



CHELSEA

CHELSEA
SENIOR LIVING

TIMES

SPRING 2022

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

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Lisa Berrios (far right) shown with three of her four children. / Chelsea Senior Living

A Mother's Strength

It's lunch time in The Country Cottage and Lisa Berrios, a lead aide at The Chelsea at Montville, is transporting residents to the dining room.

While she makes her rounds from table to table, Berrios is seen comforting and chatting with the residents.

"Some of them think I'm their daughter," she said.

Even though they are mistaken, it's not completely inaccurate. Sure, Berrios isn't

blood-related, but after 17 years of working at The Chelsea, she's around these residents long enough that she feels like family to them.

She knows each resident's story, their preferences, their mannerisms and who their real family is, through photos and visits.

Berrios never knew her grandparents.

"I have a lot of grandmas, a lot of moms," she said. "I take care of these residents like they're my grandmother,

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my mother, my aunt. I never had time to be with my family."

Time that she wishes she had with her grandparents who lived in Puerto Rico, but passed away young.

SUPER-PARENT

Berrios raised her four children – two girls and two boys - on her own in Newark, NJ.

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Mt. Bethel Village Resident Wins Gold at the Special Olympics USA Games



Jodi Hadam won gold at the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games in Orlando, FL on June 12th / Mt. Bethel Village

Raising her hands with both index fingers pointed vertically to indicate she's 'number one,' Jodi Hadam stood on top of the podium in Orlando, Florida on June 12th with a gold medal hanging around her neck. This was her first time at the Special Olympics USA Games, but she spent years of playing tennis to build up to this moment.

The Mt. Bethel Village resident won the women's singles Division Four bracket, beating Ohio to clinch the top spot. "I remember walking off the court and saying, 'where's Mom? I want to hug her,' she said. "It has not worn off. I still want to show people who

don't know about it." Hadam also competed in doubles and won the silver medal. She started playing tennis when she was 13 years old in Somerset County's Therapeutic Recreation tennis program. When she aged out, with support from her coaches, she decided she wanted to focus on competing at the Special Olympics.



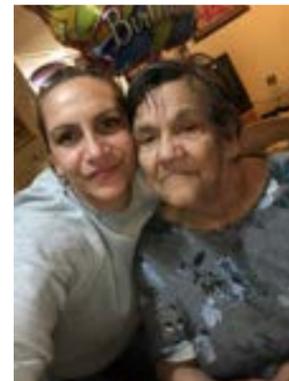
Hadam competing in a match at the Special Olympics USA Games. / Mt. Bethel Village

After doing well enough during the state competition, she was invited to try out to represent New Jersey at the USA Games. And she did not disappoint. "I felt like New Jersey's national treasure," she said. Hadam said she started practicing not long after returning home. She can't wait to do it all over again but she'll hold the national distinction of being number one for the next four years, which is when the Special Olympics USA Games is set to kick off again. And with the World Games fast approaching in January, she'd welcome the opportunity to showcase her talent on the international stage.

A Mother's Strength

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She played the part of mom and dad. (And on Father's Day she said she gets a gift, too). "It was a struggle," she said. "I went to school at night and worked during the day." She was going back to school for her GED diploma, which she later completed. She was also working to support her family. Her children are now married and have children of their own.



Berrios and her mom, who passed away late last year. / Chelsea Senior Living

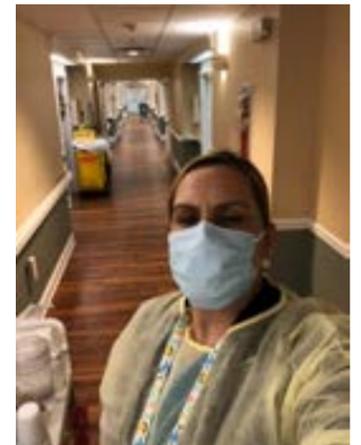
"It's a blessing, it's a blessing," said Berrios, suddenly choking up. "I don't have any words to say because they are always there for me, they always call me and ask, 'Mom, how are you? Are you okay? Do you need anything?'" It's how she was with her mom, who sadly passed

away six months ago. Her mom, Delfina Berrios, had been sick for a while and was beginning to experience symptoms of memory loss. During that time, Lisa took care of her. It was the least she could do as she had always looked up to her while growing up. "I was always there with my mom and I always paid attention to what she did so I could learn from her," Berrios said. "It was very hard and a struggle but we made it through."

