

# MAKING LIFE MORE FUN

## Here Wii Go...Seniors Rolling Along With Popular Gaming System

(NAPSA)—Although video games are usually enjoyed by their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, a number of seniors are finding that a popular gaming system is right up their alley.

Retirement communities and senior centers across the country are seeing very promising results with this kind of digital entertainment as seniors dive in with a sense of fun and joy some haven't experienced in years.

For example, Oregon-based Holiday Retirement began rolling out Nintendo Wiis to 25 of its independent-living senior communities as part of a pilot program in November 2007, with an ultimate eye toward phasing it into all of Holiday's 300-plus communities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The success of the pilot program prompted Holiday to order units for another 230 communities; Maplewood Estates in Fairport, N.Y., reported anticipation as delivery approached.

"Our residents' initial reaction about it was excitement," said Amy Werth, life enrichment coordinator. "While they didn't know what it was, they had heard about how popular it was, so they were very curious. They were eager to learn what the hype was all about."

Now with a couple of months under their collective belts, Holiday managers and enrichment coordinators, who generally introduce the Wiis to their residents as well as play alongside them when time permits, are reporting excellent response.

"What we are finding is that this game system is playable by all residents, across the board, no matter how limited their fine motor skills or eyesight might be,"



**Vineyard Place (Milwaukie, Ore.) residents Theresa Schmidt and Dorcas Riley get into the spirit of the game with Nintendo Wii.**

said Jeanie Sparagna, resident volunteer in charge of setting up the system at Woods at Holly Tree in Wilmington, N.C. "And they don't need any understanding of the technology to enjoy playing all of the game."

Vineyard Place in Milwaukie, Ore., reported an excellent reception at the initial setup session, attended by 15 residents. "Everyone had a great time setting up their identity for the games," said Linda Pruitt, manager. "I could hear the laughter all the way down the hall."

Bowling is a special favorite, with many communities setting up bowling leagues. "The residents think it's exciting that they can bowl just like they used to, in spite of physical limitations they have now," said Holley Howard, enrichment coordinator at Washington Commons in Evans, Ga. "One resident got a strike and said, 'Wow! I never did that before!'"

In addition to being well received by seniors, the game system also enjoys significant cross-generational appeal. "One of our residents wanted to learn before Christmas so she could play with her great-grandchildren over the

holidays," said Bill Johnson, manager at Cascadian Place in Everett, Wash.

Overall, the Wii appears to be a hit among Holiday's senior residents, appealing to their lighter side as well as providing physical and social benefits as they play, move and interact with their fellow residents.

"I feel that the Wii is a wonderful way to get exercise and to have a lot of fun," said Victoria Diana Liberator, therapeutic recreational director at White Oaks in Manchester, Conn. "The residents who have tried the Wii truly enjoyed themselves."

"It's a great idea to get the residents who don't normally participate to get involved and have fun," added Joy Paglia of Bethel Park in Bethel Park, Pa.

And what is life if it doesn't involve a bit of fun from time to time, a chance to relax, play alongside your neighbors and hit the sweet spot? Or roll your first strike?



**Resident Irby Dawson of The Stratford (High Point, N.C.) enjoys bowling with the Wii.**