

SOcial
CAPITAL

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Building Better Communities

Social Capital

Volume VI

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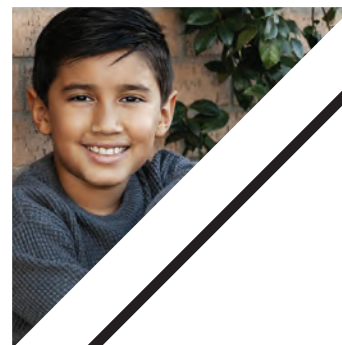
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Introducing



Social Capital was started as a way to highlight the many people, communities, and programs that help HCA come together. Through hours of commitment and decades of engagement, HCA's programs continue to push the envelope. However, if recent months have taught us anything, it's that human connection is really at the heart of what we do. When so many were isolated we needed a way to pivot and continue to make things within reach. So we got to work. Within weeks we had set up a plan to release on-demand content for our residents to watch 24-7. Posted on YouTube and shared on Facebook, participants of HCA programs started viewing drawing tutorials, yoga exercises, and learning about poetry. While informative and fun, on-demand content lacked the interaction that makes HCA programs endearing moments of learning, growth, and connection.

Enter HCA Live.

Located at www.hcalive.org, the online platform has allowed residents from across HCA's portfolio to connect regardless of location. In many ways this form of distance learning has closed the gap for many of our residents. Properties that were once too far to support on-site classes with HCA instructors, can now access classes taught by all of them. Residents in the Antelope Valley can take a yoga class that was, at a time, only offered in-person in Carson. This hybridized approach to programs is paving the way for a new approach to access the vast offerings HCA can provide. All of this is exclusively available on HCA Live. All residents have to do is sign up on the HCA Live website, completely free of cost, to gain access to dozens of hours of live classes and programs. We look forward to serving our communities with this new platform—not as a replacement to in-person programming—but as very necessary companion to help keep education and enrichment within reach.

TOP 5

HCA Live is bringing our seniors into the digital era one Zoom call at a time

In March the world we knew flipped upside down, and in a matter of days we all retreated into our homes, connected only through our hearts – and through technology.

As we at HCA transitioned to online classes and HCA Live was born, we heard from our senior residents who wanted to up their game in this new online world. The last call for the digital train was ringing out and they wanted to board.

Here are the top 5 reasons residents are taking our Computer Literacy classes:

REASONS OUR SENIOR RESIDENTS ARE TAKING COMPUTER LITERACY CLASSES

- 1 Zoom is the new hangout spot:**

From church to educational programs to their Friday rosary group, everything is on Zoom now. Learning how to use it means keeping interests active and friendships intact.
- 2 Family love:**

Being away from loved ones takes its toll on our mental health, and more so during a pandemic. Residents want to get a hold of their families for special occasions, to host gatherings or to simply catch up and find comfort.
- 3 HCA Live:**

Residents who had always attended our classes missed yoga, art, singing and more, and wanted to adapt as fast as we did.
- 4 Necessity is the mother of invention:**

A whole new world opened up for our senior residents who now see the magic of learning online, buying from their favorite supermarket online or travelling the world online.
- 5 Self-sufficiency:**

What to do when their computer acts up? Or if they forget their passwords? Learning new skills helps seniors troubleshoot without depending on grandchildren for help.

FEEDING

A PORTFOLIO



Apart from mask-wearing, social distancing, and business closures, pandemic life also saw an immediate surge in online grocery shopping as citizens everywhere hunkered down at home. The rush to provide contact-free options led many stores to partner up with delivery services like Instacart or create their own in-house solutions. Prepared meal delivery businesses also grew in popularity.

These alternatives served some demographics quite well: younger, tech savvy professionals, and those employed in fields that could easily transition to remote work. For HCA residents however, over 50% of whom are seniors, this growing trend presented some formidable barriers. The limitation of Internet and technology resources due to on-site computer lab closures, combined with the various surcharges and convenience costs associated with online food sources reasonably precluded the participation of many. Though in-person shopping persisted, concerns about safety and transportation also rendered this tradition less desirable, especially early on in the pandemic.



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LOS ANGELES REGIONAL



Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.

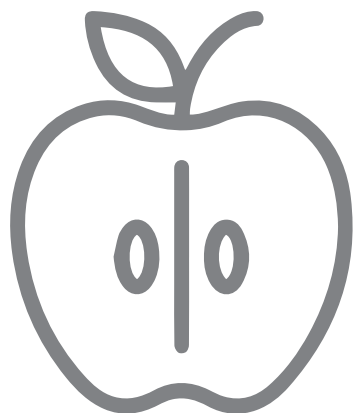


In response to a growing concern about food insecurity in our portfolio, HCA combined forces with Thomas Safran & Associates in the spring of 2020 to research local resources and opportunities. Now a year later, we have succeeded in coordinating 63 deliveries of food—most of which were donated—to 42 different low-income apartment communities across LA County and Fresno. Needless to say, we certainly didn't do it alone. We partnered up with local organizations specializing in food resourcing to help us reach as many residents as possible, with as much fresh produce, bulk grains, and quality prepared foods as we could.