GOING AND GROWING AT THE CHELSEA

That toughness is ingrained in Berrios. She came to Chelsea after seeing an advertisement online and started as a housekeeper. But she was always getting herself noticed in different ways. She was eventually promoted to supervisor. "The aides would need some help with the residents so I would jump in and help them out," Berrios said. And they were soon encouraging her to go for

her license. "I said you know what, let me go ahead and go do it," she said. "So I went and I did it and I'm here now as an aide and I love my job. I love the residents. I love the environment."



Berrios at The Chelsae at Montville. / Chelsea Senior Living

For the past two years, Berrios has been a lead aide. And she believes this may not be the final chapter of her career. "Keep going and keep growing," she said. "I learned a lot here. A lot."

To read more stories like this, please visit: ChelseaSeniorLiving.com

Impromptu Moment Turned Into Fashion Show



[Watch the video](#)

The Chelsea at Clifton hosted a fashion show for residents spurred by an impromptu moment. / Chelsea Senior Living

Kyisha Branch wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary other than being herself. She was coming out of a resident's room after completing her cleaning duties at The Chelsea at Clifton, a leading Assisted Living and Memory Care community in Passaic County, New Jersey. She noticed a resident working with a physical therapist. Branch, who is outgoing, compassionate, and has a self-proclaimed "big mouth," started shouting words of encouragement toward the resident.

"Put your head up, hit that runway," she remembers saying. "The resident looked up..."

[she pantomimes by picking her head up, eyes bulging to copy the resident's expression] "and gave me such a joy. And he started moving fast."

That moment, as she said, turned into something special, far beyond perhaps what Branch even understood at the time.

Branch started working as a housekeeper at Chelsea Senior Living in November 2021.

"It feels like forever when you build relationships and connections," she said.

Long before that, though, she started a clothing and styling business built out of passion. For the last 26 years, she's been running

Kyisha's Korner Boutique.

"Fashion is a happy place," Branch said. "From that happy place that I have in my outside life, I wanted to bring it to Chelsea to see the residents have that happy place."

She proposed the idea of a fashion show and it was well received.

Leading up to the big day and before showtime, she had help all around at The Chelsea.

"Some of the nurse's aides helped get them dressed," she said. "On my break time, I was ironing all of their stuff. I got a dolly. I hung up all their stuff and I labeled them."

During the show they rolled

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Chelsea's Career Development Program Kicks Off for Local High School Students

Chelsea is teaming up with local high schools to provide career paths for students who are looking to create a foundation for their futures.

The program is for students as young as freshmen and Chelsea is providing these opportunities at all locations.

"We have always welcomed students into our communities for both career

and volunteer opportunities," said Roger Bernier, COO and President of Chelsea Senior Living. "But there are students who may not be aware of these opportunities."

Most recently, Bound Brook High School and East Brunswick High School students have joined the program after meeting with Chelsea staff and touring the Bridgewater community.



Local high school students learn about The Chelsea at Bridgewater during a tour. / Chelsea Senior Living

Mt. Bethel Village Raising Bar with College Academics

Mount Bethel Village wrapped up their first semester participating in an interactive online college-level program to provide residents an opportunity to advance their education and improve on various social and vocational skills.

Those who participated were awarded certificates for completing one of two classes - or both - during Mt. Bethel's Day Program in the Spring.

The classes were taught by Successful Learning Center, a program for students of varying abilities such as

visual or hearing impairment, spinal cord injuries, Down Syndrome, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, speech and language disabilities, or disabled veterans and stroke survivors.

On Tuesdays, Mt. Bethel students learned about U.S. history. On Wednesdays, they learned about creative writing and poetry. Each class has a ten-student capacity and ran for eight weeks.

"Our Residential and Day Program members have been really engaged and it's exciting to see the strides many of them have made in

such a short amount of time," said Bridget Garland, the Director of the Mt. Bethel Village Day Program. "Some students are already writing their own poetry and have shown interest in continuing next semester."



Students at Mt. Bethel raise their hands to answer a question during a poetry class. / Chelsea Senior Living

To read all Chelsea press releases, please click [here](#).

Senior Fashion Show

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out the red carpet, brought in a DJ and a photographer. Residents were grouped by themes such as “Behold the Black, White, and Gold,” “The Cool Guys of Chelsea,” “Sports and Shorts,” and “Cottage Hits the Catwalk.” “I wanted to accent their smiles with a lot of colors,” she said. “If you look at the pictures, you’ll see a lot of color added to the smiles and joy that was shared in the room.”

Residents had ear-to-ear smiles as they strutted down the carpet waving and gallantly bowing or curtsying to a familiar audience.

“One resident, she threw her walker when she hit the top of the runway,” Branch said. “She sat up, put her hands on her hips, it was just amazing.”

There was also a crowning ceremony for all the ladies in which they received a tiara and a flower.

