



Offering Hope One Card at a Time

Written by: Miriam A. Campo

COVID-19 is a term that our generation will never forget. So quickly we have all experienced so many changes that are unprecedented, "a new normal" it is called. We have all had to adjust to this new normal, but those that have been severely impacted are our seniors. They are the population that is most affected and as a result those that live in assisted living facilities and nursing homes are living in isolation and though it is for their own good, it is difficult to endure. I have spent most of my adult life caring for elderly relatives; I helped my husband care for his parents, I helped care for my dad until he passed in 2018 and now, I help care for my mom. Seniors have a very special

place in my heart and so during this pandemic I wanted to reach out to seniors in some way. I decided to put my creativity to good use and create cards for seniors living at The Atrium in Boca Raton. I drive by this facility every day on my way to work at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and thought it would be the perfect location to reach out to. I set out to make cards and write notes of encouragement for the seniors living at this facility.

I solicited family, friends and colleagues for assistance, and they did not disappoint. I also received several drawings from colleague's children and even my 83-year-old mom helped

with the cards. I delivered cards with handwritten encouraging notes to the 88 residents of the facility and a letter for the staff to thank them for all they continue to do.

This project is a success because people came together to make a difference and let others know they are remembered, and we care.

COVID-19 is not over and neither are we.

As luck would have it, the Division of Research created the COVID Change Challenge competition for FAU students, and as a result I met four amazing FAU students; Kassi Coviello, Mark Dawod, Maya Khazem and Isabella Seferoglou, who are as passionate about helping seniors through this pandemic as I am. These students did not win the competition, but that has not stopped them. We are working together to implement the three-part project. As outlined in their proposal titled "Connected Through Caring."

Letters: constitutes volunteers writing letters to recipients of nursing homes, hospital



Hortensia Alam, Miriam Campo's mother, assisting with the card creation.

"COVID-19 is not over and neither are we."

***– Miriam A. Campo,
Assistant Vice President for
Research Sponsored Programs***

patients and the essential workers who are putting their health and safety at risk to serve the community.

Pen Pals: establishes a community-based pen pal system between students at FAU and local assisted living facilities with a goal of promoting ongoing stimulating communication between seniors and students.

Video Communication: creates video communication between nursing home patients and an FAU student volunteer in an effort to alleviate stress on the elderly during this unprecedented time.

Part three requires buying iPads that would be donated to the facility. To implement this segment, we are creating a crowd funding page to solicit money to purchase the iPads. Each student is selecting a different facility in the county they live in. This allows us to reach more seniors in three different counties, Broward, Martin and Palm Beach. Depending on the number of volunteers that sign up will determine if the project can be extended to more facilities. As for my initial project, I continue making cards and sharing them with seniors, just sending hope and putting smiles on the faces of those that need it most.

For any questions about the project, how to volunteer or make a donation, please contact me at ConnectThroughCaring@fau.edu.