Our most wide-reaching partners were no other than the LA Regional and Central California Food Banks. Together, they were responsible for 40 food deliveries to communities ranging in location from Fresno to Whittier to Inglewood.

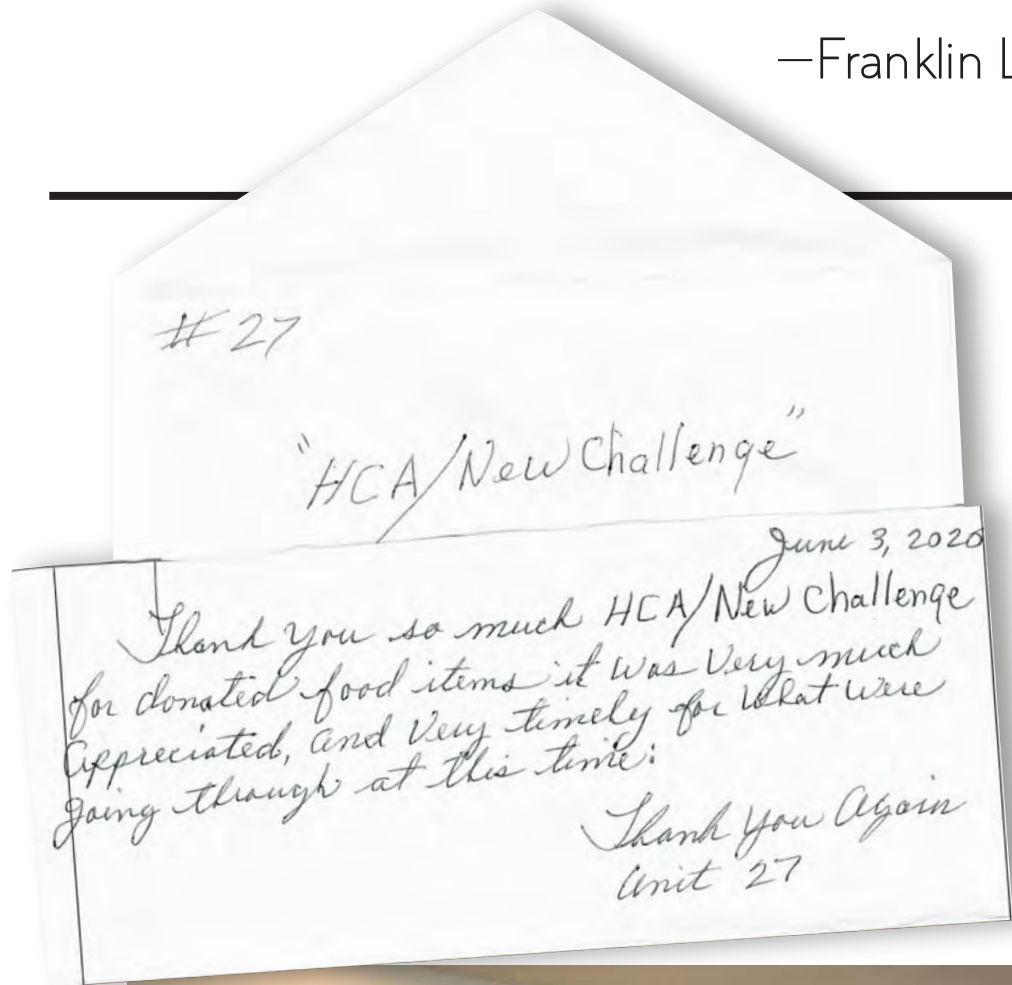


We also owe a huge debt to Food Cycle LA, a small but mighty nonprofit focused on reducing food waste while feeding those who need it most. In addition to sourcing fresh produce and other standard groceries, their offerings also include prepared foods leftover from local restaurants and caterers, a unique addition to the donations of other food banks. David Chong, Property Manager of Hancock Gardens Senior Apts shared how “Our first fresh food delivery from Food Cycle LA was a great success. The residents loved the variety of food, such as the fruits, breads, and the ready-made salads.” Sandra Hernandez, Skyline Village Property Manager recalled, “My experience with FoodCycle LA was effortless. They arrived on time—early in fact—and unloaded all items for us in the community room.”



