

**Ocean City Today**

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## Gull Creek residents, staff paint mural of OC at facility

By Kara Hallissey | Jul 20, 2017

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*Photo by: Kara Hallissey*

Colleen Koziara, senior programming specialist and consultant of the Valeo programs, left, and Cassandra Coulbourne, director of Gull Creek's Valeo program, smile for a picture in front of the Ocean City-themed mural painted on Tuesday and Wednesday by staff and residents of the Gull Creek Senior Living Community in Berlin.

(July 21, 2017) On Tuesday and Wednesday, staff and residents of the Gull Creek Senior Living Community in Berlin painted an Ocean City-themed mural on a wall of the Treasure Cove neighborhood, which houses residents with dementia.

“Many of our residents have family businesses or lived on the Boardwalk,” said Cassandra Coulbourne, director of Gull Creek's Valeo program. “Ocean City is the stomping grounds for most and we are bringing it back.”

The Valeo program, which means “to thrive” in Latin, is a wellness initiative for those with memory impairments.

Activities incorporate components of

social, intellectual, spiritual and physical well-being.

The mural is approximately 6 feet by 14 feet and is designed to have residents feel like they are walking down memory lane and back to a familiar place.

“This population walks and wanders,” said Colleen Koziara, a certified dementia care practitioner and senior programming specialist and consultant of the Valeo programs. “They walk to the end of the hall and turn around. The perspective of the mural is set up to entice them to walk back in that direction [toward the Boardwalk.] What is really neat is some of the staff and residents have helped paint.”

Highlights include depictions of Candy Kitchen, Thrashers French Fries, Fisher's Popcorn and Trimper's Rides in addition to a number of other businesses and shops lining the Boardwalk.

The mural also includes the ocean, sunglasses, a pizza shop, sand castles and vacationers sitting under umbrellas on the beach.

“A lot of our residents are from this area and Ocean City is the main attraction,” Coulbourne said. “The mural is a sensory and will bring back that part of their memory by seeing something familiar.”

Memory Care residents or those with dementia helped paint their wing as well as employees and assistant living residents of the Gull Creek Senior Living Community.

“The goal is to have everyone in the building to have at least one stroke of paint on the mural so we can say everyone had a hand in it,” Coulbourne said.

The Ocean City Boardwalk mural painting is designed to help residents living with cognitive and memory impairments. The art can draw them away from daily concerns, foster self-expression, allow for creativity and help to relive fond memories, she said.

“This has been my passion for the last 13 years and I get joy out of helping this population of residents,” Coulbourne said. “I absolutely love what I do here and I am happy to come to work every day.”

Gull Creek Senior Living Community in Berlin has 19 independent living apartments, 56 assisted living apartments and 15 memory care suites in the Treasure Cove neighborhood wing of the facility.

For more information about Gull Creek, visit [www.gullcreek.com](http://www.gullcreek.com) or call 410-641-3171.



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