

THE CLARE

CONNECTION

SPECIAL EDITION





Kyle Exline, Executive Director



THE CLARE

Gold Coast Retirement Living Your Way

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"I cannot express my gratitude enough for our residents and employees who have come together for this COVID-19 journey."

The Pandemic Turns 1

As the COVID-19 pandemic approaches its 1-year anniversary, I wanted to take an opportunity to reflect on the year we are leaving behind and look ahead to what's to come for our community.

Navigating the pandemic at The Clare is one of the greatest challenges I have faced in my career to date. It has been stressful, grueling and adrenaline-inducing at the same time. Every answer we unlocked about COVID-19 seemed to prompt more questions. Recommendations changed daily, and how we operated one day could drastically change the next. We shifted our perspective to be very short-term, focusing on the micro details of the day in front of us rather than looking ahead at the next 6 to 12 months. We faced positive COVID-19 cases, contact tracing, sick friends and family, social isolation and fear of the unknown.

After 10 months, we finally reached our first vaccine clinic in January, which brought so much hope and positivity back into our lives. In partnership with Walgreens, we successfully vaccinated 690 people, which represents well over 80% of the community. Nearly 100% of our residents received the vaccine, and a majority of our employees did, as well. What's more, we provided the vaccine to 55 potential residents on our waitlist. One resident even said to me, "I think we vaccinated all of the Gold Coast!" With the vaccine clinics behind us, we can now finally think about what comes next.

Through it all, we had each other. Enduring this situation as The Clare community has only strengthened the bond we all share. We always tout the people living and working at The Clare as our greatest amenity, and the pandemic has only spotlighted that more over the last year. I cannot express my gratitude enough for our residents and employees who have come together for this COVID-19 journey.

Over the next few months, we will continue to reassess guidelines, loosen restrictions and reopen The Clare in accordance with state and city mandates and recommendations. We started this process by reinstating in-person dining at a limited capacity in The Grafton and allowing small group programming. Moving forward, we will take everything step by step, always monitoring the local positivity rate and continuing to test our employees and residents. We will remain vigilant with social distancing and mask wearing. Eventually, we will look to open our doors to family members, so they can once again visit and connect with residents on site.

After a year with so little to look forward to, there is much anticipation for everything that lies ahead. Of course, we will continue to confront it all together, just like we always have! ☺

Kyle Exline

~ONE YEAR of COVID-19 at THE CLARE~



TOTAL MASKS
PURCHASED:

102,730



FLOORS OF MAIL
DELIVERED:

8,064



PACKAGES LOGGED: **19,462**



FUNDRAISING BY
RESIDENTS FOR
EMPLOYEES:

OVER
\$550,000

One Community~ In This Together



MEALS PREPARED: **191,135**



BOTTLES OF WINE
CONSUMED:

4,476



ZOOM PROGRAMS
COMPLETED:

268+



COVID TESTS
CONDUCTED:

MORE THAN
10,000



VACCINES
ADMINISTERED:

690

RESIDENT

Then and Now

~Harlean Barth

Looking forward to our New Year! The last year was a challenge for all of us. What did I miss? I loved eating breakfast with friends and sharing our stories while we ate at the community table. I learned so much about my neighbors. We had lots of laughs!

Now, I am so thankful for our chats on Thursdays on Zoom. I really encourage my friends to chat and tell us what is going. I am so thankful that we have been able to get back in the gym, as it is much safer than walking out in freezing weather. And I am so thankful that I chose The Clare, the perfect place to retire. ☺

2020 in Hindsight

~Dorothy and Larry Pirovano

They were all planning to come here for my birthday last April. Canceled. They were all planning to come here for Thanksgiving. Canceled. But instead – and despite the myriad restrictions that COVID-19 has brought us – we’ve seen more of our very large family (5 kids, 14 grandkids, 5 great-grands and assorted spouses and “others”) than ever before. Thursday nights are Family Zoom Call nights. At 7:30pm, a few or many sign-in from time zones across the continent and we share celebrations and concerns. We’ve watched our newest great-grandson grow from babbling to almost crawling and grabbing at the Zoom screen. We had eight Zoom calls over Christmas, watching families open presents. We “dined on Zoom” with Clare neighbors for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and had multiple Zoom cocktail hours with neighbors and friends as far away as San Francisco and Canada. We haven’t had time to sit still, what with Zoom memoir classes, Zoom workouts for Larry and Zoom choir rehearsals for me. In the midst of pandemic and panic, there has been blessed Zoom, and for that we are both very grateful. ☺