“ We are extremely blessed to be able to assist our community in need and look forward to continuing to contribute during these difficult times. ”

—Franklin Lopez, Sassy Bird



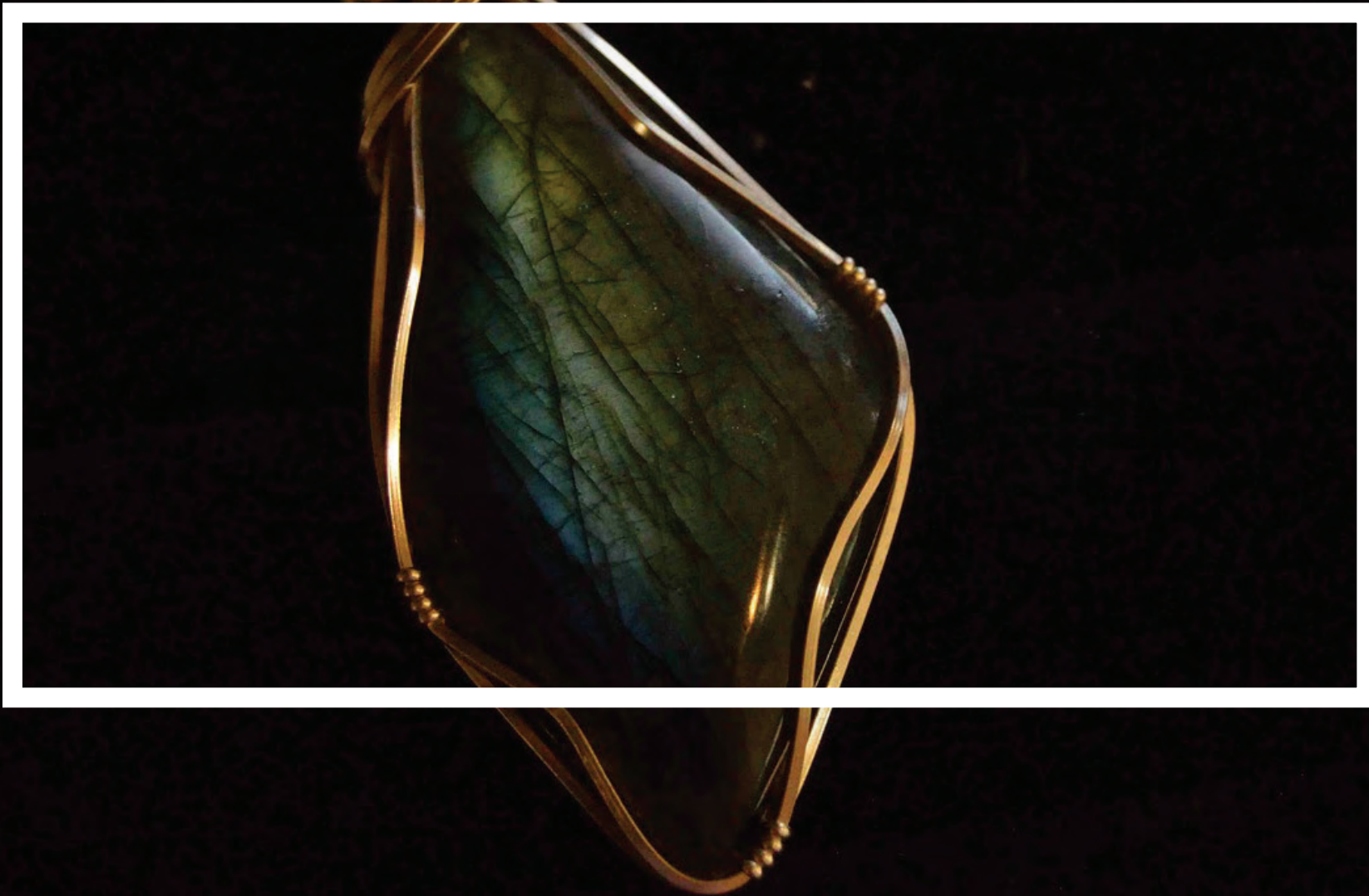
Franklin Lopez (right) & Dorian Salazar (left) of Sassy Bird Lancaster

If you've visited Lancaster with a hankering for spicy chicken, then you probably already know about our next food resource partner: the Nashville hot chicken joint, Sassy Bird. This small but spicy establishment came to Lancaster's 'Boulevard' in early 2020 and soon became a neighborhood favorite. Owners Franklin Lopez, Dorian Salazar and the Sassy Bird team delivered more than 6,000 pounds of dry foods to 1,500 households across several different TSA-HCA communities in the greater Los Angeles area. They even negotiated support from large-scale vendors like Performance Foodservice, which donated 200 pounds of pasta. Lopez said, "We are extremely blessed to be able to assist our community in need and look forward to continuing to contribute during these difficult times. This experience has been amazing to the entire Sassy Bird team."

HCA is also grateful to Pastor John and his Torrance team at New Challenge Ministries, a South Bay food bank that brought enough food to feed all 149 households at the Villaggio in Carson. One Villaggio resident wrote, "It was very appreciated and very timely for what we were going through at this time."



