

Thank You For The Music!

Research proves what most of us have known all along, that music – and singing especially – is good for you. We caught up with Liz, who runs the Choir at Birchgrove's Queensgate Apartments, Sidcup, to find out how it helps enliven the retirement community.

"It all started in late 2018, when one of our residents bought her grand piano. It was too large for her apartment, so it took pride of place in the club room. Lisa, our events coordinator, got in touch to see if I would organise a sing-along on Friday afternoons to see if it proved popular. I was delighted to do this, and it quickly became apparent that everyone wanted a bit more. So, we broadened our repertoire to include classical music, some Gilbert and Sullivan, Schubert's The Trout, even some tricky madrigals. We do catchy songs from musicals and theatre shows, nostalgic songs like the Hippopotamus Song from Tom Lehrer's book of Flanders and Swann... literally, anything and everything people want to sing.



"Music is so powerful it breaks down all the barriers. Two rather quiet, very lovely ladies have formed a wonderful friendship through their love of singing. We've had so much laughter... even tears. One lady was so sweet; we were doing a song she requested. Afterwards, she came up to me and said, 'I am so sorry, I couldn't sing that.' She was so overcome; I could see from her expression the song meant something deeply special to her.

"Singing is good for you on so many levels. It helps relieve stress, stimulates the immune system, improves lung function and singing with others gives you a sense of belonging and connection like the bonding those in a sports team experience. Recent studies have shown it enhances memory in people with dementia. I've seen this myself. There's one lady who joined in with the songs she knew. Her eyes lit up her whole face as she recalled song lyrics that seemed to bring back life memories. Things like that stay with you."

Queensgate Apartments unlike most other assisted living developments offer the benefits of independent living, whilst removing the complications of home ownership. And life within the community has carried on, albeit not quite as normal due to the lockdown, but as great communities do, with everyone rallying together and caring for one another.

If you would like to find out more about Queensgate Apartments contact the friendly advisors for an informal chat. The helpful staff will happily talk through the options and tailor something that works to support your personal needs. You will be amazed at how quickly plans can be put in place. And how Birchgrove can help you move at speed into a place where you will be warmly welcomed, supported and looked out for as part of the friendly Birchgrove family.

To find out more, please contact the team on **020 3929 5599** or visit **www.birchgrove.life**

