Oaks enjoy contemporary living and dining excellence.

MorningStar at River Oaks offers trusted Memory Care

By Jan Burns | FREELANCE WRITER

Opening December 2021, MorningStar Assisted Living & Memory Care at River Oaks offers residents a unique philosophy and holistic approach to dementia care called Lavender Sky. Its mission is to enter, embrace and explore in support of seniors who are navigating the complicated journey of dementia.

According to Rebecca Martin, vice president of Memory Care, "When families are searching for a memory care community, they look for an engaging environment with an overall sense of calm; they look for staff who can truly connect with residents. They also seek support for themselves as dementia is a difficult journey for the entire family."

Creating a warm and welcoming residence begins with specialized staff training, both in MorningStar's culture of "Radiance" and in dementia care. Says Martin, "I lead a rigorous six-hour course in the principles of Lavender Sky, teaching the team how best to communicate, connect and engage with those suffering from dementia in its various forms."

Whether a cook or housekeeper, concierge or maintenance director, everyone at MorningStar is specially equipped to serve.

"Through greater empathy and proven methods, we hope to reduce the anxiety and frustration a resident may feel in the grip of dementia. Our team members are the most sincere and kind-hearted I've ever seen," said Martin. "Families feel the love in the air when they walk into one of our communities."

MorningStar Senior Living offers life enrichment that meets the social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of residents with activities as diverse as dance, music therapy, and horticulture. Programming combines a variety of entertainment with opportunities to engage in life skills.

"We host guided baking classes as well as one-on-one activities particular to a resident's interests. Outings are important as well for a fully blended day," says Martin. "We also offer 'Cloud 9 Moments,' adventures tailored to a particular resident's history or special interests that offer a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Like many, residents enjoy projects that allow them to serve the greater community, including packaging gifts for troops overseas or putting together care packages for the homeless. Giving back locally and globally is a central aspect of the MorningStar brand, both for residents and team members.

MorningStar offers resort-style amenities and maintenance-free living with housekeeping, security, wellness programs, scheduled transportation and a dedicated 24/7 team of care managers to serve its residents. For more information, go to MorningStarRiverOaks.com or call 832-263-9477.

Communities celebrate with holiday festivities

As they do every year, senior living communities around Houston are enjoying celebrations that are fun, festive, delicious and meaningful, with beautiful decorations, Christmas trees, meals, lights, and entertainment throughout the holidays.

Buckner Parkway Place is decorating their community with several Christmas trees.

"They range between 4 feet to 15 feet in a variety of hues from rose gold, silver, iridescent, shades of green, red, blue, and of course the ever-elegant white," said Kat J. Alvarado, lifestyle and wellness director at Parkway Place. "The culinary team will be preparing a lovely spread, with two smaller buffets that feature heavy hors d'oeuvres and a holiday Sweet Shop. There will also be a hot cocoa bar with white, dark, and rich chocolate flavors to soothe the cold and warm the palate. A secret recipe of beverages will be served at our mobile bar."

"We are also expecting a visit from a jolly ol' guy from the North Pole!"

Alvarado said that for its resident holiday Open House, two entertainers will enhance the holiday ambience, filling the community with the sounds of jazz in the formal dining room and Motown favorites in the auditorium. They will have a small number of vendors on site to promote safe shopping as well. The culinary staff will prepare a Christmas feast in the main dining room for all



Courtesy of Parkway Place
Gorgeous holiday decor at Parkway Place keeps residents in the spirit of the season.

to enjoy. Also, the Parkway Place team is participating in a secret Santa within each department for holiday cheer.

As with other communities in the area, everything is planned around making sure residents feel the togetherness and warmth of the season.

"Our residents also are participating in two charitable activities. The first is a Dress for Success clothing donation," said Alvarado. "The second is the BCPS Toy Drive. Both benefit wonderful organizations that sup-

port (those) in need this holiday season."

Alvarado said residents and associates alike understand the significance and importance of this time of year and beyond.

The holidays are a special time of year as well for residents and employees of Eagle's Trace, an Erickson Senior Living community in west Houston.

