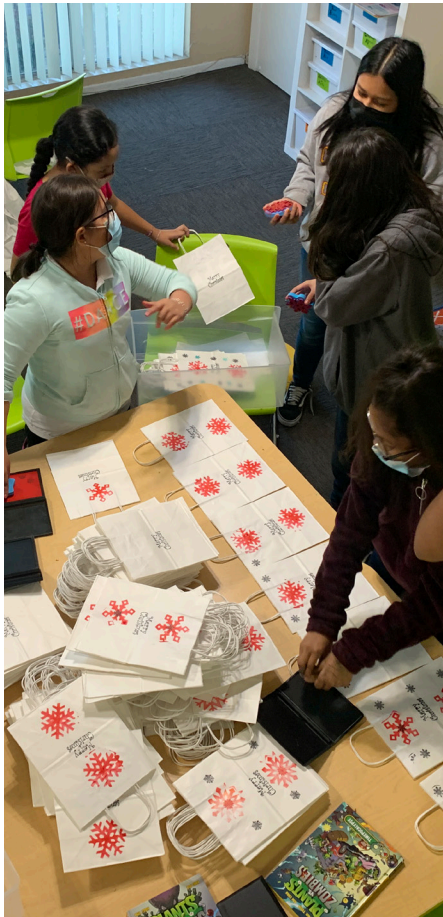




Opening Doors to a Brighter Future



Students in the new Discovery Club found a creative way to participate in community engagement: "hand stamping, glitterizing, and beribboning" 200 gift bags for a holiday giveaway and event for the residents at City Gardens in December.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Urban Comfort Foods

It may be the season of elaborate holiday meals, but the culinary arts are always in full swing in Spark at Midtown's teaching kitchen. Thanks to the wonderful partnership of Urban Comfort Foods, residents have had the opportunity to participate in 11 monthly cooking classes, making gourmet meals with the expert instruction of chefs Maxarine and Jinell.

Urban Comfort Foods is a South LA-based business, founded by two local mothers working to fight food insecurity, provide nutritious and affordable dining options, and make gourmet meals accessible to everyone in the community.

With the support of Maxarine and Jinell, residents at the Spark have cooked dishes ranging from vegan pizza to jerk chicken pasta, using fresh, nutritious ingredients to create healthy, well-balanced meals. Residents who can't attend classes in person can even watch a YouTube video of the class and receive a home cooked meal for four people delivered to their door. To learn more about Urban Comfort Foods and see their cooking classes in action, visit them at urbancomfortfoods.com.

LIFE-ENHANCING SERVICES

Gourmet on a Budget

USC Occupational Therapy interns hosted nutrition and cooking demos for residents at Mosaic Gardens at Willowbrook. Families learned tips on buying in-season produce and finding affordable store-brand groceries for healthy meals.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Residents Give Back

Seasons at Compton residents Maria Elena, Chuy, and Aura have been increasing food access within their community. Twice a month, they volunteer their time to help Resident Services Coordinator Carrie with the neighborhood food bank distribution. Together the women organize groceries, spread the word to neighbors, and even deliver bags of food to the doors of those who can not easily access the food bank.

At Hollydale Plaza, resident Connie has been giving back by distributing flyers for upcoming activities and events in the community. "I have known Connie for over 8 years, and I can still remember my first day at Hollydale, as she was the first resident to welcome me and even introduce me to other residents within the community," said Carrie. "Connie is always willing to help and most importantly, she advocates for her neighbors in need."



