TOUCHMARK

THE {FULL} LIFE

Touchmark on West Prospect Newsletter

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EARTH APPRECIATION

Have you ever heard the joke about the fish who meets another fish and asks, "How's the water?" The other fish responds, "What the heck is water?" This oft-told joke is relevant to us on Earth Day. For the fish, there's no distinguishing between what is water and what is not—it's all water! And for us, our goal on Earth Day (and ideally every day) is to recognize that it's all the earth, and it is all worth appreciating. From the sights we see on walks around the neighborhood to the hikes we take in mountains many miles away, the beauty of the earth shines through in even the most unassuming places, and it is up to us to recognize that.

The International Council on Active Aging®, an association that serves as a thought leader in the active aging industry, has this same philosophy built into one of its seven dimensions of wellness, which Touchmark embraces. The Environmental dimension states, "Surrounded by natural and man-made environments, good stewardship means respecting resources by choosing 'green' processes that reuse and recycle goods. It also means looking at ways to bring people into the natural environment and encourage active living through urban and property designs emphasizing walking paths, meditation and vegetable gardens, and similar options."

Touchmark communities are living this value in a multitude of ways. In one community, residents peeked into the wilder side of nature when they traveled to the heart of the Rocky Mountains to see hundreds of elk in their natural habitat. Elsewhere, residents strapped on skis and snowshoes or hopped onto sleds for

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invigorating winter experiences. Residents appreciated the natural world in more subtle ways, too: one community created compact and easy-to-care-for succulent gardens; other communities prepared to welcome spring with parties that focused on appreciating this season of change.

Read on to find more stories of residents digging into the soil of earth appreciation and anticipating its many rewards.

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT



Howie Gilchrist
Touchmark at Wedgewood resident

How long have you lived at Touchmark, and why did you choose to move here?
I've lived at Touchmark for one-and-a-half years. I moved here after being alone for three years after my wife of 55 years passed away. I had friends, of course, but it was a lonely time. A friend whose mother-in-law lived at Touchmark told me that when she was asked if she would have done anything differently in her own retirement, her answer was that she wished she would have moved to Touchmark sooner.

It's been great for me. I've met a lot of people, and I am involved in all the activities—last night, I participated in the singing group. I'm not the best singer, maybe, but I'm here for a long time and a good time! I am in touch with my family every day, and I still get to see them a lot. I figure I could be home alone by myself, or I could be here! And I'm happy to be here. I had a friend who used to say, if you aren't happy, get happy. I like that approach.

How does life at Touchmark help you feel connected to the natural world or earth more broadly?
I take every trip that Touchmark offers, so I get to see many new places. I have a friend here who grows a garden every year, and this year, I'm going to help him with his garden. I'm planning to grow rhubarb in it. I grew up in the country, and we bought a farm when I retired at 60, so I like being outside. My son lives at the farm now, and I'm going to take some of the rhubarb from the garden there and plant it at Touchmark. My friend grows cucumbers and lots of other vegetables in the raised beds available to us here. Maybe we'll get some rhubarb pies out of the garden this year!

What other hobbies or activities do you participate in at Touchmark?
I enjoy cross-country skiing, but this year has been very different weather-wise. We've had snow, then warm weather, and then rain, so it hasn't been a great year to do it. But we just got new snow recently, so I can go out soon! I'll sometimes see deer, and there are lots of rabbits. Touchmark is on 26 acres, so there's a fair bit of property to explore.

Touchmark makes it easy to be comfortable in the community but still get outside. We have picnics near the river and go on other outings around the area. It's wonderful! I've learned more about Edmonton from living here than I knew before, and I lived in Edmonton for 40 years before moving to Touchmark!

Congratulations!

Two of Touchmark's accomplished female leaders have been recognized as impressive contributors in the senior living industry in 2022 through the McKnight's Senior Living and McKnight's Long-Term Care News Women of Distinction awards program.

