



Our Favorite Moments from 2020



Hello Sunflower Hill Supporter,

From all of us at Sunflower Hill, we wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season and a New Year filled with laughter, health, and well-being.

2020 was certainly an unexpected year for all of us - chock full of challenges. But it was also a year of resilience, creativity, and teamwork, where we saw the greater community pull together on countless occasions to offer support to one another. The team at Sunflower Hill embraced the principles of resilience, creativity, and teamwork to make 2020 an exceptional year, by looking for strength and joy in the “ordinary” moments that are a part of each day. Here are a few of our favorite moments from 2020:

- Garden Teacher **Abby** reveled in the moments when her [virtual cooking class](#) participants surprised themselves by trying a new food that they found they liked, doing something they didn't think they could do, like using a knife, or the stove, and making themselves something delicious to eat.
- **Shannon**, our Administrative Assistant, enjoyed participating in our Online Activities in her free time. Her favorite was the relaxing [Meditative Coloring](#) activity.
- Farmer **Caitlin** loved smelling the summer basil as she worked to harvest produce to [donate to local non-profits](#).
- Communications & Administration Manager **Rachel** loved seeing the [smile on Austin's face](#) when he was touring his new apartment at Sunflower Hill at Irby Ranch.
- **Pam**, our Advancement Director, truly enjoyed seeing our program participants enthusiastically embrace the transition from in-person to virtual programs in this [4-minute video](#).
- Advancement Coordinator **Sarah** was impressed to see how staff reinvented themselves this year, discovering and sharing their skills and talents by creating [Online Activity](#) videos in their living rooms, kitchens, garages, and at the garden. They embraced the roles of talent, film crew, director, writer and video editor.
- Teacher **Becca** loved fulfilling her childhood dream of being an actress and being on a film set creating the [Join The Team, Wear A Face Mask](#) video!
- Residential Programs Manager **Pratima** enjoyed watching [Sunflower Hill at Irby Ranch](#) residents chatting and getting to know each other during the Thanksgiving Paint Night Virtual Party.
- **Alicia**, our Administrative Coordinator enjoyed orchestrating our pre-pandemic office move and looks forward to being able to enjoy the new office post-pandemic.

- **My favorite moments** were seeing residents get keys to their apartments and hearing from them about their successes.

As you look back on 2020, we hope that you find many special moments to celebrate and enjoy. We thank you for standing by us, encouraging our work, and helping us enable many of these memorable moments. If what we do inspires you, we hope you will consider a [year-end gift](#) in support of our programs, activities, and commitment to developing residential communities and exceptional programs where adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities thrive.

Have a wonderful holiday; we'll see you in the New Year!

Warmly,

Edie

Edie Nehls, Executive Director

Get Involved and Make a Difference

Looking for ways to get more involved in your community and make a difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities? We're looking for volunteers! Whether you choose to volunteer in the Sunflower Hill Garden or in the kitchen at Sunflower Hill at Irby Ranch, your time and commitment will have a positive impact on people with developmental disabilities and your community. [Check out our current volunteer opportunities!](#)



Program participant, Blake holding up his gourd ornament that he painted.

Program Registration Now Open

Registration for Winter and Spring programs is now open! Our program offerings include in-person and virtual, live classes, and are designed for adults 18 years or older who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability. Our in-person, [Hands-On Garden Groups](#), held in the Sunflower Hill Garden, offer person-centered programming for adults with developmental disabilities, providing opportunities to learn, explore, and engage in new and supportive ways. Our [Cooking with Teacher Abby](#) classes are interactive, live classes designed to build independent living skills through cooking discussions, teacher demonstrations, and group activities. Meeting weekly, our free [Popcorn Chat](#) program is a live, virtual class, encouraging participants to engage in activities to build community and friendship, experience supportive leadership, and learn the tools necessary to enjoy their own virtual, social independence.

Register



Hands-On Garden Group program participant preparing to weigh harvested vegetables.



Teacher Abby's Cooking Class participants make carrot cake waffles!



Popcorn Chat participants learn to communicate with masks during a recent class.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to see more of our Programs participants in action!



Robert Half Awards Grant for Programs

We're extremely thankful to [Robert Half](#), a global staffing firm with offices in the Tri-Valley, for awarding Sunflower Hill a \$3,500 grant, which will be used to enable us to meet the diverse needs of the individuals participating in our in-person [Hands-On Garden programs](#), as well as adults with developmental disabilities who generously volunteer their time to assist with maintenance tasks in the Sunflower Hill Garden. With this grant, we'll purchase program supplies such as assisted kneelers, adaptive tools, harvest equipment and other materials for our 2021 programs. Robert Half previously awarded Sunflower Hill with a grant in 2019, and volunteered to help create a short educational video titled, [Join the Team – Wear Your Face Mask](#), created for adults with



Culinary Angels Partnership Expands

We've expanded our partnership with [Culinary Angels](#)! In addition to continuing to donate our organic produce to Culinary Angels, we have partnered to utilize the commercial kitchen at [Sunflower Hill at Irby Ranch](#) to provide meals to Irby Ranch residents and Culinary Angels' recipients. Culinary Angels provides nutrient-rich meals to people living in the Tri-Valley who are going through a serious health challenge. Working in the new commercial kitchen at Irby Ranch, Culinary Angels Head Chef, Claudia Castillo Holley and volunteers will design and prepare nutritious and healthy meals for residents at Irby Ranch who choose to opt in to the meal plan. In addition, Chef Claudia will create and prepare bi-monthly meals for Culinary Angels recipients. We're thrilled to be creating

developmental disabilities, detailing the importance of wearing a face mask. Thank you, Robert Half, for your generosity and ongoing support!

nutritious and delicious meals for residents who choose to opt in to the meal plan. We can't wait to see what Chef Claudia cooks up!



Kathy Layman Receives Threads of Hope Award

Congratulations Kathy Layman, longtime volunteer and current Sunflower Hill Board President, on receiving a [Diablo Magazine 2020 Threads of Hope Award](#) earlier this month! The award is given annually to five local volunteers who provide vital services in a variety of fields, and whose "selfless dedication to volunteerism is strengthening the fabric of our community." Congratulations to all of the honorees who are heroes in our community!

Watch Kathy Receive Her Award!

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