



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation Receives Grant from Aroha Philanthropies Vitality Arts Program**

### ***Gift Supports Arts Classes for Chelsea Retirement Community Residents***

**Chelsea, MI, September 28, 2021** – The UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation is excited to announce it has received \$25,000 from the Aroha Philanthropies Vitality Arts Granting program. These funds will support arts instruction for residents of UMRC’s historic Chelsea Retirement Community (CRC) campus as part of the project, *Art of Aging: Crafting a Creative Community*.

This project will offer an opportunity across CRC’s continuum of care for independent and assisted living residents and those receiving care at the Kresge Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center to learn the art of pottery, watercolors, and acrylic painting from local, professional teaching artists. Each class will also include a culminating event to showcase the finished artwork they create.

“Life enrichment is one of the Foundation’s four priority fundraising initiatives, helping the older adults we serve to find their purpose, follow their passions, and live life to the fullest,” said UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation President, Wendy Brightman. “We know the arts are a vital part of healthy aging, and we are thrilled to have this unique opportunity to provide meaningful arts instruction for the older adults we serve.”

Since launching arts classes at CRC in 2017, thanks to an initial grant from Aroha Philanthropies and gifts from other funders, UMRC & Porter Hills has offered a variety of arts programming, including theatre arts, ukulele, pottery, painting, and more, for over 200 residents.

“The UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation is grateful to Aroha Philanthropies for this opportunity to continue to provide residents with lifelong learning and creative opportunities,” said Brightman. “Especially following the isolation felt as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, these arts classes are a welcome opportunity for residents to enjoy social times with their neighbors and express themselves in new ways, while developing or discovering their artistic creativity.”

A brand new art studio opened on the CRC campus during COVID. This space, also made possible thanks to philanthropic dollars, is dedicated for residents to use and demonstrate their artistic expressions.

Brightman added, “We are delighted for the older adults we serve to have the opportunity to utilize this new space for this exciting project and honored to partner with Aroha Philanthropies to make the arts available and accessible for our residents.”

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*Aroha Philanthropies* launched its *Seeding Vitality Arts* programming in 2016. Built on the foundation of love, Aroha, a core value of the Māori culture of New Zealand, combines selflessness, tolerance, kindness, and compassion. Aroha is the creative force that comes from the spirit and is represented in action through generosity. This word beautifully embodies the spirit and life philosophy of the foundation’s founder and president, Ellen Michelson. [www.arohaphilanthropies.org/](http://www.arohaphilanthropies.org/) 415.547.9025

Building on a foundation of 165 years of combined service to older adults, **United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills** is a faith-based, nonprofit organization whose mission is: Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives. Its vision is: A world in which all are empowered to age well. Together, UMRC & Porter Hills represents the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a commitment to cutting-edge care, UMRC & Porter Hills and its affiliates combine to serve over 7,400 older adults each year, from 24 locations and service lines, across 22 counties in Michigan’s lower peninsula. [umrcph.com/](http://umrcph.com/)734.433.1000 and 616.949.4975