



## Curiosity—and continued learning

Genealogy and astronomy are just two examples of educational classes Stanley and Carolyn Mitchell have participated in since moving to Touchmark three years ago. “Touchmark brings to us the opportunity to learn new things,” explains Stanley. “With classes held right here, attending is easy and accessible.”

“The astronomy class was one I was excited about, as I always wanted to learn more about it,” adds Carolyn.

Touchmark’s Life Enrichment/Wellness staff regularly schedule educational forums and classes for residents along with the many social and other activities reflecting seven dimensions of wellness.

Twice a year, Touchmark hosts a series of classes dedicated to guest speakers offering more in-depth classes on specific topics. Class offerings have included new media literacy, geology, and habits for healthy living. Often the presenters are professors or professors emeritus from the local university.

“There are lots of learning opportunities for a variety of interests,” says Stanley. “One of the classes we attended was on Alzheimer’s and mental health, which was very helpful.”

### **New experiences create memories**

The couple admit they like to try new things and continually learn. “New experiences we share together create a ‘remember when’ of shared

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history,” says Carolyn. Recently the Mitchells attended a concert at the Meridian Symphony, saw a play at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and have plans to visit the Starlight Mountain Theatre in a mountain community outside of Boise.

“The music of the area symphonies is a joy,” exclaims Carolyn. “It’s so uplifting and enriching. Now it’s so easy. The prearranged transportation to the concerts is much more enjoyable, because we don’t have to drive, and when we arrive at the venue, we are warmly greeted as ‘the group from Touchmark’ and led to our reserved seating.”

The surrounding area has no shortage of interesting activities for the Mitchells, whose key interests include art, human rights, geology, travel, and food. Exercise is another area of keen interest, and the couple work out nearly every day in the Touchmark Health & Fitness Club. “This has been vital to our health,” says Carolyn.

### **Like-minded people find each other**

“We’re very social people, and we like to be with our friends,” says Stanley. “That’s what’s happened here at Touchmark. We’ve become real fast friends with people who are like-minded and enjoy new experiences.”

Carolyn adds, “We became involved in the Touchmark Thespians group. It’s fun, a lot of work, and quite impressive: The sound, lighting, and staging are amazing.” Both Carolyn and Stanley have served as stage managers, and Carolyn has performed in the show.

Married 57 years, Stanley and Carolyn moved to Touchmark from another state. The two agree they have found a new group of friends with whom they can enjoy learning new things, sharing a glass of good wine, and savoring a fine meal.

“It’s about having fun, laughing, and sharing,” says Carolyn. “It’s just what we do.”



**Melissa Conrad**  
Vice President, Wellness &  
Marketing

**“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.”**

– Henry Ford

Because it’s back to school season, we’ve been thinking about the role learning plays in life, whether during our formative or later years. Learning can happen at any age as long as one has the curiosity and commitment to open his or her mind.

Not only does learning new things add more definition and enjoyment to your life, studies also show that it is particularly useful in keeping the aging mind sharp. Researchers from the University of Texas at Dallas recently experimented with adults ages 60-90 to gain insight into how learning new skills affects memory and mental cognition.

The results of the study showed that people who engaged in challenging new activities—such as digital photography and quilting—exhibited improvements in memory and problem-solving, whereas those who participated in activities with which they were already familiar—such as crossword puzzles and listening to classical music—did not.

Furthermore, the researchers observed that a hobby most improved individual brain function when it tapped the working memory, long-term memory, and other high-level cognitive processes at the same time. “The findings suggest that engagement alone is not enough,” says lead researcher Denise Park. “The three learning groups were pushed very hard to keep learning more and mastering more tasks and skills. Only the groups that were confronted with continuous and prolonged mental challenge improved.”

With that in mind, give yourself the gift of learning a new skill this autumn. There’s no better way to improve brain health while having fun at the same time!

# Health & Fitness Club

Please help us welcome Certified Fitness Professional Laura Bruce to the Health & Fitness Club! Laura will be focusing on some fun new classes and brings expertise in strength training and metabolic education. She has several certifications including Hatha Yoga, Mindful Meditation, Advanced Yoga, and Group Instruction. She has over 20 years experience in the health and fitness industry. Her motto is “I move. Therefore I am.” Laura believes, “exercise is beneficial for human longevity and activity is fundamental to authentic education.”

