

NK PRESENTS

# Senior Living in Response to COVID-19

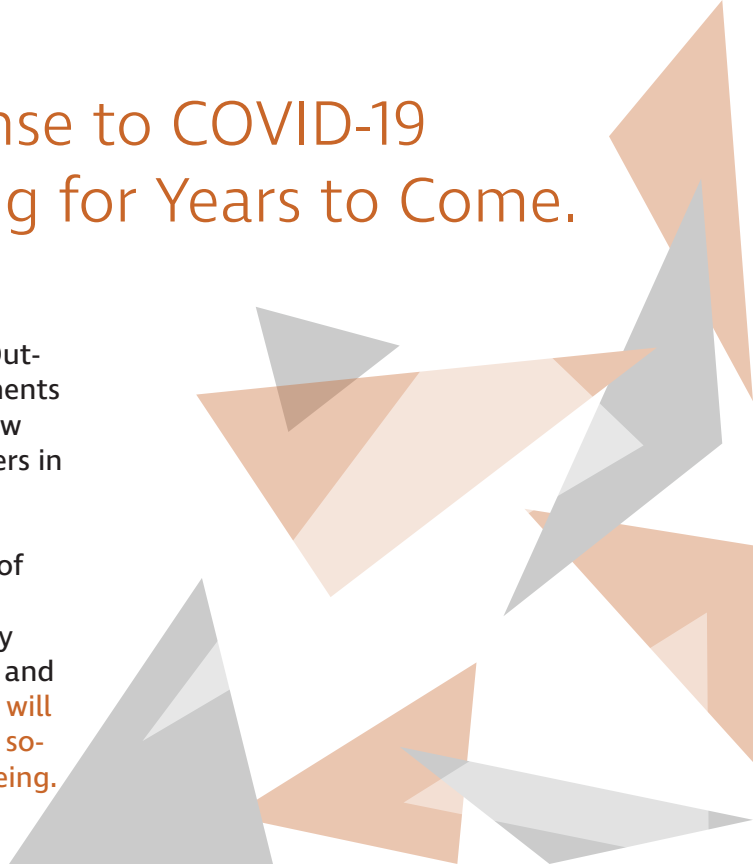
13 Ways to Make Safer,  
More Social Environments  
for Seniors



# Changes Made in Response to COVID-19 Will Improve Senior Living for Years to Come.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone, but perhaps no group more acutely than older adults. Outbreaks in assisted-living and nursing-home environments in particular have forced operators to implement new design and operational protocols to protect the elders in their care.

In December 2020, NK Architects convened a panel of leaders in senior living to discuss the pandemic, and it quickly emerged that their responses have actually addressed many long-standing issues around health and safety. **When the crisis ends, many of those changes will remain, fostering environments that are safer, more social, and more supportive of residents' overall wellbeing.**



# Panelists



## Facilitator

**Daniel J. Topping, AIA,  
LEED AP BD+C**

Principal, Senior Living Practice  
Design Leader, NK Architects

Daniel J. Topping is nationally recognized for the design of comprehensive, high-performance and sustainable senior living environments. Shaped by his time at Virginia Tech's College of Architecture and Urban Studies, his planning and design process is driven by deep investigation, discovery and research.



**John F. Urban, PE, LEED AP**  
Principal, Johnson & Urban, LLC

For over 30 years, John F. Urban has provided consulting engineering services and has been responsible for the management and/or engineering design of millions of square feet of construction for a wide range of projects throughout the U.S. His firm, Johnson and & Urban, is a leader in healthcare engineering.



**Toni Lynn Davis, MHA, CNHA, FACHA, CNA**  
Administrator, CentraState Manor  
Treasurer, NJACC

Toni Lynn Davis is the administrator at CentraState Healthcare System, The Manor, a not-for-profit senior rehabilitation and long-term care community in Freehold, NJ. Toni was the first to bring to New Jersey the Green House® home model, a revolutionary concept of nursing care.



**Brian G. Lawrence, LNHA, CPA, MBA**  
President & CEO, Fellowship Senior Living

With over 20 years of healthcare and Life Plan Community (CCRC) experience, Brian Lawrence assumed the duties of president and CEO of Fellowship Senior Living in 2009 with the priority to provide a high level of care and service to seniors. He is a licensed nursing home administrator and certified public accountant and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Seton Hall University.



