

NEWS RELEASE



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Therapeutic gardening sprouting at Touchmark

SPOKANE, Wash. — Whether it's snowing or sunny outside, residents living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia at Touchmark on South Hill now have the opportunity to spend time gardening indoors, day and night, no matter the weather. Touchmark is the first retirement community in Spokane to partner with Eldergrow™ and offer this unique experience.

"We are delighted to be working with Eldergrow and providing residents this indoor, elevated garden box along with regular garden-centered activities," says Touchmark Vice President of Clinical Services Wendy Schrag, RN-BC.

Schrag first saw Eldergrow at a conference and instantly knew the benefits it would provide to those with advancing dementia.

"Gardening is a favorite hobby for many people," she says. "It connects with people on so many levels and is a very rewarding activity offering numerous benefits."

Among the benefits are improved motor skills and self-esteem, normalized sleeping patterns, enhanced mood, reduced disorientation and decreased risk of falling.

Master Gardener Tracy Helling is an Eldergrow Educator who will be working with Touchmark residents. She points out that because gardening connects with people's senses — sight, smell, touch, sound and taste — it is an especially enriching activity for people living with memory loss.

Residents agree. "These classes are so much fun. I have a great time with my friends and touching the dirt," says Marilyn Shafer. Her friend Pat Martin says the garden brings her great joy. "Every time I look down the hall from my home, I see this bright garden."

The indoor garden box features a grow light connected to a timer that delivers the optimal spectrum of red and blue light. A fan runs constantly, which keeps away pests and aids in water evaporation. A watering chart helps make sure plants are not overwatered.

Residents tend to an assortment of plants that provide various sensory features, such as firm foliage, fuzzy leaves, edible herbs, pretty blooms and more. "Marty the

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Mint,” “Old Man Thyme” and “Maple the Waffle Plant” are just a few of the clever names residents came up with as they planted the wide variety of plants.

Twice a month, Helling leads a culinary or craft activity incorporating the plants.

Those interested in learning more about the benefits of the Eldergrow garden at Touchmark can call (509) 536-2929.

About Eldergrow

Eldergrow offers residents a therapeutic connection to nature through innovative gardening products and services. The mobile sensory garden brings nature inside, and educators teach evidence-based, therapeutic horticulture classes that engage residents physically, socially, cognitively, creatively and sustainably.

About Touchmark on South Hill

A full-service, award-winning retirement community, Touchmark on South Hill offers a wide range of homes and lifestyles, including an on-site Health & Fitness Studio with state-of-the-art equipment, certified fitness professionals, and a robust schedule of classes and personal training. More information is available at [Touchmark.com](https://www.touchmark.com).

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