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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dedication will be Monday, Sept. 22 at 6:30 p.m..

Wellness Garden Dedicated

Typically when thinking about exercise and wellness, most might picture weights and cardio equipment in a gym setting. After all, getting in shape is synonymous with gyms or trendy exercise facilities full of benches, treadmills and bikes. But for seniors at Clark-Lindsey Village, in addition to the community's newly expanded indoor fitness center, they have an outdoor, park-like setting designed to improve wellness through cardiovascular performance and increased muscle strength and flexibility.

This innovative wellness garden is a collaborative project between the University of Illinois and Clark-Lindsey Village. Called New AGE (Active Green Environment), the concept was to develop a physical activity enabling green space that is fun and functional while promoting physical activity for older adults. Village residents and their visitors walk along paths and sloped walk ways, participate in group physical activity classes and numerous other activities that promote health and wellness.

The New AGE vision is that of a sanctuary filled with green walkways, flower gardens, bird feeders, waterfall, lawns and patios. As visitors enjoy the greenery, they

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stoop down to feed the wildlife, follow where the path leads, and take advantage of different physical activity and recreational opportunities. This safe and inviting setting is more than a park or garden, it is actually a health maintenance facility for seniors, designed to enhance cardiovascular health, sustain muscle strength, and provide numerous opportunities to stimulate balance and stretching activities.

The design, building and testing of the New AGE plan required a multi-disciplinary approach, utilizing the expertise of horticulturists, landscape architects, environmental engineers, health care professionals, and kinesiologists.

Noted experts from the University of Illinois, Dr. Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, Director of the Department of Kinesiology and Dr. Hank Wilkinson, a full Professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and a turfgrass pathologist at the university since the program's inception in 1982, led development of the project.

"Clark-Lindsey's partnership with the New AGE project seemed absolutely natural for us. Thirty years ago when ground was broken on Clark-Lindsey it was a revolutionary concept, just as New AGE is revolutionary in concept and design" said Cliff Ingersoll, Clark-Lindsey's President and CEO.

"We have long recognized the value of garden environments for their therapeutic health benefits," Ingersoll continued. "This new garden space, designed with physical activity components, demonstrates our continued commitment to the well-being of our

residents. We continue to raise the bar on retirement living in Urbana-Champaign with the dedication of the New AGE project as the Masterpiece Gardens. Not only are residents engaged in community, they are engaged in their own well-being. The Masterpiece Gardens is another tool available to Clark-Lindsey residents who seek to stimulate the mind, body and spirit.”

Clark-Lindsey offers residents ongoing group exercise classes including Tai Chi, strength and balance training and chair exercises. Paula Martin, the organization’s Wellness and Activity Coordinator who is a certified Tai Chi instructor, provides instruction for classes. A recently expanded fitness center at The Village boasts the largest variety of state-of-the-art equipment available in a retirement community locally. The community even held a bowling tournament using the popular Wii game technology providing exercise in yet another manner that is fun and beneficial to participants. Its popularity has led to the development of a bowling league organized by residents.

Located in southwest Urbana on 27 acres, Clark-Lindsey is recognized for its outstanding plantings and gardens as well. Resident garden plots with ground-level and raised beds offer the opportunity for residents to plant and tend to flowers and vegetables. The retirement community was recognized by the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners and invited to participate in their annual Garden Walk this past spring.

The Village at Clark-Lindsey offers active adult residential apartment living. Meadowbrook Health Center is also part of the Clark-Lindsey campus and offers senior

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health care services to the greater Champaign County area including assisted living, skilled care and special memory care. Clark-Lindsey has served the senior community of Urbana-Champaign for more than 31 years.

The New AGE project was funded in part by the Retirement Research Foundation and Clark-Lindsey Village.

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