“2020 offered a time for reflection – remembering those we have lost, finding new appreciation for the benefits we have received and being thankful to live at The Clare, such a caring and watchful community.” ~Anne Kern

Reflections on 2020

~Anne Kern

We entered the new year without a concern for what was soon to confront us. Our first inkling was a notice of a virus emanating from Wuhan, China. Did we know where that was? Or did we even know what would soon follow? Very soon, travelers from China were forbidden entry to the United States, save for the many exceptions to that edict, which quickly resulted in the spread of the deadly virus. Not soon enough, we went on lockdown, but, thanks to The Clare, we donned masks, socially distanced and kept to our apartments. No one, that we knew of, succumbed to the virus until several months later, and then, only a few residents, who were quickly isolated and bounced back.

For myself, I found the time for the many tasks I had been putting off for far too long – cleaning out my cupboards and closets, working on files, catching up on desk work and talking with friends via email or telephone. Meetings and programs, as well as exercise, soon began on Zoom or our in-house TV channels. Fellow resident **John Clum** organized a fine selection of evening movies. Dining Services kept our menus varied, healthy and tasty, and Life Enrichment managed to keep us entertained. Before virus (BV), I found myself leaving The Clare almost daily for one thing or another, suddenly I was staying in place. I rather welcomed this. If I tired of the meals we had on our daily menu listing, there were other ways of getting food from friendly restaurants eager to keep in business and willing to deliver. It was not all bad at all.

2020 offered a time for reflection – remembering those we have lost, finding new appreciation for the benefits we have received and being thankful to live at The Clare, such a caring and watchful community. ☺

REFLECTIONS



My Life in 2020

~Becky Davidson

As COVID-19 raged in the outer world, I was safe at The Clare. I have always been an avid reader, but I increased from 3 to 4 books a month to 7 or 8. I watched more series on Netflix, Zoomed with family and friends and learned to knit. I have always loved to cook, and with the help of my caregiver, I tried new recipes over the last year. We watched Saturday cooking shows on Channel 11 and took recipes from Pati's Mexican Kitchen, which were delicious. I was never bored, but I will enjoy being able to get out and about again. ☺

Lessons Learned During the Pandemic

~Linda Brooks

So many changes in our lives happened so quickly. Without cleaning help for weeks, I learned how to use a Swiffer quite efficiently. My husband, Bob suffered a bit of lower back pain from vacuuming. The apartment didn't seem to have its former sparkle. Also, the social events and dinners with other residents came to an abrupt halt, with all dining venues closed, meals delivered to our apartments and the Ambassador Room closed to coffee dates. What to do?

The New Norm: ZOOM! I had to learn how to go to the correct email, hit the right highlighted word, click JOIN with or without VIDEO and figure out how to MUTE and UNMUTE myself. It was very important to me to continue the classes I was attending at the Center for Lifelong Learning in The Fourth Presbyterian Church, so I also had to learn to enroll in CLL classes by computer, pay and place my INVITES into a CLL FOLDER. Since I'm taking 10 CLASSES (!), this is tricky. I'm even feeling a bit cocky that I know how to unmute, and we have to wait for others to FINALLY unmute themselves when they don't know they're still muted.

Although in most cases, I miss the in person contact with teacher and students, it's different with my two tap dance classes. We turn our videos off for better reception. The teacher continues to be very positive with us, saying, "Good, good!" even though she can't see my sloppy Shim Sham or my wobbly Paddle Turn. It's hilarious to me!

The other "techie" feat I've proudly learned is signing in at the machines in The Lobby. After using hand sanitizer, I now time myself on how fast I can enter the necessary information, scan my temperature and sign out. Easily amused, right?

Keeping a sense of humor throughout the turmoil and changes has been crucial. So much lost, so many changes. But, the vaccine has been our saving grace, and we will find ways to socialize with other residents in person soon. Here's to FUN in 2021! ☺

Going Digital

~Anne Scott

During the months of COVID-19, I succumbed to the need and coaxing of friends, neighbors, colleagues and relatives, both near and far (did distance matter?) to learn to use email and its offspring, Zoom! Board and committee meetings and spending money have become almost too effortless, and if I am not careful, I will become a slave to technology. Setting up and learning the programs (or are they apps?) was made possible through The Clare IT Department, patient tutoring from my stepdaughter, wonderful neighbors who made house calls and speaker phone at my elbow while under lockdown. I was not alone in learning Zoom. One early session with seven participants would have scored first place on America's Funniest Home Videos.