Hall of Honor Class of 2022

The Hall of Honor category honors women who are at a level equivalent to vice president or higher and who have had a significant effect on their organization or industry.



Wendy Schrag, RN-BC, Vice President of Clinical Services, Touchmark

Beginning at age 14, when she started as a CNA in a nursing home, Wendy has devoted her life to improving people's health, wellness, and quality of life. In 2002, Touchmark at All Saints hired her to work one day a week as the Wellness Nurse for independent living. In 2004, she was promoted to Memory Care Manager, a position she held for eight years. Today, she is responsible for supporting and directing all clinical services for Touchmark's 13 communities in the U.S. and Canada, ensuring they comply with local and national guidelines and the Touchmark Gold Standard.

Rising Stars Class of 2022

The Rising Stars awards category celebrates women who are 40 or younger or have fewer than 15 years of experience in the senior living, skilled nursing, or home care fields.



Anne-Marie Fitz, Executive Director, Touchmark in Fargo, North Dakota

Anne-Marie has had a meteoric rise to a leadership position since beginning at Touchmark in 2007 as an intern and advancing through a variety of jobs with increasing responsibility. She was appointed to the Life Enrichment/Wellness team before assuming the role of Director and leading the department for six years. In 2018, she also was given full responsibility for Dining Services. A brief stint as Interim Executive Director was followed by her promotion to Executive Director in 2020.

The common denominator shared by Wendy and Anne-Marie are their genuine and thoughtful leadership. Both are known and respected for their clear thinking, calmness, compassion, integrity, and creativity, no matter the circumstances.

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COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Enriching lives through fun and vibrant community events! Note: The photos below show The {FULL} Life at varying stages of state and local mask mandates.

















CELEBRATE EARTH DAY



MICHELLE SUE
Director of Wellness Operations

The theme of Earth Day this year is Invest in Our Planet. Whether you choose to invest your energy, time, or other resources, there is a multitude of ways to show your appreciation for our earth.

Limit device use: You might choose to take an evening off your cellphone or refrain from watching TV on a particular day. The benefits of this are two-fold: in addition to saving valuable energy that can tax the earth, you're giving yourself an opportunity to get more enjoyment from the natural world.

Prepare for a "green" picnic: While it might still be too cold to enjoy an outdoor picnic, you can prepare for one now. Reusable utensils, tote bags, and other gear such as solar-powered lanterns are simple but effective ways to keep your personal waste to a minimum and encourage thoughtful habits.

Creative gift-giving: Consider purchasing items that can leave a lasting positive impact on the recipient and the world. Glass containers, reusable water bottles, or even a basket of sustainably sourced fruit can be a sweet treat for everyone.

Plant a native garden: You don't need lots of space—a large pot or two will do! Native plants can help your local pollinator population and inspire the appreciation of friends and neighbors. For more on native plants that do well in pots, see below.

NATIVE PLANT BALCONY GARDENING

Balcony and deck gardens are great ways to connect with the natural world and encourage a healthy ecosystem. They require little care but provide a lot of color and joy, not to mention valuable food for hungry pollinators. The following three plants are native to North America and are easy to cultivate in medium-sized pots, meaning that even if your thumb isn't all that green, you still have a high chance of succeeding! Visit wildflower.org for more ideas.

- Maidenhair ferns grow intricate and delicate leaves that are a joy to see. Though not technically a flowering plant, their abundant green leaves make nice additions to gardens big and small. Conditions: medium shade and water.
- Columbine is an easy-to-grow flowering plant with leaves that turn maroon in the fall and flowers that bloom in various colors during the spring. Conditions: mid to full shade, infrequent watering.
- Echinacea will grace your garden with bold purple flowers that are sure to add joy to your day. Conditions: sun, part shade, infrequent watering.

TOUCHMARK ON WEST PROSPECT
FULL-SERVICE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
2601 TOUCHMARK DRIVE • APPLETON, WI 54914
920-832-9100 • TOUCHMARK.COM

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