**CREATIVITY
ALL AROUND**



At TSA communities, HCA offers a variety of creative programs for residents ranging in age from seniors to youngsters, and in skill from complete novice to diehard artist. These programs attract those looking for an opportunity to explore their inner artist, to enhance their skills, or to just create from their hearts. "Creativity Class" at Eucalyptus Park is a prime example.



Every Tuesday morning a dedicated group of resident women gathers in the building's community room to make art. The class aims to create a space for residents to explore their imagination by either learning new arts and crafts techniques or going back to recall and refresh old ones. Together, these residents have a space to share, learn from one another, and keep their talents up to date.

One of the projects voted "most popular" by Creativity Class participants is Celtic jewelry-making. Here, they dive deep into the technique of wire-wrapping, while at the same time learning about the history of Celtic symbols and history, as well as the meaning and properties behind different types of stones.

Of course, the benefits of learning how to make your own jewelry go well beyond just the new knowledge. They give residents a weekly opportunity for connection and social interaction, as well as a new sense of accomplishment.

"Making these rings and bracelets has been a blast," says Eucalyptus Park resident Mae Clark, who loves sharing stories about her grandmother's quilting and her husband, who shared her jewelry-making passion. "I don't even have to pay for jewelry anymore, since I know I can do it on my own, and that's very fun."

Parents eager to give their kids a space in which to develop mentally, socially, and emotionally through art also have the opportunity to do so with our creative programming. At Skyline Village in downtown LA, kiddos enjoy everything from finger painting to dance and music, from crafting to reading and writing. They love both the process and the results. Layla Durán, one of the youngest residents in the online program “Move, Paint, Create!” says, “I love dancing and painting, but my favorite is all the artwork we make.”

Creativity promotes problem-solving skills in children, in addition to enhancing their imagination. In lessons centered around movement, for example, kids learn dance steps through character and story creation. Each step connects to a different part of the story. This process involves working together, expanding their imagination, and building on their movement and coordination. It also gives them an opportunity to learn stage presence. This was most evident in the summer of 2020, when students filmed individual clips of themselves showcasing their newly acquired dance skills. It was later edited into a fun video premiered to families and friends. In addition to Layla, Abigail and Keidelyn Lemus were a hit, delighting everyone with their beautiful performance, improvisation skills, and joyful movements.



(re) **INVENTING &**



(re) **DISCOVERING**

the essence of theatre

“ It is not theatre that is indispensable, but something quite different. To cross the frontiers between you and me.”

– Jerzy Grotowski

As the theatres have gone dark with no concrete reopening in sight, it's easy to fear an end. What is theatre if not the illuminated stages, the elaborate costumes, the changing sets, and the people in seats?

When you think about it, theatre is about reinvention. The impetus behind so many scripts has been the desire to reimagine how we explain the human condition and our attempts to better understand it. Theatre gifts us the opportunity to reinvent perception—that of ourselves and each other. It holds the potential to grant empowerment through authenticity and discovery through shared experience. Actors go on stage countless nights in a row, not to perform the same script, but to breathe new life into the words and actions of their characters. Theatre is constantly undergoing this beautiful process of metamorphosis.

Theatre is also about bridging the many gaps we face in this world. Through this medium of storytelling, we can feel in real time the empathy that could move us to make change outside the theatre walls.

While theatre as we know it has been forced to take a beat, its true essence has continued to thrive. Reinvention can still be had, and bridges can still be built, as proven by HCA's 2020 Storyteller's Virtual Summer Camp (SVSC). Across seven weeks, seven campers redefined theatre and reestablished Grotowski's idea of crossing the frontiers that exist between us all. Theatre has not made its exit; it has only found new life through the innovation and open minds of our very own residents.

Theatre camp has always played a huge role in the theatre community to nurture future artists and leaders. Stay-at-home orders could not stop our young artists from discovering the fun that theatre brings to the table. For some kids, like Patrick Medwood (Gilbert Lindsay), this was their first time exploring this medium. "I thought theatre was only acting and making movies. I feel really good about theatre now because I know there are other things to enjoy." Ethan Lopez-Rugamas (Jefferson Square) admits that before SVSC, he "didn't think theatre was hard [and] thought it was easy." Through his camp experience, he cultivated a new appreciation for the art, learning that theatre "takes time and work." Other kids had already dabbled in this medium. Madison Hunt (Jefferson Square), for example, said that she "knew it would be fun because [I did] theater in school...and was happy to get more experience in my acting."