Family visitors

"Our campus is beautifully decorated, and it is rewarding to see residents enjoying visits from family members and friends," said Pam Burgeson, director of sales. "The activities fit the festive mood of the season, from special menus prepared by our culinary professionals to parties hosted by resident groups such as the Eagle's Trace Wine Club and Eagle's Trace Entertainment Committee."

Burgeson said that giving back during the holidays has also been a longstanding tradition.

Eagle's Trace residents and employees partner on projects such as a food drive benefiting Houston Food Bank, a toy drive to support Child Protective Services, and a "Books Between Kids" campaign to help Houston-area elementary school children in need.

Have a very happy holidays.



Shutterstock
Residents at communities across Houston gather this time of year for dining, holiday cheer and camaraderie.

'A Wonderful Expression' at Eagle's Trace

Houston ranks among the top cities in the country for its population of working artists, but you don't have to drive to the museum district to see an impressive collection of art.

Eagle's Trace, the Erickson Senior Living community in west Houston, opened a fine arts gallery on its campus in September. The special occasion was celebrated with a wine and cheese reception.

The first exhibit featured works by 12 residents and one employee; their media of choice included watercolor, oil, acrylic, pastel, pencil, black ink, and photography.



Courtesy of Eagle's Trace
Fine arts committee member Louise Baldaro stands in the new fine arts gallery at Eagle's Trace.

Unique resident artwork

"The fine arts gallery opened to showcase original resident art," says Louise Baldaro, who serves on the fine arts committee with fellow artists Marilyn Meushaw, Mary Burkwall, Richard Schwarz, and community resources coordinator Lisa Baughn. "As

we've spread the word, it's incredible to discover how much original art there is in our community."

Baldaro moved to Eagle's Trace 10 years ago from the historic Houston Heights neighborhood. A specialist in art quilting, Baldaro began teaching an art quilting class. In turn, she had the opportunity to learn from other artists who live at Eagle's Trace. She took a Zentangle class from Meushaw and discovered a love for a new form of expression.

These artists are vital participants in the community's resident-run clubs and activities, which are an integral part of the social fabric at Eagle's Trace. Currently, a resident-led ARTspiration class meets every Friday afternoon in the creative arts studio in the Audubon Clubhouse.

The pieces showcased in the fine arts gallery change monthly.

"In October and November, we featured the work of one of our resident photographers, Tom Snodgrass," says Baldaro.

"When we were planning out each month's exhibit, it became clear that some artists had enough pieces for an entire show."

From November to December, the gallery showcased a new variety of artists and their work. Baldaro said the variety of original art created by residents includes basket bowls, fabric dolls, silk screen, and more.

"There's an astounding amount of talent and creativity represented among those who live here," she says.

Sarah Roush, a retired high school teacher, appreciates the value the fine arts gallery brings to the community.

"This is a wonderful expression of individuality and such an important feature to so many of us. All this lovely art was here, and the fine arts committee recognized how beautiful it is. The gallery is an important addition to Eagle's Trace."

To learn more about the vibrant, worry-free lifestyle and opportunities available at Eagle's Trace, visit eaglestrace.com or call 281-496-7676.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



TREEMONT: Seniors often view moving during the holidays as an impediment because they want one last holiday at home. The reality is, it can be much more fun to be part of a community over the holidays, where rich bonds and camaraderie are shared, with support available. Learn about the benefits of residing at a senior living community like Treemont during the holidays. Call 713-783-6820 or click www.treemont.com/holidays, or stop by 2501 Westerland Drive in the Memorial area.



DEL WEBB: This leading active-adult builder for those age 55-plus broke ground on its third community in the Houston market, Del Webb Fulshear, in late July. The community just west of Houston will contain 725 single-family homes and an abundance of amenities at build-out. Homes are from the consumer-inspired GenYou collection with spacious owner's suites with spa-like baths, and ample storage space. For more information, visit www.delwebb.com/Fulshear or call 281-626-8839.



EAGLE'S TRACE: 2021 has been memorable at Eagle's Trace, the Erickson Senior Living community in west Houston. They welcomed new residents, opened the Austin Square independent living building, and celebrated their dedicated employees. Now during the holidays, Eagle's Trace is taking time to give back to local charities and celebrate the season. Join the fun in 2022. Call 281-496-7676 or visit <http://eaglestrace.com> to learn more.