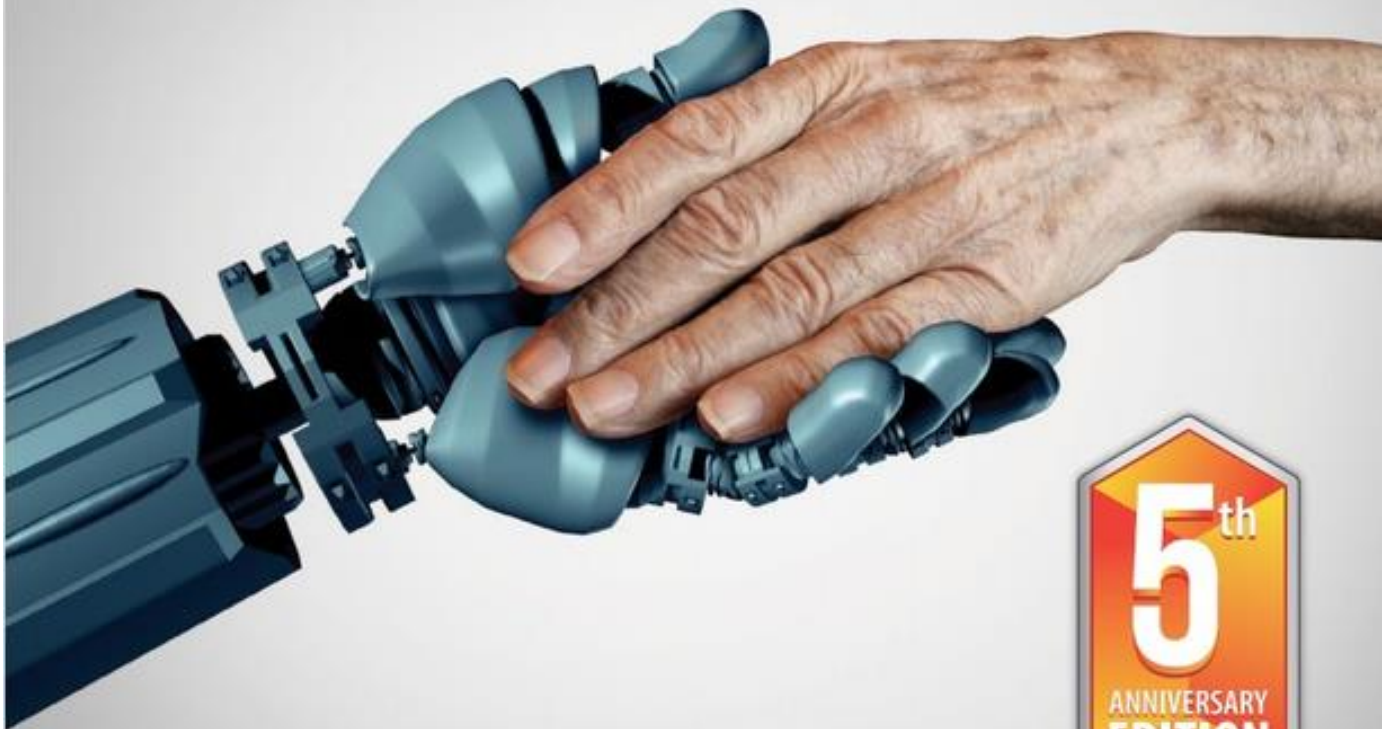


LEADINGAGE CALIFORNIA

SUMMER 2019

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TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP USES VOICE FIRST TO REDEFINE “AGING IN PLACE” FOR RESIDENTS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Watch the video at youtube.com/leadingagecalifornia

The numbers on the clock are harder to see these days.

“It gets blurry,” says Joyce Lynch, 93. “So I can ask her what time it is. And she doesn’t care if I call her and it’s two in the morning. She’s always cheerful.”

Joyce Lynch is a resident at Eskaton Village Roseville, a Northern California retirement community who in 2019 was able to offer all their residents Alexa devices through a partnership between Eskaton and technology company K4Connect. The “she” in question

is an Alexa Dot, a voice-activated AI assistant that helps Joyce control her lights, the volume on her music, gets her daily menus, wakes her up for church on Sundays, and keeps her up to date on the events of the day at her community.

“A couple of years ago Eskaton was exploring the opportunity to bring more social connection into our communities and also explore smart home automation for the environment,” explains Sheri Peifer, Chief Strategy Officer for Eskaton. “We did a lot of research around great technology partners that were mission-

based and came across K4 Connect Communities.”