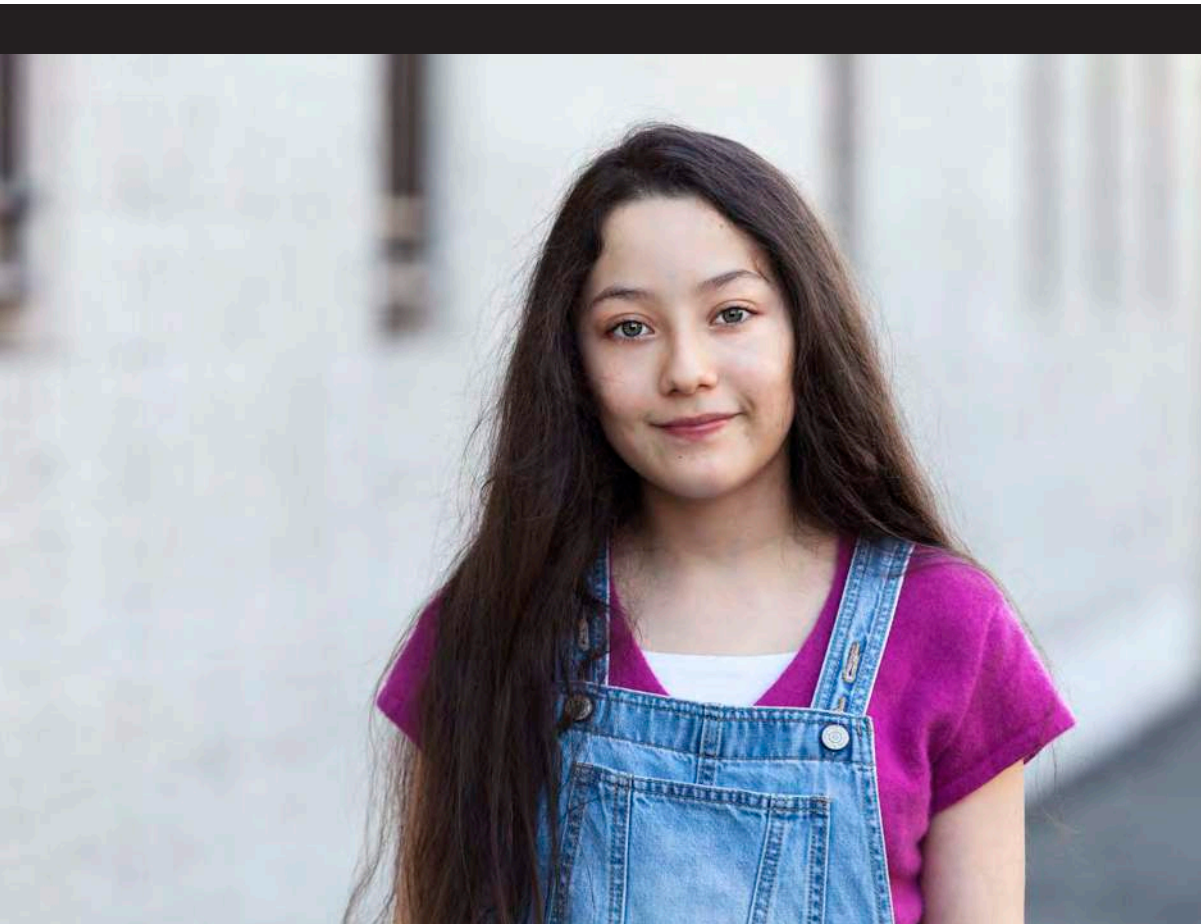


Through the summer, SVSC students explored the physical comedy of Commedia dell'Arte, learned how to listen and react in the improv space, produced their own original monologues and short plays, and so much more. "One Word Stories" was an improv game the kids played. Valerie Chicas (Jefferson Square) called this her "favorite exercise." She described it as students taking turns "saying a word and having to keep going" to create a cohesive story together. Writing and performing puppet shows was another favorite amongst students. Patrick said, "it was fun to make puppets and write a story about them. It was my first time doing this." Madison shared, "It was fun to make my own characters and create my own story any way I wanted." Ethan added, "I had fun writing my own monologue and acting it out. It was exciting to create my own theatre work. I wanted to see how it happens and now I know." The students started to really find agency in creating their own original work—proof that storytelling truly lives within all of us.



Storyteller's Virtual Summer Camp was one of the first times that we saw residents from different properties come together. In this case, those seven students came from two communities in the Thomas Safran & Associates portfolio: Jefferson Square and Gilbert Lindsay. Ethan mentioned, "it was cool to meet other kids and have a virtual experience while learning something new." Patrick thought "it was cool to speak to kids I have never met before. They were excited like me and easy to talk with." Valerie, who admits to being shy, gushed about how "getting to know everybody made me not feel shy anymore." Madison thought it was "fun being in theater with kids that lived on the same property." By reinventing theatre in a virtual landscape, we were able to create different kinds of bridges. They transcended physical space, from a hallway to several city blocks, as well as existing or even likely social networks.