**Esther Greenhouse, M.S., CAPS**  
Built Environment Strategist  
Consultant, AARP International  
Strategic Director, TC Age Friendly Center for Excellence  
Industry Scholar, Cornell Institute for Healthy Futures  
Lecturer, Design & Environmental Analysis, Cornell University

A catalyst for positive change through design, Esther Greenhouse is a built environment strategist and environmental gerontologist. She is the creator of the concept "Enabling Design"— a powerful approach to design and planning which harnesses the features of the built environment to enable all people to thrive.

# Findings

From our conversation emerged four design principles — and 13 specific interventions — that support care providers in fostering healthier, more connected environments for senior living, not just in times of crisis, but every day.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### Use the Entire Campus

Many campuses have underutilized space, either indoors or outdoors, which can be cost-effectively repurposed into residential amenities.

### Connect Via Technology

For seniors who are less mobile, technology can help bridge the gap to connect with family or other residents.

### Establish Zones

Dividing a facility into zones not only makes it easier to manage security or health concerns, it can help residents form more intimate connections.

### Ensure Safety

COVID-19 isn't the only virus out there. Simple infection-control solutions, many pioneered by healthcare, can keep residents healthy no matter the season.

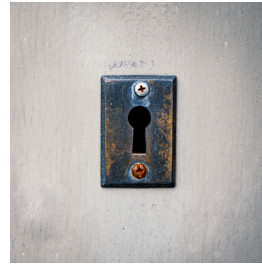




Use the Entire Campus

## Live Outdoors

Outdoor space allows people to dine or socialize safely while enjoying the calming effects of nature — benefits that can extend year-round with covered porches, fire-pits and heat lamps. For residents who can't get outside, consider ways to visually connect them to the outdoors.



Use the Entire Campus

## Unlock Existing Space

Have under-utilized rooms? Consider reusing spaces — like converting a supply closet into a consult room — to get more value out of existing real estate.

Use the Entire Campus

## Program the Parking Lot

Parking lots can double as drive-in theaters or places of exercise and recreation. If room numbers are displayed on windows, visiting family members can socialize with residents from the comfort and safety of their cars.

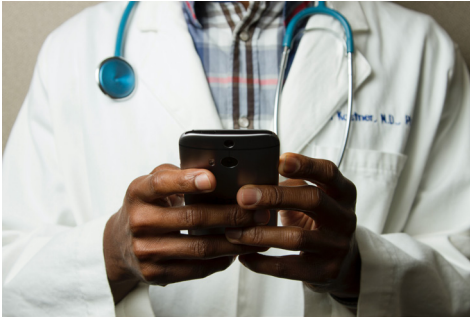


Connect Via Technology

## Expand Telemedicine

Telemedicine is not only more convenient, it also reduces the likelihood of infection.

To expand access, create flexible consult rooms with AV equipment for connecting with medical providers.



Connect Via Technology

## Put Social Media on Display

Social media is a great way to stay connected.

Allow residents to share their personal lives by connecting mobile devices to large video screens in public areas.



Connect Via Technology

## Build Livestream Studios

Connect residents virtually by using in-house studio space to broadcast entertainment, exercise programs, news and more — and allow family to log in remotely.

Establish Zones

## Layer Privacy

For security, establish a spectrum of privacy — from fully public, to semipublic, to semiprivate, to fully private — and expand or restrict access to visitors in each zone as necessary.



Connect Via Technology

## Upgrade to Broadband

More technology requires more data. Broadband internet connections keep downloads running smoothly.

Establish Zones

## Foster Community at Multiple Scales

To build stronger connections amongst neighbors, establish smaller communities, both spatially and socially, within the larger population. Small groups also quarantine more easily when infection control is paramount.





Establish Zones

## Demarcate Thresholds

Use both visual markers and operational guidelines to demarcate public space from private space. These thresholds can be opened or closed as the need for security increases or decreases.





Ensure Safety

## Install Cleanable Materials

Flooring, upholstery and other materials may need to withstand intensive cleaning with UV light or bleach. Consider using materials pioneered in healthcare spaces that balance warmth with cleanability.

Ensure Safety

## Upgrade HVAC Systems

MERV-13 filters remove most particulate matter and infectious agents from the air, but filtration at any level contributes to a healthier environment. Consider cost, local regulations and resident and staff wellbeing when installing and upgrading HVAC systems.



