



Robotic Seal Assists Memory Care Residents ***Residents enjoy interacting with Paro***

Paro, the robot baby harp seal, which, following pilot testing at Sunny View Retirement Community by the [Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing](#), showed great promise in engaging those with Alzheimer's disease, is now widely used at Front Porch memory care communities.

Paro is easy to love. It wiggles and squeaks. It shakes its head when its whiskers are touched. All of this courtesy of a 32-bit CPU and sensors that recognize touch, light, sound, temperature and position. This "socially assistive" robot draws its energy not



from fish but from a battery charger. The Food and Drug Administration has also designated it a "Class II medical device," the same designation as a wheelchair.

"We use Paro for social interaction, stress reduction, anxiety reduction. We use it to combat self-isolation, to give them something to engage with," said Joanne Gilbert, director of health services at Sunny View. "Residents talk to it and pet it every day."

During the initial five-month test at Sunny View, one of the pilot's findings was that when caregivers brought Paro out to help residents who experienced bouts of anxiety or wandering, it reduced the need for anxiety medications by 30 percent.

"The effect was pretty immediate," said Davis Park, director of the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing. "They would pet the device and calm down."

With such positive results from the pilot, Front Porch's four philanthropic partners, FACT Foundation, Pacific Homes Foundation, California Lutheran Homes and Sunny View Foundation were enthusiastic about funding the purchase of a Paro for Summer House memory care neighborhoods at Walnut Village, Claremont Manor and Wesley Palms as well as at Villa Gardens' memory care day program Horizon Academy and other Front Porch community memory care programs.

About Front Porch

[Front Porch](#) is a not-for-profit 'human serving' organization based in Glendale, California, that serves individuals and families through full-service retirement, active adult communities, affordable housing communities and related management and development services. Front Porch retirement and active adult communities offer options ranging from independent living to skilled care, including assisted living and memory care. Front Porch holds a BBB+ credit rating from Standard & Poor's. Founded in 1999, Front Porch embraces a leading-edge approach to enhance wellbeing with innovative communities and programs that meet the changing needs of people as they age. Front Porch's 'human serving' capabilities are epitomized by [Humanly PossibleSM](#), Front Porch's commitment to cause-based innovation that harnesses the innovative spirit of all of its staff in an effort to do whatever is humanly possible to meet emerging needs now and in the future. Specialized outreach programs like the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing, Social Accountability in Action, Front Porch Gallery and affiliated Centers for Spirituality and Aging support the Front Porch belief in understanding and meeting the needs of the individuals and communities we serve.

Front Porch Communities and Services is comprised of 10 full-service retirement communities in California and two adult living communities: one in Louisiana and one in Florida. Front Porch also serves individuals and families through more than 20 affordable housing communities managed by CARING Housing Ministries, a division of Front Porch.

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