

Greenfield Retirement Home staff participate in state event

Illinois Activity Professional Association hosts 45th
annual conference in Bloomington



Photo provided by Christine Thompson Christine Thompson's presentation, titled "Let's Pop Some Bubbles and Burst into Laughter," delved into the science behind laughter and its profound benefits on mental and physical health.



Photo provided by Christine Thompson Deb Moreland's session, "Roots & Reflections: Revive Your Spirit Through Gardening," explored the therapeutic power of gardening.

BY DEREK BARICHELLO - DBARICHELLO@SHAWMEDIA.COM

The Illinois Activity Professional Association hosted its 45th annual conference, themed "Rest, Reflect and Recharge," including presentations from Greenfield Retirement Home professionals.

The event brought together activity professionals, certified therapeutic recreation specialists, administrators, social workers, consultants, nurses, CNAs and other professionals working various venues, including nursing homes, retirement communities, assisted living facilities, supportive living facilities, adult day centers, senior centers, hospitals, mental health settings, group homes, developmental disabled setting, homes for the blind and deaf, rehab and other specialized care from across the state to exchange ideas and learn new techniques to enhance the lives of residents/clients in their care.

The three-day event Oct. 2-4 in Bloomington focused on innovative programs designed to promote well-being, engagement and creativity in senior and various other types of living communities.

Among the featured speakers were Christine Thompson, activity director, and Deb Moreland, activity assistant, both representing Greenfield Retirement Home in Princeton.

They delivered insightful presentations that left participants with practical tools to reinvigorate their activity programs. Thompson's presentation, titled "Let's Pop Some Bubbles and Burst into Laughter," delved into the science behind laughter and its profound benefits on both mental and physical health. Thompson, a certified laughter leader, shared engaging laughter exercises, interactive crafts and tips on establishing laughter clubs within senior communities.

"Laughter is a powerful tool for healing and connection," Thompson said, adding that incorporating laughter into daily routines can uplift the spirit and bring people together.

Attendees left her session not only with smiles but also with practical exercises to bring joy to their own participants.

Moreland's session, "Roots & Reflections: Revive Your Spirit Through Gardening," explored the therapeutic power of gardening. Moreland discussed how gardening enhances physical well-being by promoting mobility, offers emotional relief through connection with nature and boosts mental health through creative expression.

She also shared gardening crafts and provided a wealth of resources to help attendees implement similar projects in their communities.

"Gardening is a way for seniors to reconnect with their roots, literally and figuratively. It's about nurturing both plants and the human spirit," Moreland said.

Both sessions were met with enthusiasm as participants eagerly discussed how these approaches could be applied in their own facilities. Attendees appreciated the mix of hands-on activities, engaging content and resources to take home. The IAPA's 45th annual conference continues to be a source of inspiration and rejuvenation for professionals dedicated to enriching the lives of seniors/clients, providing new ways to keep minds sharp and spirits high through the power of laughter, nature and creative activities.