Ensure Safety

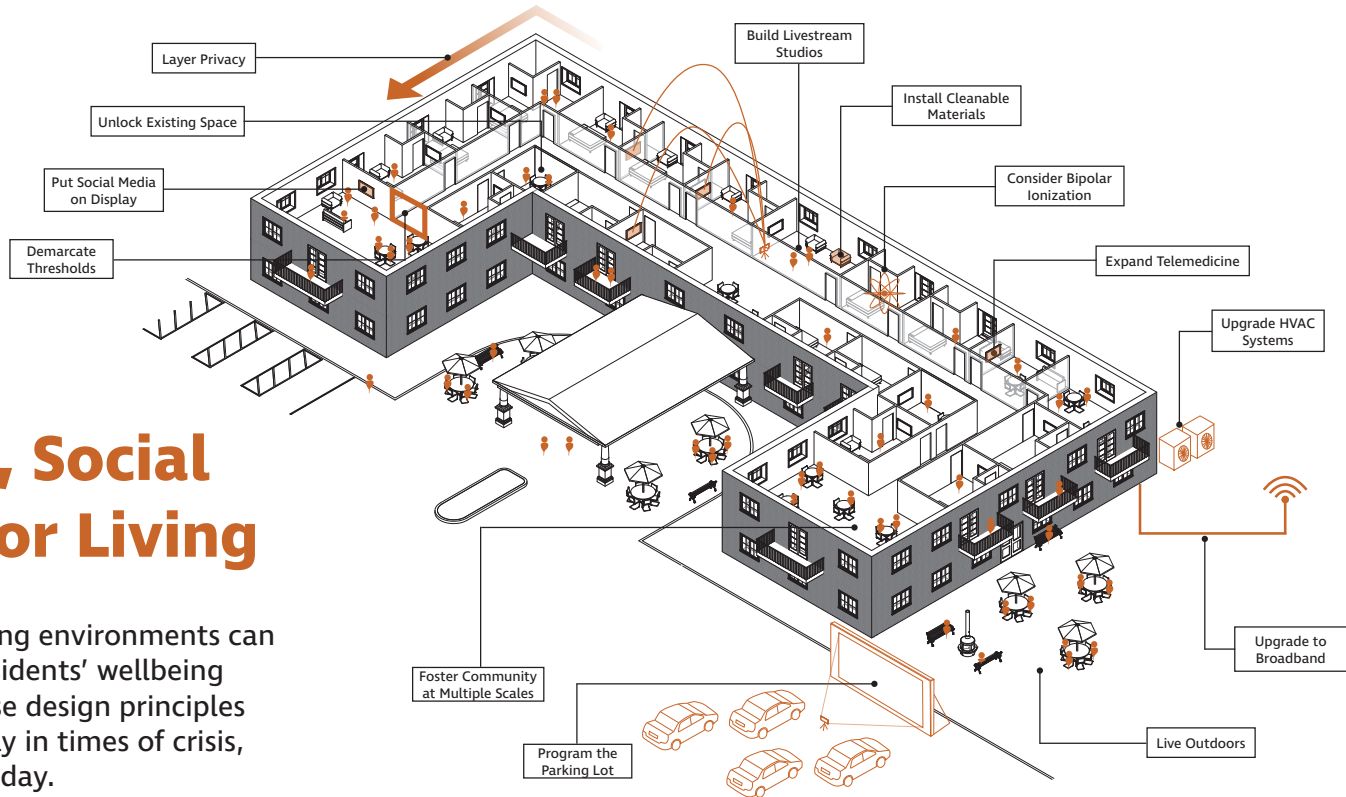
## Consider Bipolar Ionization

Filtration systems can be made more effective with ionization, which attracts bacteria and other infectious agents to dust particles and makes them easier to remove from the environment.



# Safe, Social Senior Living

Senior living environments can ensure residents' wellbeing using these design principles — not only in times of crisis, but every day.



# Senior Living of Tomorrow, Today

Forward-thinking senior living providers already employ many of these principles to foster safer, more social environments. Following are a few examples designed by NK Architects.