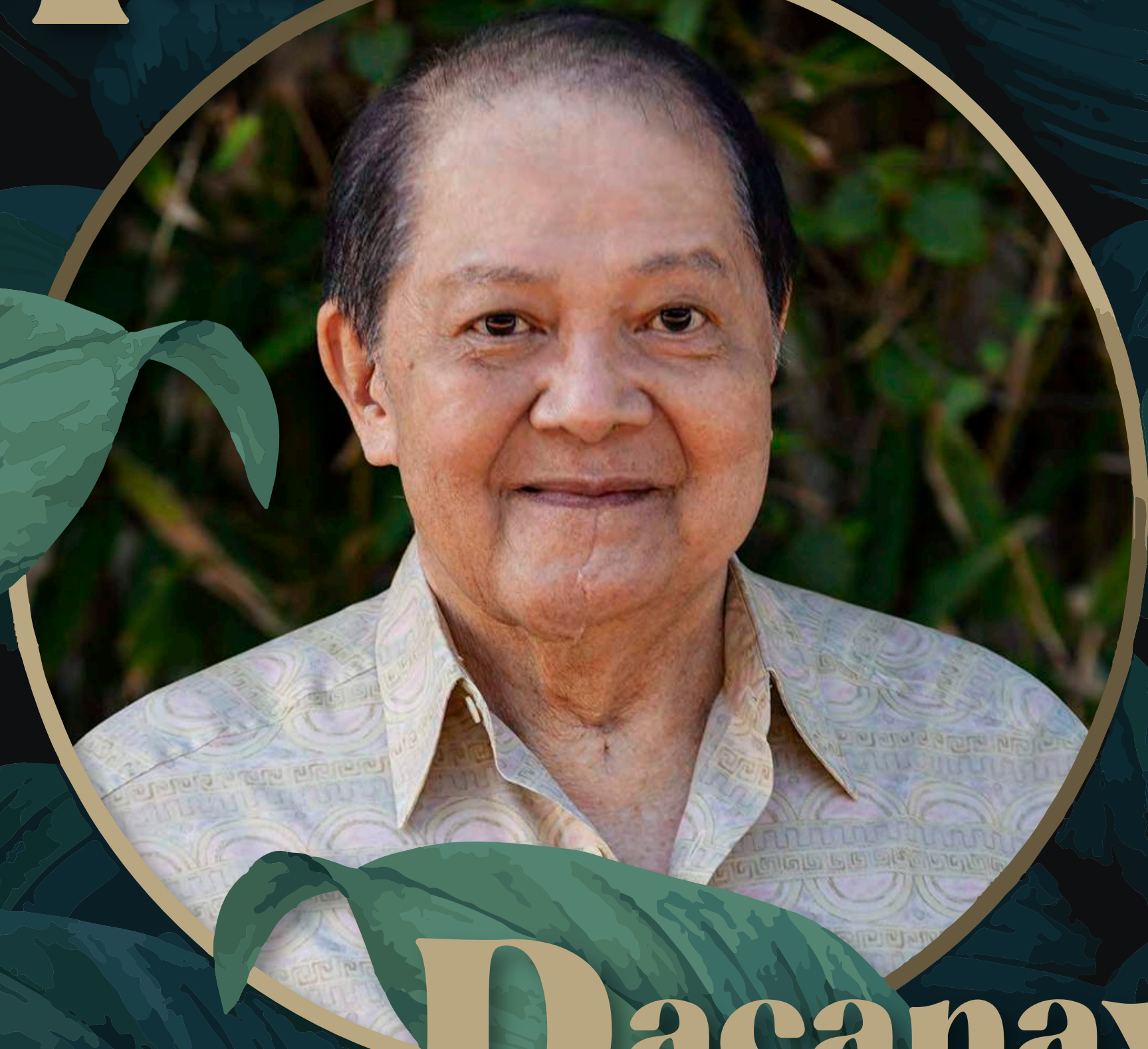




Whether they felt it or not, the SVSC kids became theatremakers. They made theatre within the space we call home and the walls we call Zoom screens. They celebrated their own unique voices and those of their classmates through a historic form of art and a sacred creative tradition. They proved that the magic of theatre truly lives in the people who come together to create pathways to see each other more clearly.

If our theatremakers were able to cross this frontier in a time that says theatre should find its exit, what quest can't we conquer? This wasn't just a pivot in how we experience theatre, this was a beautiful metamorphosis in how we celebrate each other and the stories that live within us. The theatre continues to live and breathe, and we have our beloved theatremakers of Storyteller's Virtual Summer Camp as an example to lead the way.

Mariano



Dacanay

It's almost time for class. On the screen at hcalive.com, the purple "Join Now" button turns pink. Mariano clicks, Zoom launches, he sees the teacher, and he's in. "Hi Mariano, welcome to Yoga class!"

For more than a year since the pandemic started, this is how Philippines-born Mariano has started his weekday mornings. At 80 he keeps himself active and loves to learn new things that help him feel good and keep growing as a person. "These classes give me a lot; they stimulate my mind and my muscles," he says when asked what he thinks about his HCA Live classes.

