



February Newsletter

Save the Date!

Join us for the **Sunflower Hill Annual Gala** on **Saturday, September 27th**, at the **Dublin Shannon Community Center**—this year's theme is **Mardi Gras!** 🍷 🎵

How can you get involved? Sponsor, Donate, or Volunteer to help make this event a success! For more information, contact **Jennifer Oxe, Development Director**, at oxe@sunflowerhill.org. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

Mark your calendar for our **Tips for Change** event at **SideTrack Bar + Grill** on **Tuesday, April 15th!** Stay tuned—reservation details and more information are coming soon!



New Classes and Programs at Irby Ranch! Join us!

Sunflower Hill is pleased to present a series of new cooking, social, and vocational activities at Irby Ranch -- all designed for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The new monthly classes, launched in February, include expanded in-person cooking options, virtual cooking segments featuring fun 'five-ingredient' recipes from Trader Joe's, as well as 'Learning with Olivia' -- a new series of vocational classes designed to build confidence and common life skills. Also back is Popcorn Chat, the popular virtual program Sunflower Hill introduced during the pandemic to stay in touch.

"We're very excited to bring these new programs to our greater community," said Olivia Christensen, Sunflower Hill's Program Manager. "We've heard from so many folks who've asked us to expand. But we wanted to do it in a way that met the needs of what our residents and program participants preferred and also complemented many of the activities offered by other local I/DD program providers like the City of Pleasanton's RADD program."

Both free and fee-based classes are available, and scholarships are available as well. To learn more, contact programs@sunflowerhill.org.

Spend your Friday Nights with Sunflower Hill!

Coming soon: **Friday Night Live at Sunflower Hill** -- a fun way to spend your Friday night with friends at Irby Ranch in Pleasanton. Sunflower Hill will launch these once-a-month engagements beginning Friday, March 7th, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. All are open to any adult with I/DD in the community.

Friday Night Live dates include:

- Friday, March 7
- Friday, April 11
- Friday, May 16

All dates complement the RADD activity calendar. "We hope everyone will come hang out with us," said Olivia Christensen, Sunflower Hill's Program Manager. "We'll have a theme each month, with outside entertainers, dinner, and fun activities."

Cost for Friday Night Live is \$25 per person, and scholarships are available. Registration begins on February 26. For more information, contact programs@sunflowerhill.org



Programs Activity Calendar and Guideline

January was a fantastic month filled with exciting activities! We kicked off the year with several new and returning events, including our **Learning with Olivia** sessions, which take place twice a month and focus on vocational and daily living skills. In January, these sessions centered on **healthy nutrition and meal preparation**. Participants learned how to create a **weekly grocery list**, ensure a well-balanced plate with a variety of foods, and even meal-prepped their own **trail mix snacks** for the week ahead.

We also launched a new program called the **Sunflower Hill Sun Squad!** This group will meet once a month to participate in **volunteer-focused activities**. In January, our first Sun Squad event was a **neighborhood trash pickup**. We look forward to collaborating with local organizations to support their volunteer efforts in the coming months.

Additionally, we brought back our **virtual Popcorn Chats!** These monthly chats allow people near and far to connect, share about their lives, and build community. Our first session of the year featured a **show and tell**, where participants shared meaningful items, including **artwork, favorite stuffed animals, and treasured keepsakes**. Next month, we'll host a **relaxation-themed** Popcorn Chat, where we'll listen to calming music, do a guided stretching sequence, and reflect on our days.

We also restarted our **virtual cooking classes!** Perfect for anyone who loves to cook from the comfort of home, our **Trader Joe's Virtual Cooking Classes** are held twice a month and feature two recipes made exclusively with Trader Joe's ingredients. This month, we'll make **Vegan Yellow Curry** and **Fiesta Taco Bowls**. Be sure to **register online** to join in!

Non-Resident Calendar & Guideline links:

- [Non-Resident February 2025 Calendar Guideline](#)
- [Non-Resident February 2025 Activity Calendar](#)
- [Program Registration Page](#)

Register for Programs



Winter Garden Programs

We have had a blast moving some of our garden programs to Irby Ranch during the cold month of January to focus on art-focused garden activities, comfortable sit-down tasks, and bundling produce to share with our incredible partners.

Our garden participants have made flower bouquet notes, repainted and decorated our garden stakes, propagated succulents, and made some amazing lavender sachets.



Community Member Spotlight: Amy, Scott & Steve Tessler

My wife, Amy, is an avid lover of gardening and has been a weekly volunteer in the Sunflower Hill Garden since 2016. Who would have known that five years later, our son, Scott, would move into an apartment at Sunflower Hill? It was a dream come true!

Scott is a “wants to do” kind of guy. He likes his schedule full of activities whether it’s cooking, fitness class, bowling, tennis, walking, yoga, dancing, hiking, basketball, swimming, or bocce. If you ask, Scott will probably say “yes” and, as we like to say, “goes with the flow.” Also, he likes cleaning, putting away dishes and even making Amy’s coffee. It has prompted some of our friends to ask if they can borrow Scott for an afternoon or evening!

Amy and I are so proud of Scott and the way he has embraced living at Sunflower Hill. It is every parent’s dream, especially one of a special needs individual, for their child to live a life characterized by independence and fulfillment. Sunflower Hill has allowed Scott to realize this vision while giving us, his parents, the peace of mind that he has a supportive, caring, and nurturing community around him.

I recently joined the Board at Sunflower Hill. It is a pleasure for me to give back to the Sunflower Hill Community which gives so much to us.

Steve Tessler, Scott’s Dad

2024/25 Sunflower Hill Board Treasurer/Executive Committee Member



Irby Ranch Tours

Join us for an exclusive one-hour tour of [Sunflower Hill at Irby Ranch](#) in Pleasanton! Discover how this innovative housing development creates a vibrant, inclusive community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Please note that our Irby Ranch Resident waiting list is closed, and we are not currently accepting additional resident applications.

Spaces for the tour are limited, and registration is required. Register today!

Friday, April 25, 2025 at 4 pm

Friday, August 1, 2025 at 12 pm

Friday, October 17, 2025 at 12:30 pm

[Register for Irby Ranch Tour](#)

Follow Us



Contact Us

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Thank you for making a difference in the lives of adults with I/DD!
