



For immediate release

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Touchmark wins award for innovative therapeutic program

SPOKANE, Wash. — An estimated 5.5 million Americans have Alzheimer’s disease. Within the population of older adults, it is believed approximately one out of every three individuals lives with Alzheimer’s or other age-related dementia. November is Alzheimer’s Awareness Month, and Touchmark is recognized as a leader in innovations in memory care.

Touchmark is a recipient of a 2017 Innovators Achievement Award from the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA). The prestigious award recognizes Touchmark for a new memory care program called Fragrance in Frames that achieved remarkable success and is being implemented in Touchmark communities throughout the U.S. and in Canada.

Fragrance in Frames combines essential oils with paints, which provide natural health and mood benefits to those living with forms of dementia. The idea was born from Touchmark’s Vice President of Clinical Services, Wendy Schrag, RN-BC. She also provided insight into which essential oils would create a desired outcome, which staff use when doing painting sessions with residents.

“Touchmark’s mission is to enrich people’s lives, and one of the main ways we do that is through our Full Life Wellness & Life Enrichment Program™,” says Lora Hovland, Life Enrichment/Wellness Director at Touchmark on South Hill. “We incorporate the seven dimensions of wellness to create a Full Life for all residents, including those living with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia.”

How Fragrance in Frames works

Before each painting session, a team member shares the essential oil with the resident to ensure it evokes a pleasant response. A few drops of the selected oil is then mixed into the paint.

Because Touchmark wanted to be able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between painting with essential oils and residents’ behaviors and outlook, staff tracked residents’ responses in the electronic medical record system every shift.

Astounding results

The results showed that agitation and behaviors decreased. Attention span increased, and social engagement expanded. Even residents’ handwriting improved.

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Prior to beginning the sessions, one resident had 27 episodes per month in which he attempted to leave the room. Over a three-month period while participating in Fragrance in Frames, these episodes diminished to only five. His aggressive behavior disappeared entirely, and he became very engaged. He now loves to reminisce with staff.

The ICAA Innovators Awards were created to honor those in the active-aging industry who are leading the way, setting new standards and making a difference in the lives of older adults. Eligible offerings can target any or all of the seven wellness dimensions endorsed by ICAA – social, emotional, vocational, spiritual, intellectual, physical and environmental.

“This award is fundamentally about giving accolades to organizations that push creative boundaries in devising and delivering programs for older adults,” says Colin Milner, ICAA CEO. “For 15 years, our awards program has spotlighted initiatives that inspire and impress us with creativity and excellence. Recipients such as Touchmark serve as inspiring models for any organization that seeks to support older-adult wellness.”

Touchmark’s Hovland says, “It is an honor to have Fragrance in Frames recognized, and we are excited to incorporate its many benefits into our memory care program.”

About ICAA

ICAA is a professional association that leads, connects and defines the active-aging industry and supports professionals who develop wellness facilities, programs and services for adults over 50. The association is focused on active aging – an approach to aging that helps older adults live life as fully as possible within all dimensions of wellness. It provides members with education, information, resources and tools. ICAA has advised the U.S. Administration on Aging, National Institute on Aging, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Canada’s Special Senate Committee on Aging, the British Columbia ministries of Health and Healthy Living and Sport and other organizations.

About Touchmark on South Hill

A full-service, award-winning retirement community, Touchmark on South Hill offers a range of homes and lifestyles. More information is available at [Touchmark.com](https://www.touchmark.com).

About Touchmark

Touchmark has been a leader in retirement living for more than 35 years. Currently, there are 11 communities in eight states and a Canadian province. Two more communities are under construction in the U.S. All Touchmark communities offer a continuum of services through multiple levels of licensed care, supporting residents to their highest level of independence. Visit [Touchmark.com](https://www.touchmark.com) for more information.

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