Ever since he became a resident at The Gateway at City Center, he has attended the educational programs that HCA offers at the property. "I've been living here for about four years. A few months after I moved in, I noticed some classes were offered and I was delighted. I have taken many classes ever since: Reflections, Art, even French! Before the pandemic I was taking Yoga classes and Arts & Crafts," he shares.

When the pandemic started and all in-person classes were cancelled, he feared he wasn't going to be able to keep learning. However, as HCA readily evolved to keep serving residents across all properties, in-person classes transitioned to online classes. Mariano was eager to get the news and signed up immediately. "I was very happy. Because of the pandemic we knew everything would be stagnant and you wouldn't be able to go anywhere except your own living room. We

couldn't have classes in the community room anymore, so that made me excited, to exercise long distance. What a delight!"

Mariano doesn't miss any of the wellness classes offered daily at HCA Live. "Exercise needs to be done every day," he shares. "The first thing the doctor asks when you go to your appointments is: do you exercise? How many times?" He loves the mix of wellness classes that he is able to take, from Chair Yoga to Face Yoga, from Breathing Exercises to Meditation.

However, it is not only wellness he is after. He adds, "every class you offer is so stimulating for the body and the mind. I'm really glad and delighted to join all of the classes. You have Arts, Computer Literacy, Technology. There are new topics to learn every day. It's just wonderful."

The very first class he had when the pandemic started was Computer Literacy, via a phone call, where he learned how to download Zoom and how to connect to a Zoom class so that he could join the daily Chair Yoga classes offered by HCA Live. "At first I didn't know how to get there, but Computer Literacy remedied that right away," he says.

After that there was no going back. A year later Mariano signs up for most of the daily programming offered at HCA Live. When asked what his favorite class is he answers without hesitation: "If they say pick one class I pick them all because I love them all."



The Bright
Future
of Theater



Melody Chicas and A'niya McDermon first made their presence known in HCA's Storyteller's Virtual Summer Camp. It was in this program that the TSA and HCA community got to learn of these two bright stars that we know will make a mark on our world one day.



**ACTOR
NOTEBOOK**





When speaking to *Melody*, you can't help but admire her cool soft-spoken confidence. At such a young age, she already exercises such a matured empathy and a flourishing understanding of following your gut—qualities of an artist extraordinaire. Since Storyteller's Virtual Summer Camp, *Melody* has dedicated her time to mastering her skills in Acting, Dance, and Voice and continues to make leaps and bounds in her weekly self-discovery as an artist. “[With] Theatre, I feel like I can find a whole new personality inside of me when acting. I love singing because it's incorporated with music, and I have a love and passion for music.” Her thirst for new knowledge and sharpening her skills shows itself in how she breathes authenticity into her character work, in her nuanced storytelling, and in her generosity towards fellow actors.



Upon meeting A'niya, you can't help but be enveloped in her bright and cheery disposition. Her illuminous energy not only finds its way into our hearts, but it finds itself in her art. Since Storyteller's Virtual Summer Camp, A'niya has been honing her Acting and Dancing chops. With every move and every line she delivers, you can count on A'niya bringing her essence to the work and giving her own 100% with profound pride. A'niya states, "I love the performing arts because I get to express my feelings." When you witness A'niya perform, it's easy to feel where her heart is. Each week, A'niya's work is personal testament to who she is and wants to be as an artist. The love she has for her art will easily put a smile on anyone's face.



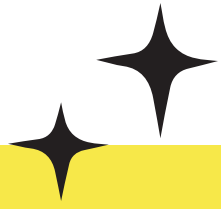


These two powerhouse gals have been growing together as artists. They have been on the challenging, but joyful journey of developing their improvisational “...yes, and” muscles, analyzing and identifying story trajectories in their scripts, fleshing out characters, and so much more. Upon reflecting on their time in classes, Melody states, “Before taking *Zooming into Broadway* with Ms. Krystle...I didn’t really change [my] tone or the way I acted, I just acted in my normal voice. But now that I’ve spent a few months in *Zooming into Broadway*, I know that I’ve gotten better. Now, I don’t act in my regular voice anymore, and I actually jump into the feelings and emotions of the character.”

Melody and A’niya have been so undeniably invested in the work they do and have also become great support systems for one another.

A’niya “loves sharing ideas” with Melody and Melody appreciates how “A’niya’s enthusiasm makes me enthusiastic, too.” The kinship they have created as young colleagues has been a beautiful one to witness.

Both of these young ladies have dreams to be actors. It is astounding to see the level of talent each of these girls holds and how their skills continue to grow. On top of that, the support they have for one another is powerful. In a world where young girls still do not see a consistent seat at the table for everyone, it is evident that these girls have everything it takes to show us that the future of art will have no other choice but to make seats or reinvent its ecosystem completely. Remember these names—these girls are rising stars.