“One of the residents, she doesn’t remember a lot, but the next day she was talking about the fashion show all day,” she said.



A resident showing off a nice suit with a top hat. / Chelsea Senior Living

After the show was over, all residents came together for one big dance party.

“It was a real success,” Branch said. “It was a success. A true success.”

Her positive attitude, bright spirit, and dedication has led to being promoted as the new Lifestyle Director at The Chelsea at Clifton.

Branch no longer has biological parents or grandparents, but she said the residents have become her family.

“They call me their sunshine and they have no clue how much sunshine they bring to my life,” Branch said.

Maintaining Mental Health for Seniors

Mental health issues are on the rise, according to the latest reports from the World Health Organization. More than 40 million people in the United States currently suffer from anxiety, and over 19 million live with some form of depression. Those are only a couple of the mental disorders that affect the

population. To make matters worse, many people are affected by those conditions but don’t get the help they need to deal with them in a healthy way. While no one is invulnerable to mental disorders, recent studies show that people over the age of 55 are at greater risk of developing them than others.

Seniors who are suffering from an acute psychiatric

episode, however, can find solace knowing there is a place for them to get better. Chelsea Senior Living has the only mental health program for seniors in New Jersey at our East Brunswick location. But before assuming you or your loved one are ready to get help, it’s important to understand the signs and effects of mental health disorders.

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Maintaining Mental Health for Seniors

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Understanding Why Seniors are More at Risk of Developing Mental Health Issues

Many people wonder why their aging loved ones are more at risk of developing mental health issues than those in other age categories. Studies show that several factors enter the mix. For one, cognitive decline that often occurs as we get older can detract from mental wellness. Experts note that this could come from numerous sources, with one of the most significant being a loss of purpose. Seniors find that their direction in life isn’t quite as clear once their children grow up and build lives and families of their own. Their friends often drift away as well.

These aspects can lead to greater isolation. In fact, an estimated 25 percent of seniors are isolated or lonely. They don’t have as much contact with friends and loved ones as they once did. They’re often less active than they were in their younger years, and they don’t go out as much. Many also live alone. All this increases loneliness and isolation. In turn, those elements further contribute to both cognitive decline and the development

of mental disorders.

Additionally, many aging Americans suffer from various medical conditions. Those illnesses can cause pain, inflammation, and other problems. From there, the conditions often lead to a lack of sleep, which can increase the effects of physical issues. Decreased physical activity and the lack of an established routine that tend to come with aging have been found to boost the risk of insomnia as well. Research indicates that insomnia increases the risk of mental disorders. All those issues create a cycle that causes declines in both physical and mental health.

Exploring the Effects of Mental Disorders on Physical Health

As mentioned, physical health problems can lead to mental disorders. This chain of events works both ways. Mental disorders likewise bring about physical problems. Though many people insist those physical effects are all in people’s heads, science has proven that’s not the case. Mental issues impact the brain, and the brain affects the physical body. Mental disorders may cause a loss of appetite and serious digestive issues.

Both may detract from physical health and lead to weakness and fatigue. Mental disorders may also cause headaches, muscle soreness, inflammation, joint aches, and other physical symptoms.

Recognizing the Symptoms of Mental Disorders

Spotting the warning signs of mental disorders in aging loved ones isn’t always easy. That’s especially true in cases where people have little contact with their senior family members. Due to increased isolation, the symptoms of mental illnesses often go unnoticed in seniors. At the same time, many people attribute those symptoms to general signs of aging. Because of that, it’s important to be on the lookout for the warning signs of mental illnesses in older people.

To continue reading, please go to [Chelsea’s blogs](#).

Spring Recap at The Chelsea



Celebrating Mother's Day at The Chelsea at Warren.



Celebrating Father's Day at Maple Pointe.



A Luau at The Residences at Plainview.



Prom king and queen during a senior prom with high school seniors at The Chelsea at Clifton.



The Chelsea at Toms River presenting a check to Ocean of Love to help raise money to beat pediatric cancer.



Enjoying the first day of summer and the end of spring at The Chelsea at Sparta.

Spring Celebration for Chelsea Nurses

Chelsea celebrated its Health Services staff during national appreciation weeks throughout the spring. National Nurses Week was May 6-12. National Nursing Assistants Week was June 16-23.

Our family wouldn't be complete without the amazing Health Services staff that we have.



Celebrating the nurses at The Chelsea at Brookfield.



Celebrating Nursing Assistants at The Chelsea at Clifton.

Chelsea Times is a publication of the Communications Department of Chelsea Senior Living. Submissions of stories, articles and photos are welcome. Email material to Jason Kahn at jkahn@cslal.com.