As for the year ahead, taking my next technological step to a smartphone along with texting, maskless interactions, in-person bridge and Scrabble, group dining at restaurants and The Clare and a years-long desire to travel to London via air and sea are my goals. Or shall I say dreams? ☺

A TIMELINE OF COV

2020

MARCH 18

USPS halted mail delivery to The Clare, which resulted in The Abbey becoming a mail sorting center and the Front Desk team working diligently to organize and deliver mail to resident shelves each day.

MARCH 10, 2020

The Clare began taking steps to restrict visitors to those who were essential and medically necessary, implement check-in procedures, switch to delivery-only dining and cancel large-scale programming in an effort to protect residents.

MARCH 24

The Clare discontinued in-unit housekeeping services to prevent employees from transmitting COVID-19 to residents and closed the Salon on the 9th floor.

MARCH 27

The Clare removed furniture from common spaces to discourage anyone from gathering to socialize and promote the safety of residents and employees.

MARCH 16

The Clare implemented further restrictions based on guidelines from the CDC and IDPH, and all community dining venues closed.

MARCH 23

The Fitness Center and the Pool at The Clare closed, and all in-person group fitness and organized events were canceled.

APRIL 2

Executive Director Kyle Exline hosted his first Zoom update to virtually provide residents with recent COVID-19 information and policies and answer questions.

APRIL 16

The Clare established a wing on the 12th floor as a COVID-19 unit within the community, where any resident who might test positive could stay for care without impacting the rest of the building.

APRIL 6

An employee was the first to test positive for COVID-19 at The Clare. The employee recovered at home and did not expose residents to the disease.

APRIL 6

The Clare mandated mask wearing for all residents and employees at the community.

JUNE 8

Following the city's reopening plan, The Clare introduced guidelines and policies to take a small step in reopening the community, including allowing fitness classes for groups of less than 10 and reinstating salon services on the 9th floor.

MAY 15

The Clare began conducting its very-first round of testing all employees and Terraces residents, which was an in-house, 2-week process to identify any COVID-19 cases and contain any potential spread of the virus.

JUNE 22

Housekeeping services returned on a bi-weekly basis, and resident-led events like mahjonn, book clubs, bridge and more reconvened.

JULY 6

The Fitness Center reopened on a limited basis by reservation only, and faith services at The Clare resumed in a smaller capacity.

COVID-19 AT THE CLARE

JULY 14

Employees and Terraces residents began to get tested on a weekly basis per a mandate from the Chicago Department of Public Health.

NOVEMBER 15

With a COVID-19 positivity rate above 11% in Cook County, The Clare was required to move to testing employees and Terraces residents twice a week.

FEBRUARY 5

Nearly 700 first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were administered during The Clare's second clinic date with Walgreens.

SEPTEMBER 21

The Clare loosened restrictions on visitors to the building, broadening the term "essential" to include outside accountants, housekeepers, beauticians and more.

DECEMBER 29

The Clare finalized its COVID-19 vaccine clinic dates with Walgreens, with enough doses secured for all residents and employees.

FEBRUARY 15

Once the majority of residents were fully vaccinated, The Clare brought back in-person dining and small group activities in accordance with state and city guidelines.

SEPTEMBER 22

The Bistro reopened for lunch and The Grafton for dinner in a limited capacity based on state and city requirements, which lasted until October 30.

JANUARY 8

In partnership with Walgreens, The Clare hosted its first COVID-19 vaccine clinic, during which approximately 580 vaccine doses were administered.

MARCH 5

After the third and final clinic at The Clare, 99% of residents have been vaccinated, as well as a vast majority of employees and caregivers.

NOVEMBER 13

A surge in cases in the city and the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday prompted The Clare to tighten many of its restrictions, including limiting essential visitors again to those that were medically necessary and requiring Safety Days for various activities.

FEBRUARY 1

As COVID-19 cases began to decline, The Clare returned to once-a-week testing for employees and residents.

MARCH 10, 2021

The Clare has now reached the 1-year anniversary of navigating COVID-19 at The Clare. We continue to navigate the pandemic, with more cautious optimism than we had previously. Since the beginning, our goal has been to keep our residents safe, and this remains our top priority moving forward.

