

NEWS RELEASE



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Touchmark to host ‘Purple Tie Event,’ benefitting Alzheimer’s Association and featuring unique paintings

BISMARCK, N.D. – The second annual Purple Tie Event will be held at Touchmark on West Century in Bismarck on November 29 to raise funds for the Alzheimer’s Association and shine a spotlight on the Fragrance in Frames program. Fittingly, November is Alzheimer’s Awareness Month.

The award-winning Fragrance in Frames is a unique therapeutic art activity piloted in 2017 at Touchmark on West Century and continuing today. It combines paints with essential oils, which provide natural health and mood benefits to those living with forms of dementia.

Catherine Erickson, daughter of Touchmark resident and Fragrance in Frames participant Hilda Michaelis, says she couldn’t be more grateful for the work being done through this therapeutic art program.

“The Fragrance in Frames program has given my mom a productive and creative outlet when so many things are becoming difficult. She would never call herself an artist, but her paintings are wonderful,” says Erickson. “I have had several framed for me and for my children as a memory of my mom that we will have forever.”

Erickson will be a speaker at the Purple Tie Event on Thursday, November 29 at 6 p.m. Along with celebrating the Fragrance in Frames program, participants will enjoy refreshments, including purple-themed cocktails, mocktails and cake, and a silent auction of some of the paintings created by Touchmark residents. Local businesses, such as Sam’s Club, Dacotah Paper and Glasser Images, have donated baskets that also will be available via silent auction.

Purple ties or apparel are encouraged but optional. All proceeds benefit the Alzheimer’s Association. Touchmark is located at 1000 West Century Avenue, Bismarck. Those with questions can call 701-323-7000.

“Fragrance in Frames is a wonderful program, and the benefits of the program are many—and amazing to see,” says Destiny Sisk, Touchmark Life Enrichment/Wellness Director. “We invite the community to come to the Purple Tie Event, bid on these

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TOUCHMARK ON WEST CENTURY
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paintings and enjoy an evening dedicated to raising funds for the Alzheimer's Association."

Nikki Wegner from the Alzheimer's Association and Whitney Ruscheinsky, Touchmark Life Enrichment/Wellness Coordinator who helped to pilot the program in Bismarck, will be speaking, as well.

Fragrance in Frames, a brief history and how it works

The idea was born from Touchmark's Vice President of Clinical Services Wendy Schrag, RN-BC. Schrag provided insight into which essential oils would create a desired outcome and staff in Bismarck got to work implementing the theory in an activity for residents.

Before each painting class, residents smelled essential oils to determine their preference on which oils to use. A few drops from the selected oils were then mixed into the paint used during the lesson.

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

Touchmark team members reviewed the results and found them truly amazing. Agitation and behaviors decreased. Attention span increased. Handwriting improved. Social engagement expanded!

Prior to beginning the class, 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 and now loves to reminisce with staff.

The unique program is now in use across all 13 Touchmark communities in the U.S. and Edmonton, Alberta.

About Touchmark

A full-service retirement community, Touchmark on West Century offers a range of homes and lifestyle options for people 55-plus years. An on-site health and fitness club is open to anyone over 50 and features a variety of fitness options. For more information, visit [Touchmark.com](https://www.touchmark.com).

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