



## SUNNYSIDE VILLAGE

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*A Christian Senior Living Community*

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## **Sunnyside Health and Rehabilitation Center is bringing nature indoors!**

SARASOTA, Fla (July 1, 2021) – Sunnyside Health and Rehabilitation Center nursing care residents are getting a hands-on therapeutic connection to nature through innovative indoor gardening from Eldergrow, which specializes in therapeutic horticulture gardens.

Sunnyside Village’s therapeutic garden is the result of a \$1 million grant awarded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Agency for Healthcare Administration to LeadingAge Florida for the joint Eldergrow GARDEN project.

Eldergrow brings nature inside 12 months a year. Residents engage with the Eldergrow garden in all aspects — physically, socially, cognitively, creatively and spiritually.

“In this unprecedented time, it brings us comfort that our residents can safely interact with nature throughout their days. Eldergrow and our incredible staff now make that possible,” said J. David Yoder, Executive Director at Sunnyside Village.

Studies show that therapeutic horticulture reduces depression, improves balance and lowers the risk factors for dementia by 36 percent. Eldergrow offers seniors a therapeutic connection to nature through enrichment classes on horticulture, the culinary arts, and garden art.

The project will implement therapeutic horticulture programs in 22 LeadingAge Florida member nursing homes across the state — including Sunnyside Village — enhancing the quality of life for seniors living in these communities. Eldergrow, an award-winning Seattle-based company, offers therapeutic gardening programs to seniors in residential and skilled communities. Through this new partnership, Sunnyside Village residents are now able to nurture a lush indoor garden from within the safety of their community.

“Our members are always looking for new and innovative ways to engage their residents,” said Steve Bahmer, President and CEO of LeadingAge Florida. “We are confident that the Eldergrow GARDEN project will provide enormous benefit to Sunnyside Village residents and to the families and staff who provide direct care and support.”

Sunnyside Village will maintain their garden and therapeutic program with the help of Eldergrow Educators, who will conduct bi-monthly gardening classes with residents.

“We are excited to start our new partnership with LeadingAge Florida to bring wellness indoors to Sunnyside Village,” said Eldergrow CEO & Founder Orla Concannon. “This is easily a reflection of the innovative wellness that the community provides to their residents because if you have a healthy garden, you know you have a healthy community!”