2021

Nearly 700 residents, employees receive COVID-19 vaccine at The Clare

Nearly 700 residents, employees receive COVID-19 vaccine at The Clare

After nearly a year of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and working diligently to keep residents safe, The Clare finally sees a light at the end of the tunnel.

Approximately 580 residents, employees, caregivers and others associated with The Clare received the first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on January 8, with their second dose administered on February 5. Employees and residents who missed the first clinic date were eligible to receive their first dose at the February clinic, which brought the number of those vaccinated at The Clare to 690.

Following the initial January clinic, 99% of residents had received the first vaccination dose, as well as about 50% of employees. After the February and March clinic dates, more than 80% of the overall community has been vaccinated.



Residents Suzanne Turner, Ken Mullin and Sheila Rock celebrate receiving their first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

"This is something we have all been looking forward to for so long," Executive Director Kyle Exline says. "The most rewarding aspect was seeing how excited and emotional residents were to receive the vaccine. It was truly a historic and groundbreaking

moment, and to be part of that with the residents was incredible."

While the initial distribution of nearly 600 vaccines took place over just 8 hours in January, logistical and operational planning occurred for weeks beforehand. In October, The Clare partnered with Walgreens for the administration of the vaccine, and Walgreens confirmed the clinic dates about two weeks before the first one took place.

From there, the community worked out as many details as possible ahead of the first clinic. This involved registering residents and employees who wished to receive the vaccine, organizing appointment times to limit long lines and excessive wait times and maintaining appropriate COVID safety and distancing measures throughout the day.

"We had to be thoughtful of all elements and make the experience a quick and effortless one for everyone," Kyle says.



Resident Roberta Weisberg receives the first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

In the end, these preparations resulted in efficient, successful vaccine administration.

"The pre-organization paid off," Administrator Monica Rusboldt says. "The day went really smoothly, and people did not have to wait extensively for their vaccine. It was also really great to see people happy and excited about something!"

Residents and staff at long-term care facilities like The Clare were included in the initial vaccination phase, per the City of Chicago's distribution plan.

For residents like Jack Jennings and Steve Molinari, having access to the vaccine ahead of the general public represented a glimmer of hope in what has been a grueling, terrifying time in the world.

"We chose to get the COVID vaccine without a second thought," Jack and Steve say. "The virus has controlled our lives for almost a year. Like most other people, we watched the havoc it created in our society and in our own lives. And, we did a lot of reading and listening, so when the vaccine was approved, we had no hesitation. We knew that the vaccine was the most effective means of gaining back our freedom."

*"We have a sense that a heavy weight has been lifted.
It's hard to express the feeling of relief!"*

~Jack Jennings and Steve Molinari

Offering the vaccine within the community also eliminated any confusion of trying to find somewhere to get it on their own, resident Roberta Weisberg says.

"I know people who live on their own have been unsure of where they can go to get the vaccine and when they can get it," she says. "We haven't had to worry about any of that, which is really remarkable. We're very lucky."

Above all else, though, the anticipation around the vaccine at The Clare largely revolved around safety.

"I was looking forward to getting the vaccine, knowing that I was taking the steps to protect myself in these difficult times," resident Dr. Mary Davidson says.



Executive Director Kyle Exline receives the first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.



Administrator Monica Rusboldt receives the first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

Although the vaccine doesn't yet eliminate necessary precautions around masks, testing and more, it certainly does provide more room for comfortability and movement around the community itself. The Clare has now begun slowly reopening the community, starting with in-person dining and small group programs, both in limited capacities within the state of Illinois' restrictions. Restrictions will likely be loosened further in the coming months.

"We know we still have to follow the guidelines regarding masks and social distancing, but we have a sense that a heavy weight has been lifted," Jack and Steve say. "It's hard to express the feeling of relief!" 🍷

RESIDENT REFLECTIONS RESIDENT

Pandemic, Pandemonium and Prayers for Peace and Justice

~Carol Feiser Laque

Family, Friends, Faith and Love: We survived during the 2020-2021 lockdown and quarantine. I wrote almost 300 poems and flash fiction. Chicago, global suffering, love poems, always keeping the TRY in triumph. How did my past, present and future thoughts weave a tapestry of horror, struggle and survival for all? The incredible Clare employees were our heroes and heroines. We are cared for.