## Live Outdoors

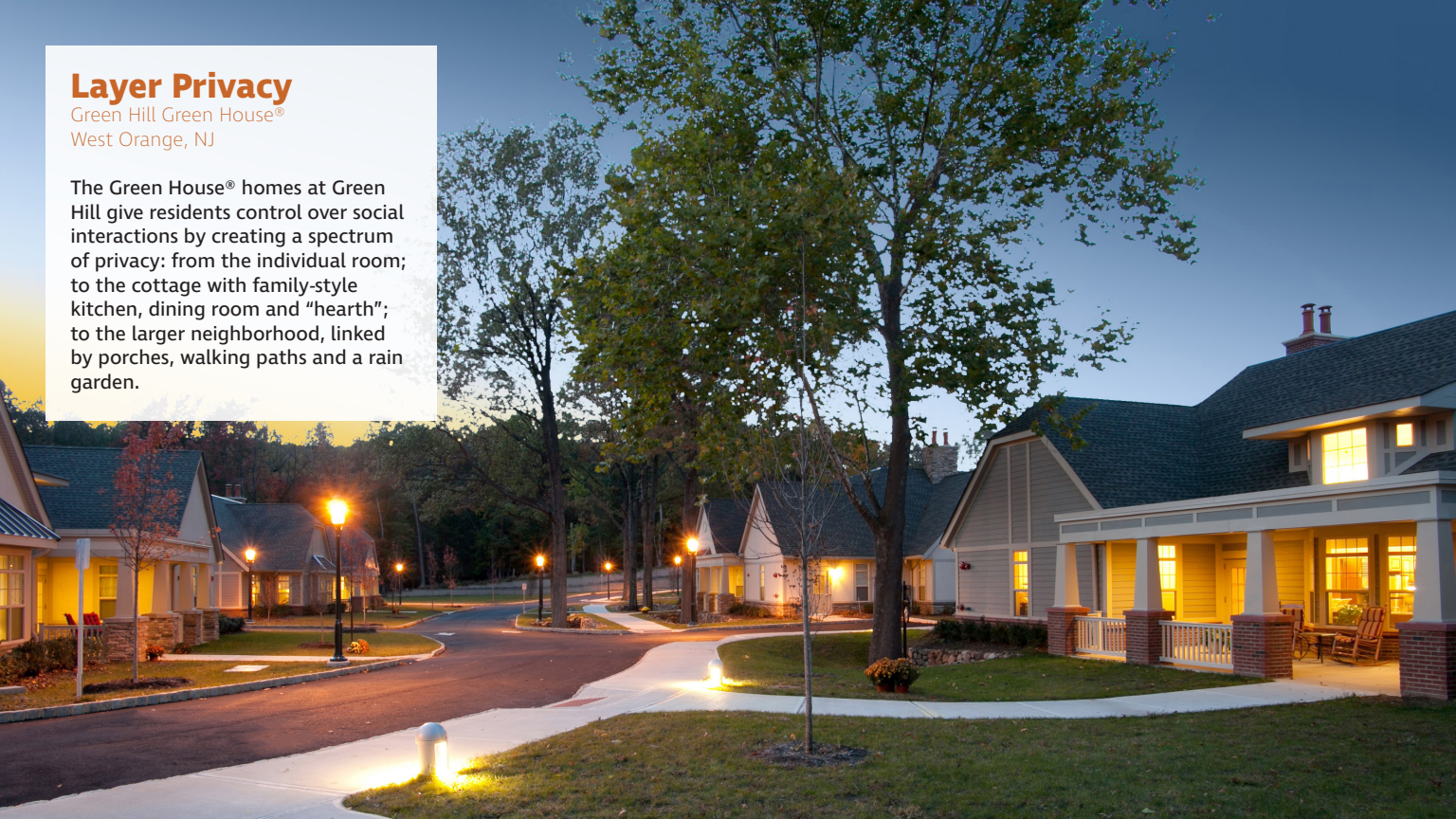
Morris Hall Meadows at Lawrenceville  
Lawrenceville, NJ

Because spending time outdoors is proven to improve health and wellbeing — and, when necessary, to facilitate safe social distancing — Morris Hall Meadows at Lawrenceville provides outdoor patios adjacent to every residence.

## Layer Privacy

Green Hill Green House®  
West Orange, NJ

The Green House® homes at Green Hill give residents control over social interactions by creating a spectrum of privacy: from the individual room; to the cottage with family-style kitchen, dining room and “hearth”; to the larger neighborhood, linked by porches, walking paths and a rain garden.





## Unlock Existing Space

Jewish Home at Rockleigh  
Rockleigh, NJ

With the addition of fountains, gardens, a walking track and outdoor terraces, a drainage area can double as a welcoming landscape and residential amenity, as at the Jewish Home at Rockleigh.





## Foster Community at Multiple Scales

Sycamore at Totowa  
Totowa, NJ



To emulate “at-home” residential living, the Sycamore at Totowa is divided into intimate clusters of 14 residents who share common living, cooking and social spaces. Each cluster then connects to the larger community along a “Main Street” linking restaurant-style dining, a wellness center, library, cafe and garden terrace.



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