



Friends House Retirement Community Grant Report Garden Program 2020



Dear Friends,

Friends House Retirement Community, Inc. (Friends House) would like to thank Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) for the \$30,000 grant. 2020 was a year like no other, an unprecedented environment for our residents. Many family visits took place on FaceTime or zoom. Our seniors looked for a place to gather safely and within CDC guidelines. The Garden at Friends House was that place. Amid the flowers of spring, produce of the summer and bright colors of fall, Friends gathered. (With masks on 😊)



A year ago Friends House, with the help of FFA, embarked on a program to ensure 100% of the residents on our campus would be able to enjoy our garden space. The program goals were:

- 1) Renovate parts of the garden making additions to accommodate those with mobility issues.
- 2) Provide serene escapes for residents looking for a quiet retreat or a place to gather with others.
- 3) Match youth eager to learn about the garden with residents of all abilities willing to teach them.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the youth programs were not able to happen. Instead volunteers worked to make the garden a beautiful place for all. Residents built raised beds and helped each other with planting, harvesting, weeding and caring for the space in general.

The pavers were installed by Kalex Corporation and they did an excellent job donating the remaining pavers from the pallet as a gift to our residents. The overall square footage increased substantially moving from old pebbles and dirt to beautiful pavers. The pavers were completely installed by the end of June 2020. Gatherings began almost immediately. The space was exactly as we envisioned, a great place for Friends to share time socially distanced. Residents in wheelchairs and walkers were able to enter the garden from a paved walkway and enjoy the cutting gardens and sit under the pergola in the shade. The views from the garden are wonderful. We have a beautiful view of the grounds and pond as well as evening sunsets. The residents loved the space and due to COVID even put together a sign-up sheet so they would abide by all the CDC guidelines.

The garden retreat brought almost every resident out to enjoy the sun and fresh air.

The Administration and volunteers held Meet and Greet Happy Hours every Tuesday and Thursday in the fall hosting small gatherings of roughly a dozen invited guests. Every resident throughout the campus was invited to share in the garden magic. Resident groups also gathered for a small picnic or just to enjoy each other's company. (Masks on and socially distanced of course).

The garden will always be a place for family visits, picnic lunches and meeting with Friends. There is already a sign-up sheet for 2021 and there are quite a few events on the calendar.

I speak for the entire resident population when I thank Friends Foundation for the Aging for funding one of our dream projects. It's wonderful when a dream comes true. Please join us under the pergola soon for a lemon aide, conversation, and wonderful views of the wild life and plant life.



Looking forward to your visit,
In Friendship

Anne Derby
Director of Development
Friends House Retirement Community, Inc.