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Sharnyle

Linc Housing is excited to welcome back Sharnyle Gonzales as the Resident Services Coordinator for The Palace! Sharnyle is no stranger to Long Beach or Linc – as a student at CSULB, she served as a summer intern at Spark at Midtown, helping with community engagement, program planning, and data analysis. Now, Sharnyle is providing and expanding supportive services for low-income families, transition-age youth, and people who have experienced homelessness. Over the past months, she has held Resiliency and Support Group Workshops, partnered with the Junior League of Long Beach to host healthy cooking classes, and implemented a work experience program for residents with the Southeast L.A. County Workforce Development Board. In her free time, Sharnyle enjoys the performing arts and going on outdoor adventures.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Discovery Club Gets a Running Start



A new program is up and running at City Gardens Apartments! The Discovery Club gives young residents the chance to decide what they want to 'discover' themselves, offering new educational and artistic activities every Friday. Thanks to resources donated by Active Discovery, a local organization that aims to partner physical activity with literacy-based games, residents at City Gardens have had new opportunities to learn and explore while staying active.

Discovery Club aims to work with younger residents who may not have the opportunity to attend homework club or who have difficulty focusing on academics in a sit-down environment for long periods of time. To engage these students and help them learn, the program incorporates activity-based learning projects. For instance, Active Discovery donated The Travel Game, which allows the students to roll a large foam die and move across US cities on a map. Each city comes with a QR code, where students can research facts about the area and follow a link to a video demonstrating group exercises that the students can try.

Resident feedback was crucial to getting this program off the ground, so Field Supervisor Clare Ofield gathered ideas and suggestions from students

in the After School Program prior to implementing Discovery Club. Students suggested a long list of wonderful ideas, including how to use tjanting tools to create Batik wax resistant artwork!

Thanks to the wonderful support of Active Discovery and the fantastic suggestions of our youngest residents, Discovery Club is providing active learning opportunities for resident students.



Celebrating Sustainability

For this year's Green Apple Day celebration, residents at multiple properties participated in upcycling projects to promote sustainability and create something new from something old. Green Apple Day is a worldwide day of service focused on promoting healthy living and sustainability.

At Seasons at Anderson and Seasons at Los Robles, senior residents decorated pumpkins and participated in a Sustainability Trivia Challenge. Meanwhile, younger residents at City Gardens upcycled milk jugs as Halloween decorations. Being green takes creativity at any age!



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Growing Community at The Nightingale

At The Nightingale in South Los Angeles, one resident has planted seedlings from his home country in order to grow community at his new home. Mr. Leonard was born and raised in Jamaica and often visits the community room to share stories of his childhood and family history; his warm tales are always met with open ears.

One day, Mr. Leonard spoke of tending to his garden in Jamaica, where all his siblings helped their mother plant and maintain the flowers and vegetables. Sharing this story inspired Mr. Leonard to research the viability of planting similar seedlings in California with Resident Services Coordinator Cassandra Mesa. Soon, he found a reputable source for the Callaloo plant, a green leafy vegetable only found in Jamaica and often added to traditional dishes. Mr. Leonard was ecstatic, and the pair immediately ordered an envelope of seeds to begin planting.

Each day, Mr. Leonard came down to the community room to check if the seeds had arrived yet. As he waited, he shared tips with other residents about planting and caring for other new additions to the community garden. After a few weeks of patience and a careful list of preparations, the seeds arrived and Mr. Leonard was able to fill a small garden box. Now, the Callaloo sprouts are nearly ready to be transplanted to the main community garden.

"Not only was this a great experience for (myself) and Mr. Leonard, but it also made opportunities for the other residents to build stronger connections and share



"It made opportunities for residents to build strong connections."

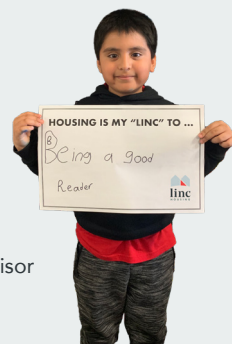
**CASSANDRA,
NIGHTINGALE RSC**

their expertise of gardening," said Cassandra. Cheers to Mr. Leonard for bringing a new nutritious and accessible vegetable option to The Nightingale community!

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS



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COMMUNITY

Sustainability and
Upcycling Projects

PROGRAMS

Discovery Club
Up and Running

RESIDENTS

Volunteers at
Food Bank