



The Fenwick Foundation

Enriching Lives...One at a Time

ERNEST L. BREEDING GARDENING PROGRAM



Fenwick's gardening program—named after Ernest L. Breeding, a former resident of one of our partner facilities who was an avid gardener—is designed to foster and encourage activity-based flower and gardening clubs and projects.

Our program provides "seed" funding for purchasing flowers, shrubs, perennials and other necessary materials so our program participants can follow their passion and create/cultivate nature's beauty.

Program participants drive these efforts - purchasing flowers and plants and then "digging in the dirt" and enjoying the results! The program operates year-round – indoor gardening is very popular.

Purpose of the Program

- Provides opportunities for gardeners to pursue their passion
- Keeps participants physically and mentally active and alert
- Promotes a collegial atmosphere to keep the residents working together and keeps them from becoming isolated
- Encourages participants to interact with each other and the communities where they live
- Beautifies the community; for some, provides produce and herbs for their meals



Benefits of Gardening:

Helps Combat Loneliness ~ Enjoyable Aerobic Exercise ~ Mood-boosting Benefits ~ Decreased Dementia Risk ~ Exposure to Vitamin D (outdoors)

Why a Gardening Program? Loneliness and isolation can have serious negative health impacts, particularly for seniors. Physical health can be affected by feelings of loneliness and, in one study, “people who identified as lonely had a...59 percent greater risk of decline and ...a 45 percent greater risk of death.”¹ In addition to these physical affects, researchers have identified that mental health issues can arise in seniors that are lonely and isolated, especially amongst those seniors residing in residential care facilities.²³ Gardening addresses these issues in so many ways.

*Gardening gives individuals a sense of worth,
a sense of responsibility, a sense of self, and
a sense of community involvement*

Gardening During the Pandemic.

During the pandemic, gardening is one of the few activities available. At this time, the vulnerable groups we serve have been quarantined and locked down – no family visits and limited communication. Our program is providing a vital need for participants and it counteracts the negative effects of loneliness by providing these individuals with an activity they can engage in while still maintaining social distancing requirements. These efforts can help break the disconnectedness and isolation that can sink in when one is quarantining.



¹ “Loneliness Linked to Serious Health Problems and Death Among Elderly.” *Loneliness Linked to Serious Health Problems and Death Among Elderly* | UC San Francisco, 15 Mar. 2020, www.ucsf.edu/news/2012/06/98644/loneliness-linked-serious-health-problems-and-death-among-elderly.

² Holwerda, Tjalling & Deeg, Dorly & Beekman, Aartjan & van Tilburg, Theo & Stek, Max & Jonker, Cees & Schoevers, Robert. (2012). Feelings of loneliness, but not social isolation, predict dementia onset: Results from the Amsterdam Study of the Elderly (AMSTEL). *Journal of neurology, neurosurgery, and psychiatry*. 85. 10.1136/jnnp-2012-302755.

³ “Depression Among Seniors in Residential Care.” *CMHA National*, cmha.ca/documents/depression-among-seniors-in-residential-care.