



246 North Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Loomis Life

Calling all Readers!

We enjoy sharing the most recent updates and valuable resources through *Loomis Life* each month, so your feedback is essential to us.

What topics would you like to see covered in future editions?

Whether it's health and wellness tips, community events, resident spotlights, or anything else, please reach out to Devin at: DCameron@loomiscommunities.org

Share your thoughts with us today!

Want to catch up on past editions of *Loomis Life*? Scan the QR Code below.



Upcoming Events:

Applewood:

Oktoberfest - October 2026

Loomis Lakeside:

5/4 - Bonsai 101

Oktoberfest - October 2026

Loomis Village:

5/8- Bonsai 101

Oktoberfest - October 2026

All events require RSVP to Devin by phone or email:

413-530-4144

DCameron@loomiscommunities.org

The Arts at The Loomis Communities:

Where Creativity Supports Healthy Aging

The Evidence is In: The Arts Promote Health and Well-Being

For older adults, the arts are not just entertainment; they're a pathway to thriving. They engage the mind, strengthen the body, nurture the soul, and build community. As we look for ways to support aging well, incorporating the arts is one of the most joyful and effective investments we can make.

Whether painting, pottery, woodworking, quilting, dancing, singing, writing, or theater residents of The Loomis Communities find new opportunities for artistic expression. Whether you have spent years in the arts or have never taken up art in your life, it's never too late to start.

You might use art to support your own well-being without even thinking about it. For example, you might doodle when you feel stressed or stuck on a long Zoom meeting.

In the summary of a National Academies Workshop, "Research Gaps and Opportunities for Exploring the Relationship of the Arts to Health and Well-Being in Older Adults", Kathy Hathorn, a pioneer in therapeutic health care art, shared that expressive arts activities help individuals relax, provide a sense of control, reduce depression and anxiety, encourage playfulness and a sense of humor, as well as improve cognition and self-esteem. Hathorn noted that making art also can nurture spirituality and reduce boredom.

In various studies of older adults, arts participation has been linked to positive health outcomes such as reduced rates of cognitive decline and improved mood, communications, and flexibility among patients with Alzheimer's disease or other neurodegenerative disorders.

Beyond cognition, the arts serve as a powerful medium for emotional expression and psychological health. The landmark "Creativity and Aging Study" conducted by Dr. Gene Cohen at George Washington University found that participants in professionally led arts programs reported fewer doctor visits, less medication use, and lower levels of depression than control groups. They also demonstrated increased morale and a stronger sense of purpose.

Creative participation has also been associated with measurable physical benefits. Research from the University of California, Berkeley, indicates that older adults who participate in dance or movement-based arts show improved balance, mobility, and gait stability — key factors in fall prevention. Additionally, attending live performances or engaging with art as an observer has been correlated with lower blood pressure and reduced stress hormone levels.

These findings reinforce the interconnected nature of body and mind: when people move, create, and engage through art, they are supporting both physical vitality and emotional resilience.



Cognitive Health & Arts Engagement

“Engagement in creative activities was associated with lower risk of cognitive decline and was positively linked to quality of life outcomes in older adults.”

— 2023 research review on arts and aging

This means older adults who take part in artistic activities tend to keep their minds sharper and feel better overall.

Emotional & Social Well-Being

“Participatory arts activities support emotional well-being, reduce anxiety and stress, and foster social engagement among older adults.”

— 2023 study on art-based activities and health

This shows that doing art with others can help reduce stress, improve mood, and build a sense of community and connection.

Art Therapy, Mindfulness & Mental Health

“Art therapy programs can reduce anxiety and stress while improving sleep quality and overall mental wellbeing in older adults.”

— 2025 study on mindfulness-based art therapy

This highlights that even gentle, mindful art experiences can support emotional health and relaxation.

Long-Term Participation & Cognitive Function

“Older adults with regular creative arts participation demonstrate slower rates of cognitive decline over time.”

— 2025 longitudinal study on arts participation

This supports the idea that consistent involvement in the arts helps keep the brain active and strong.

Arts & Healthy Aging Across the Lifespan

“Creative arts therapies and activities promote healthy aging by addressing mental, emotional, and social aspects of wellbeing.”

— 2022 scoping review of arts and aging research

This means that arts programs don't just entertain, they help people age in ways that are healthier, happier, and more connected.



In the Loop with Loomis Experts

This month, we are delighted to feature Michelle Burgess, Housekeeping Manager at Applewood. Michelle plays an essential role in maintaining a clean, comfortable, and welcoming environment for residents. Her commitment, leadership, and attention to detail help ensure Applewood always feels like home.

How do you build meaningful relationships with the residents?

I build meaningful relationships with our residents by being a safe and reliable resource for them whenever they need support. Whether it's helping after an accident, addressing an unexpected issue, or just being there to listen, I make sure they know they can count on me and my department. I never judge and always approach each situation with kindness and understanding because I want every resident to feel comfortable and safe in their home.

What is one of the most rewarding experiences you have had in your job?

One of the most rewarding experiences for me happens every year around the holidays; I help spearhead our community's initiative to get gifts for kids in the foster care system. We usually receive a list of about 100 children who are in need of gifts, and we make little gift tags with their names, ages, and things they like. Those tags get hung on a tree so our residents and staff can pick a child—or even a few—to shop for. What makes this so special to me is making sure every single child on that list gets something. If there are any tags left at the end, I always take them and go shopping myself. It's really important to me that these kids feel celebrated at the holidays, because it's not their fault they're in foster care. This project is something I connect with on a very personal level, and knowing that our community helps make their holiday brighter is just the best feeling.

What is one thing you have learned from the residents you work with?

Honestly, I've learned so much from the residents that it's hard to pick just one thing. They've taught me to be grateful for what I have, to be patient, and to really care for others—especially the people closest to us, like family and spouses. The biggest lesson, though, is to never take time for granted. Life moves fast, and the relationships we have are what truly matter. Being honest, being present, and appreciating those connections is something I've really taken to heart because of them.



Michelle Burgess
Housekeeping Manager
Applewood

We are always excited to have Loomis experts share their perspective with us. Watch for more words of wisdom in future issues of *Loomis Life*.

Want to learn more? Have an idea to share? We want to hear from you!

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