



Seniors reap benefits of gardening

The Intelligencer, Monday, August 22, 2016

Balancing her tiny frame across the small garden, Rose Mohan leaned over to gently tie the tomato plant to its stake.

The 90-year-old resident of Pine Run's Lakeview retirement center on Lower State Road in Doylestown Township was happy to be in the sun Friday morning, caring for the plants she and several of her neighbors had nurtured to life.

Although Mohan shied away from talking about her gardening skills, she eagerly tended to the pepper and tomato plants, the parsley and the onions.

Two gardens are the product of a partnership between Delaware Valley University's horticulture therapy program and Lakeview.

"I feel like people have such a deep connection with nature and plants," said Linda Klug, a recent graduate of DelVal's certification program. As part of her education, Klug was teamed with Lakeview's Alice Munn. Together, they and a handful of others tended the diminutive but robust garden.

"I was always interested in gardening," said Munn, 77, "but I worked all my life, raised four children and didn't have time for it."

Now however, she couldn't be more pleased with her efforts and all she's learned from working in the soil. "I don't think there's any disability that could prevent someone from gardening," said Munn, adding that her green thumb has done

wonders for her aging hands.

Nancy Minich, who teaches horticulture therapy at

Del-Val, said the program offers a wide variety of benefits to seniors, veterans and others.

"It adds to a sense of independence and a feeling of being productive," said Minich.

"It gives residents a sense of purpose ... and keeping them connected to a larger community," added Maureen Riley, director of life enrichment with Lakeview. "It underscores their relationships and engages them with their families, too."

As the women tenderly cared for their vegetables, Lakeview's chef, Diane Koban, brought out a silver tray laden with a snack of toasted bread adorned with cream cheese, fresh heirloom tomatoes and a touch of parsley from their garden. "This whole place is wonderful," said Munn.

