



CILC

Quality of Life
Technologies Service



The Golden Years

With special thanks to
Menorah Park Center for Senior Living
Cleveland, Ohio

People work hard all their lives dreaming of how they will spend their golden years. Many fulfill their dreams by traveling, others settle in the mountains or at the ocean. Others choose to live in retirement communities where they can engage in activities with other retirees. Often, those living in independent living or even in assisted living facilities, participate in community sponsored trips, both near and far. As people age and deal with new physical limitations, these trips become more difficult or not feasible at all.

Some retirement communities have discovered an amazing solution in videoconferencing technology. It looks like this: 30-40 seniors, some walking alone, some with walkers, and others in wheelchairs, all gather in a room outfitted with an 80" or 105" screen, audio which reaches all corners of the room and microphones that pick up the smallest of voices.

Everyone quiets as the speaker on the screen identifies herself as Arielle from the Cleveland Museum of Art and invites them to join her on an exploration of Egyptian Mummies. When she asks if anyone has ever visited the museum, five hands shoot up in the air. Arielle says, "The lady in the back row with the pink blouse, would you share which exhibit you most enjoyed on your visit?" The pink blouse lady identifies herself as Gladys and shares with both Arielle and those in the room with her.

The conversation goes back and forth as Arielle shares information, photographs and artifacts. A couple of seniors quietly whisper to each other. Arielle doesn't miss a beat. She verbally responds to their conversation causing everyone to laugh. There's no place to hide in a distance learning room! And so the session continues, enabling these seniors to explore this exhibit even more deeply than if they had actually been at the museum.

While studies prove that engaging the mind helps seniors stay young at heart and improves their physical well-being, we wondered what these types of sessions meant to the seniors on a personal level. So, through their willing activities directors, we asked them. Here are their responses:

Ida Kaufman
Independent Facility
Resident



**"I wouldn't mind if we had
distance learning every
day!"**

"I enjoy these programs because they give me a chance to see and learn about things that I otherwise wouldn't be able to experience. I especially love the monthly Israeli program as that is something near and dear to my heart. There are many things I learn about that I never knew I was interested in. What I love most, though, is that the programs are food for thought. There are times that I find myself at a loss of what to talk about. I enjoy discussing with other residents the places they have been and what they have learned. I feel truly blessed to live here because I find myself enjoying so many of the programs. I wouldn't mind if we had distance learning every day!"

Irene Kurtz
Assisted Living Resident



“It broadens my brain.”

“I get so much out of Distance learning. It broadens my brain. It allows me to visit places I’ve never been and am not likely to get to visit. It’s important to learn something new every day, even if it’s something you’ve never even heard of before. Distance learning allows me to do that without having to travel. These opportunities enrich my life. When I see one on the daily schedule, I’m excited and can’t wait to come to the program!”

Marian Rosen
Nursing Home Resident



“It’s like travelling without having to pack.”

“I enjoy all the programs. I learn about new things and remember others things I have forgotten. It’s like travelling without having to pack.”

It’s easy to see that videoconferencing experiences can help the Golden Years to keep their glow. They create an even playing field for all ages and physical abilities. It’s just people to people and mind to mind. This is what living and learning are all about!