HCA SCHOLARSHIP: SCULPTING A BETTER

TOMORROW

*“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”*

-T.S. Elliot



The above quote from T.S. Elliot embodies the very spirit of HCA's Annual Scholarship. The annual award allows those with a passion for learning and knowledge to continually explore their interests beyond HCA's normal program offerings. It's hard to think of anyone for whom this rings more true for than Bruce Ehlers.





Bruce has been a longtime resident at Arbor Court in Lancaster. Going on 10 years, he's seen his fair share of changes in the community. One constant however, has been Bruce's involvement in HCA's diverse programs at the property. Over the years Bruce has engaged sculpture, photography, screenprinting, drawing, and painting classes with an unwavering commitment to his perfecting craft and always striving to learn more. Bruce is also an avid gardener. He has been instrumental in maintaining Arbor Court's community garden, which has gained local praise for its long-sustained success.

Arbor Court's ceramic sculpture program was a gateway to revisit a medium that he had last touched in junior college nearly 45 years ago. After experimenting with some free building and getting used to the medium, Bruce made two Native American-inspired masks. Both projects took over a year to complete due to the meticulous nature of the craft and Bruce's unrelenting attention to detail. Using photo references from books on Pacific Northwestern Native American Art, Bruce was able to recreate both masks, at scale and as full heads. He even hand-crafted the stands that the sculptures sit on as well.

Getting his hands on clay and being able to create whet Bruce's appetite for continued ceramics education. By applying to HCA's Dream Big Scholarship Bruce was awarded funding to supplement his arts education off-site at a local ceramics studio. He was re-introduced to throwing clay on a potter's wheel and has made dozens of vases and vessels to date.





While 2020's pandemic put many things on hold, Bruce was not one of them. He was able to continue learning and creating via 1-on-1, socially distanced lessons at D's Ceramics in Lancaster. Thanks to HCA's Scholarship, Bruce's pursuit of higher learning went on, uninterrupted. "It definitely kept me sane during the lockdown," relates Bruce. "That and gardening made sure that I had something to occupy my time that was constructive."

If ceramics is Bruce's escape, than gardening is his constant. His green thumb has ensured the longevity of Arbor Court's community garden. Working with Arbor Court's Master Gardener, Kimble, the once empty garden beds are a veritable oasis for the residents. "It's always made me happy," Bruce states of gardening. "Living at [Arbor Court] allows me to do all the things I love to do. Can't beat it."





*I*n the spring of 2021 HCA launched their latest offering in distance learning, *Art School Confidential*. The class meets twice a month and has covered topics such as the history of landscape painting, black graphic designers, the art of movie credits, WPA posters, and a class dedicated entirely to murals, street art, and graffiti. It's served as a way for residents to learn the history and secrets behind the world's greatest artists and their work. Art School Confidential has also been a great means of exploring the cumulative nature of the art world. Current artistic styles come from previous movements and residents are able to learn about contemporary greats while discovering which masters inspired them.

THE UNBREAKABLE POWER OF




TALL TALES

T

he power of storytelling is undeniable.

Despite the forces of division or separation, there is something extraordinary about how sharing stories perpetually brings us together. On March 12th, 2020, the Tiny Mugs and Tall Tales Book Club did not know that this would be the last time to date they would convene in a physical space together. Stay-at-home orders were in place only a few hours after they met. The future of their beloved gatherings formed a palpable question mark.

In a time of great uncertainty, TMTT Book Clubbers rose above a new set of global challenges brought on by COVID-19. Leaning on each other and patiently navigating a new virtual space, they demonstrated that nothing would get in the way of their most treasured time together. Thursday's banter, discoveries, and laughs would prevail.



Navigating Zoom, device cameras, and audio settings did not deter the TMTT Book Clubbers from pointing out fascinating plot twists from their next book, Yangsze Choo's *The Night Tiger*. It also did not stop them from meeting online with Choo to pick her brain and share their journey. It's not every day we get to meet a New York Times Best Selling author! They found levity in the mischievous story of *The Housekeeper* by Natalie Berelli. They took time and love to learn more about each other and the world around them through Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*.

The TMTT Book Club also watched their family grow. Being in the virtual space, we were able to invite folks from other TSA communities.



Book Clubbers from The Woods in Playa Vista embraced residents from Norwood Learning Village and Veteran's Village of Glendale with open arms. Woods resident, Mildred Nichols, mentioned, "It feels great and I like meeting new people from different properties." A silver lining in this pandemic, the club has expanded in a way that may not have been possible had they not entered this virtual meeting space.

Storytelling is a magical and powerful vehicle for the inherently human need for connection. Whether we are relating to a friend's personal narrative or diving into a book together, we find each other through stories. Whatever comes our way, this connection is unbreakable.



“

... the club has expanded in a way that may not have been possible had they not entered this virtual meeting space.

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**“Tall Tales and Tiny Mugs”
is continued in Part I of
Social Capital Volume 6.***



*** Download *Social Capital*
Part I to read about
on-site & in-person
HCA programs.**