

# Well-Being

## June Article: Not Just May: Always

May is nationally recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month – a deeply meaningful time dedicated to renewing our commitment to understanding, destigmatizing, and promoting well-being. But once May ends, it's all too easy to slip back into our usual bad habits and routines, gradually forgetting that the practices we pursue for our own well-being have the power to ripple outward, impacting the lives of those around us in truly profound ways.

On Impact Day, June 6th, at Juliette Fowler Communities in Dallas, I had the privilege of witnessing the transformative power of shared wellness, specifically among the residents in the Memory Care Center. In this space, many residents face challenges that make even the simplest activities overwhelming or even impossible: maintaining focus is difficult, communication is a struggle, and for some, the most expressive gesture they can offer is a gentle smile of gratitude. But when I sat down at the upright piano and began to play, something remarkable happened.

For what would ultimately span over 90 minutes of music – broken into three groups of 30-minute sets – the atmosphere was transformed. Conversations paused, faces turned toward the music, and the once-weary group sat still, listening intently. And when the final song ended, this transformation was undeniable, because the audience *came to life*.

Applause broke out in the room and from the adjacent hallway; smiles bloomed and eyes sparkled with new life. Several residents reached out to take my hands, eagerly sharing memories of loved ones who had played piano for them before. This music – shared with no expectation other than connection – had rejuvenated the residents of the Memory Care Center and had sparked a joy in their hearts that was utterly contagious. This was the impact of wellness – not just for myself, but for every resident that smiled that day because of my music.

All too often, we forget the incredible impact that even the smallest acts of self-care can do to uplift the lives of those around us. Hobbies, kindness, presence – these are not meant to be hidden. They're meant to be shared, encouraged, celebrated, and made time for.

The joy I witnessed at Juliette Fowler on Impact Day is not unique; it blooms every time a new volunteer steps into the building to brighten a resident's day. We may never fully grasp the depth of the positive impact that our presence and actions can have, but we can catch a glimpse of it in these moments of connection and joy.

As author Brenda Ueland once wrote: "If you have a gift, use it in every way possible. Don't hoard it. Don't measure it. Let it pour out of you. Let it flow through you, like a river, for someone else." Let your gifts flow through you; let your wellness lift someone's spirit. Because it's not just in May that we should remember how greatly we can impact the lives of others. It's always.