My latest collection of poetry will be released in Summer 2021, titled *a prisoner of the Light*. ☺

“What I Did Last Summer – Spring, Fall and Winter”

~Carole Timmerman

Not a lot! There wasn't much to do or accomplish. My sense of humor kept me “in stitches.” There is too much laughing AT each other and not enough laughing WITH each other. Laughter is important. A few examples:

- A termite walked into a tavern and asked: “Is the bar tender here?”
- Why is the mushroom always getting invited to parties? Because he is a fungi.
- Do stairs, elevators and escalators need psychiatrists because they have ups and downs?
- My sleeves are getting shorter, because my arms are stretching from “hanging in there.”

All bad things must end, and the good shall prevail, and normalcy shall reign again (whatever that is). 2021 – another year in paradise! ☺



Perfect Days

~Vivien Lee

I was happy with my life here at The Clare and wanted more time to enjoy it. At the start of 2020, I was seriously considering cutting back on a jammed schedule that was becoming all work and no fun. COVID-19 took care of that. One by one, my outside activities were either put ‘on hold’ or terminated. Even the few things I enjoyed doing were no longer options. My calendar cleared. My days emptied. I was isolated. I wasn’t prepared for solitary confinement. I thought I would be undone. I’d tear my hair. I’d climb my enclosing walls.

Then my family came to the rescue. They called, Zoomed, wrote and gifted me. For those wet and windy gymless days, I now have my stationary cycle. For leisure, I have bags of books, CDs and puzzles, awaiting my attention. For those short walks, I got two sun hats for protection. Masked, my family visits me at arm’s length. In between visits, they stay in touch. They keep me supplied with essentials (i.e. toilet paper) as well as non-essentials (i.e. specialty foods).

Their loving nourishes and sustains me. It complements my luxury Clare existence. It lifts my spirits to new heights without having to climb walls so I feel as if I’m in the clouds. I’m buoyed by their love, which meets my every need without prodding. My mental, physical and emotional states are robust. My stars are aligned. I am renewed. Once again, my schedule is crammed. Now it’s all fun and no work. Perfect days at The Clare. It’s 2021. My optimism overflows for the coming years, which I believe not even COVID-19 can dampen. Can’t get better than that! ☺



*"We cried a little, and we laughed a lot!
In each and every case, my friends told me
that my call had made their day."*

~Claudia Boatright

COVID-19 Routine

~Ed Wentz

A regular plane of procedure: Planning my time makes each day or week go faster, as I have not left The Clare since last March.

- My day starts with making the bed, morning coffee and a 45-minute workout - bike and body movements.
- I then eat breakfast and read a quote from "The Power of Positive Thinking."
- Next comes the newspaper, followed by meditation for half an hour.
- I spend time in my studio in my unit, where I read my current book and work on a watercolor painting for the remainder of the morning.
- We make our own lunch, and I complete an afternoon workout, the same as in the morning.
- I go back to the studio to read, paint and maybe catch a TCM classic movie.
- At 3:30pm, I make an old fashioned and continue with my book.
- By 5pm, it's time for dinner, which we either order in or cook on our own.
- The day ends with a late movie, followed by bed. There you have it! ☺

A Pandemic Blessing

~Claudia Boatright

*A*lthough we have had Zoom visits regularly throughout the pandemic with our children and grandchildren on opposite coasts and friends in Cleveland, where we lived for more than 40 years, in the end, I discovered that Zoom and Facetime were no substitute for the good old-fashioned telephone! And so, I resolved early in the lockdown to call a different friend every week, either in Chicago or far away. Some of these people were college classmates I have seen only at 5-year reunions (my husband and I are graduates of The College of Wooster) or not for many years. Some were old friends with whom we generally communicate only at Christmastime. Several were women who live alone, either by choice or by loss of a partner. Many, of course, were friends I had in fact just seen and with whom I have had a longtime intimate friendship, and many were friends I've made since moving to Chicago 9 years ago, but all were absolutely delighted to hear from me, and our phone chats sometimes lasted more than an hour. We reminisced about old times. We gossiped. Of course, we did! We sometimes shared life experiences we had never before talked about. We cried a little, and we laughed a lot! In each and every case, my friends told me that my call had made their day. These conversations have certainly uplifted and exhilarated my long pandemic days. Journaling, reading, walking, visiting with folks on Zoom, posting on Facebook—all these have helped to alleviate the sense of deprivation and loss the Coronavirus has caused, but in the end, it has been my telephone visits with friends both near and far that have sustained me throughout this long ordeal. Now that I live at The Clare, I hope to meet several old friends and make many new ones—face to face without masks-- once our COVID restrictions are lifted. ☺



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