

GREENWICH

LIFESTYLE™

Local Love Awards

STYLE + BEAUTY

THE STYLE LIST BY STYLEE LYST

LOCAL SERVICES

*SHOP YOUR VALUES
WITH BUYVERDE*

*THE GREENS AT GREENWICH
MEMORY CARE*



APRIL 2023
CITYLIFESTYLE.COM

Vincent and Betty laughing together



THE GREENS AT GREENWICH MEMORY CARE

Scaros is a licensed creative arts psychotherapist, as well as a clinical chaplain and interfaith minister. She brings her years of clinical experience into The Greens along with spirituality, empathy, and mindfulness. She wants to create a safe space for the residents to live out their new normal in the best way. As she describes, “using the arts is a gateway or a pathway to empathize.”

What is empathy? Empathy differs from sympathy in that with empathy, we actually feel what the other person feels. “You hear someone’s story, and you feel connected. That’s empathy,” says Scaros. It is actually a chemical reaction in the brain, and it is intrinsic in all programs at The Greens.

This past December and January of this year the programming was centered on the theme of empathy. There were programs in spiritual empathy, kinesthetic empathy, and symphonic empathy. The therapists feel empathy for the residents. As most of the staff have been with The Greens for several years, including Scaros who has been executive director for eight years, it is a community of care, friendship, and family. The residents feel safe, they feel secure. This carries over to their family members as well.

One common experience of people with dementia is sundowning, which occurs at the end of the day. Typically, in their daily life, this is when people would go home after work, and this is when the residents may experience confusion. As part of the music therapy program, they began doing drumming circles. “It started as a cacophony, with everyone beating their drums in different rhythms,” Scaros says. “But as they continued, they found a common beat, and became in sync with each other. They calmed down.” This is a subtle example of a connection that comes after a therapeutic music session.

Similarly, the residents are like neighbors to each other. In addition to empathy from the staff, they have empathy for each other. The way they can read body language is almost genius, Scaros says. Because they need to learn new

LEADING WITH ART AND EMPATHY

The Greens at Greenwich lead with empathy as a core value to create a home environment for people experiencing dementia. The Greens is the only memory care facility in this area staffed by licensed psychotherapists with specialties in the creative arts. As Alzheimer’s and other dementias can affect verbal communication, creative arts therapists provide a means of expression for residents through the universal languages of art, music, dance, drama, and storytelling. Adding in empathy helps people feel less alone.

“The outstanding difference at The Greens is our specialization in the creative arts therapies including music, art, dance, movement, and drama as essential components to each resident’s plan of care. Our staff, most of whom have been with us over five or more years, have extensive experience in managing the complexities of dementia care. We understand the challenges created by cognitive issues are a family matter and at The Greens we partner with you in navigating this new world,” according to Executive Director Maria Scaros.

ARTICLE BY LEA GRIMALDI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE GREENS AT GREENWICH



Joyful moment in the garden with Virginia



Art Therapy



Executive Director Maria Scaros

ways to relate in the world, people experiencing dementia become extremely skilled in reading body language cues. “They can tell, this person is a friend, this person is gentle, by reading body language,” she says.

At The Greens, all persons are treated with respect and seen as whole people who have shifted due to circumstance and are journeying in a path they would never have expected. Their families and friends are also a part of this village where everyone plays a role in caring for someone whose life responds to the moment and to love.

It is important that people feel they have choices and autonomy over their daily activities. As it is a small group with only 31 residents, it is like a family environment. There are daily activities to engage, and create community, both in groups and one-on-one. Each resident chooses their activities, from dance to drama to singing.

The brain center responsible for forming words and communicating is located in the frontal lobe, which is often where dementia occurs, but musicality is all over the brain. So while communication may be failing, a person experiencing dementia is still able to sing. “They remember all the words of familiar songs, and can sing together,” she says. “It brings a feeling of comfort.”

CONTINUED >

Drama Therapy with Maria



Drumming



Home is a feeling, more than a physical space, according to Scaros. With dementia, people do not experience time in a linear way. They may think they had seen someone yesterday and it may have been months. “Home is where they feel safe, loved, and secure,” says Scaros. This is what The Greens provides for its residents.

Located at 1155 King Street, The Greens is a recognized leader in providing creative arts therapies for individuals who have difficulty communicating in conventional ways. Call and ask for Maria Scaros if you’d like a tour of the facility. The Greens also offers an internship program with accredited schools including Columbia University, New York University, SUNY New Paltz, and Sarah Lawrence College.

Come experience The Greens. It feels like home to residents, staff, and their families alike.