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Sharing Valentine's Day Love

Submitted by Beth Montgomery



Lamorinda Adult Respite Center participants show off their valentines. Photo provided

lead them in community service activities - they make fleece blankets for injured American soldiers overseas, Easter baskets for homeless children, Halloween treat bags for foster children, etc. Our folk's memory impairments mean that they may not remember a lot of what they do while with us during the day, but that doesn't matter - we know that 'in the moment,' when they are fully engaged in an activity, and know that other's will benefit, they feel useful and valued. It's that heart-felt value that they take away from here, a deep knowing that they had a fun and worthwhile day."

The Del Rey children hand-crafted beautiful valentine's cards - each one as special and unique as they themselves are. The LARC seniors also spent a whole morning making artful cards for the kids. "Our folk's were thrilled to receive Valentine's from the children," said Montgomery. "They were all smiles and love for the sweet hands that prepared cards just for them." When young and old interact and share their love, everyone benefits!

On Valentine's Day the seniors of the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center (LARC) in Orinda exchanged Valentine's cards with Mrs. Valentine's second grade class from Del Rey Elementary School.

Valentine (yes, this is her real name) and Beth Montgomery, executive director of LARC, worked together to facilitate this special intergenerational exchange. "I wanted the children to expand their thinking beyond themselves - to thoughtfulness towards others in our town," said Valentine, "and LARC was the natural choice for the children's kind gestures."

The Lamorinda Adult Respite Center at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church has been in service to the community for over 15 years. LARC is a non-profit, state licensed, social Adult Day Program for those with Alzheimer's or other related dementias. The program offers respite for caregivers by providing exemplary care and stimulating activities for their loved ones. The center's paid staff and caring trained volunteers foster dignity and self-worth in the participants.

Montgomery pointed out that "LARC's ailing seniors are still a useful and vital part of our community. Our participants continue to do for others. At LARC we regularly

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