INTRODUCTION

- At Martin Luther Care Center, a 137-bed skilled nursing facility in Bloomington, MN, our residents have identified a want for more connection to their community. This project follows the best practice methods of using creative approaches to provide meaningful connection to residents in long-term care.

- The project created an intergenerational community service program at Martin Luther Care Center. Care Center residents collaborated with students from a local elementary school in Bloomington, MN. As we could not gather in person for this activity, the students and residents first met virtually to discuss service and what it means to them.

- After the virtual connection, the students and residents worked hard to create Valentine’s day gifts for the local Meals on Wheels participants. This project will continue to be implemented for other upcoming holidays.

- This project was inspired by the best practices created in Anne Bastings’ “The Islands of Milwaukee” project. This project focused on reinstating seniors as members of their community and giving them a voice again. The project started with the 2,500 seniors writing questions to put in the Milwaukee county home delivered meals. The questions were then clipped onto the ropes of the exhibit and used to invite exhibit visitors to answer.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- “How important is connection to your community to you?”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Find new organizations to collaborate with to keep the momentum going coming out of COVID.

- Continue incorporating students from local schools in the process of the activity.

- Track contributions made by students and residents throughout the year for MLCC social media outlets and share with residents.

- Continue to provide meaningful opportunities to connect residents to their community.

SUMMARY

- 90 Valentine’s day gifts were made between the students and residents.

- Martin Luther Care Center made two connections within the Bloomington community: Indian Mounds Elementary and Meals on Wheels of Bloomington.

- Most participants felt a high level of connection to their community through this project and most participants would like to see another community service event in the future.

- Many residents also got the chance to reminisce about the happiness volunteering brought to their life in their past communities.

“It is amazing that we made 90 Valentine’s together! If I could give this more than a 5, I would.” – Martin Luther Care Center resident.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to:

- Kenzie Christopher – Preceptor/Campus Administrator
- Sally Peterson- Life Long Learning Director
- Mr. Conradi’s fifth grade class at Indian Mounds Elementary
- Martin Luther Campus Active Living team
- Kate Blessing- Community Outreach Director
- Wendy Vosson – The Director of Meals on Wheels Bloomington
- HCAD faculty