She currently teaches Strength with Low Impact Movement on Tuesdays/Thursdays at 11 am, Mindful Meditation on Mondays/Wednesdays at 11:15 am, and Total Body Flow on Mondays/Wednesdays at 9 am. She also is available for personal training to improve balance, strength, and flexibility.



## Inspiring wellness

Every September, Touchmark joins with the International Council on Active Aging and celebrates Active Aging Week. This year the theme is *Inspiring Wellness*, which encourages older adults to get excited about discovering new and engaging activities. By focusing on the seven dimensions of wellness—emotional, environmental, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual—everything we do benefits residents’ overall health and well-being. Active Aging Week is September 24 through 30. Event details will be posted on the online {Full} Life calendar.



### Tuesday, September 25

#### 3:30 pm: My Commitment to My Wellness presentation by Bruce Harmon

Bruce Harmon, 70, had cancer when he was younger and changed his habits. He has since competed in 40 marathons.

### Wednesday, September 26

#### Chair Massages. Check calendar for time.

### Thursday, September 27

#### Stretching Sessions. Check calendar for time.

#### 7 pm: Dance

### Friday, September 28

#### 10:30 am: Color Run/Walk

Registration begins at 10:30 am. The walk starts at 11 am. Hot dog lunch and live music to follow the one mile walk. Fee proceeds to support local nonprofit.





# TEAM MEMBER *Spotlight*

**Name:** Barry Creech

**Position:** Building Services Technician

**How would you describe yourself?**

I am pretty easygoing, have a great sense of humor, and I work well with others.

**Share a bit about your family and growing up.**

I am a local; I grew up in Vancouver, Washington, and have three brothers.

**What are some of the most significant events in your life?**

Marrying my wife, Shannon, who also works here. We met when we were in eighth grade. Also, the births of our three children.

**How long have you worked at Touchmark?**

Ten awesome years!

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Seeing smiles on the residents' faces when I complete their Building Services needs.

**What Touchmark value do you most closely relate to and why?**

I am a Giver, because I enjoy helping others.

**What are your favorite ...**

**Activities:** Riding my motorcycle and going on trips with Shannon, fishing, hunting, and coaching baseball.

**Food:** Steak.

**Movie:** *Shawshank Redemption* and any of the *Die Hard* movies.

**Music:** '80s and country music.



*We painted hot air balloons at the Wine, Pints, and Paint night, held a Glamour Shots event, sipped on wine and had fun at Karaoke Night, and enjoyed a beanbag baseball game with students from Knowledge Beginnings.*



*The Pembroke and Devonshire neighborhoods held a '50s-themed social with fun foods, dancing, and a lot of smiles!*

# Save the date!

## BARBECUE LUNCH

**Monday, September 3 • 11:30 am • The Courtyard**  
Featuring Chihuahua Desert entertainment. RSVP.

## WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

**Sunday, September 9 • 10 am • Esther Short Park**  
Join us for Vancouver's first Walk to End Alzheimer's! The bus leaves Touchmark at 10 am, opening ceremony is at 10:45 am, and the walk begins at 11 am. Call to reserve a spot on the bus or meet us there.

## ART GALLERY OPENING

**Thursday, September 13 • 3:30 pm**  
Featuring work by art teacher Hilarie Couture and talented residents. Enjoy wine and chocolate while

the artists discuss their work. RSVP.

## TACO TUESDAY

**Tuesday, October 2 • 4 pm**  
Featuring two types of taco meat and Coronitas to drink. RSVP.

## WINE AND CANVAS PAINTING

**Monday, October 29 • 3:30 pm • Activity Room**  
Enjoy an evening of wine, appetizers, and painting a work of art for just \$20. RSVP to reserve your spot. Space is limited.

[View our {FULL} Life calendar online for a complete list of events: TouchmarkVancouver.com](http://TouchmarkVancouver.com)

## What others are saying ...

*"Thank you to the Touchmark Team for the wonderful 'Appreciation Luncheon.' It was perfection down to the smallest detail. We noticed! What a great, unexpected thing you do for Touchmark folks, and I can tell you everyone appreciates all you do for us."*

- Don and Sandra Solmonson (right)



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