K4Connect Communities brings smart home automation to older adults and people with disabilities within one single system. “A smart home is the ability to connect and control multiple devices in your environment,” says Chris Brimble, Director of Western Growth for K4Connect. “At a larger scale, that’s going to be things like lighting, thermostats, entertainment, even the blinds going up and down. All of those connected devices are a smart home.”

For Joyce, who suffers from partial blindness and macular degeneration, the Alexa has been a big help. “As you age, you’re limited with what you can do, so it’s nice to have her here.” Alexa can also connect her to the front desk to call 911 in case of a fall.

“Voice is the ultimate freedom to be able to communicate in a meaningful way,” says K4Connect COO Derek Holt. “Being able to control your home, being able to engage with your wellness, being able to ask for knowledge – it is going to ultimately

democratize all of the great innovations that are happening and remove the barrier, that in some regards, has held older adults back from using technology.”

At Eskaton Village Roseville, peer-to-peer classes and “champions” like Joyce help get the ball rolling with resident adoption. “Television wasn’t even around when I was young. When you get older, sometimes these changes in technology are hard to accept,” she says. “But you’re learning - learning and adjusting at the same time.” Joyce laughs, “My children told me it was time to join the 21st century, so I had to learn!”

In the months since integrating Alexa, Peifer and her team have learned quite a bit as well. “That daily programming is so important,” she says. “Whether they’re in a community of 100 apartments or a campus that’s 37 acres wide,” says Peifer, “older adults have the ability to connect with the events, activities and the life of the community.”

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IMPACT of CHOOSING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

By Teri Tift, Executive Director of Quality & Compliance, Eskaton & Shirley Nickels, Chief Operating Officer, SafelyYou

Eskaton, a nonprofit senior living organization based in Sacramento, is committed to its mission to enhance the quality of life of older adults through innovative health, housing and social services. A key aspect of this mission is innovation, which is woven throughout Eskaton's daily operations and incorporated in its vision to Transform the Aging Experience. Use of technology and choosing the right technology partners is critical in this endeavor.

Before Eskaton selects a technology partner, it must validate a need to justify new technology that either solves an issue or improves current practice. Implementing new technology can disrupt the organization on many levels, and thoroughly thinking through the benefits is necessary. Some basic questions to answer would be: Who will benefit? Who are the users? Is it difficult to implement, train, or use? What research has validated its success and how does it impact resident care? What data can we analyze? What's the ROI? What security measures are in place? And finally, is the product available on a trial basis? Eskaton has specific clinical outcome goals, and falls is always on the list in some form. Finding innovative technologies with good outcomes, outside of industry standards, that would push the needle has always been attractive. When Eskaton heard about SafelyYou and their research-backed AI technology on reducing the recurrence of falls in memory care we had to pilot this program!

SafelyYou is a memory-care (dementia) focused fall prevention program which evolved from a project started in 2014 by members of UC Berkeley's Artificial Intelligence Research Lab – one of the top five AI research groups in the world. Using cameras paired with cutting-edge AI technology, SafelyYou empowers care staff to implement fall prevention, specifically for people living with Alzheimer's and dementia, through fall detection and subsequent fall video review and prevention recommendations.

Eskaton chose three of its assisted living communities to participate in the SafelyYou pilot lasting three months. These communities were chosen because they each have a designated Memory Care program that is similar in number of apartments and capacity of residents, location of the communities, and stable care staff and managers that exhibited a readiness for a culture of innovation.

Reduction of resident falls in Memory Care was the primary reason to conduct a trial of the SafelyYou system; however, Eskaton also experienced a more than 50% reduction in response times and a reduction in the number of times residents were transferred to the emergency room. In fact, armed with knowledge provided by actual footage of resident falls, among the

three communities, only one resident was transported to the ER during the 90-day pilot period. For residents with dementia and their families, reducing the trauma of an emergency room visit was significant!

An unexpected and positive outcome from the SafelyYou pilot was the shift in staff culture around fall prevention. Care staff reported feeling empowered to implement person-centered fall prevention measures, and enjoyed being a part of the solution in developing better ways to care for the residents. Care staff were encouraged to be true fall scene investigators, working together as a team with families to better understand how the resident fell and determine effective changes to reduce the likelihood of falling again.

Memory care managers reported that they found the fall videos to be particularly useful for staff education and communication with residents' families. Videos recorded of falls also include footage of the staff response, so viewing the videos as a team provided an opportunity for real-time training focused around transfers and resident engagement. The videos were also effective tools for management to communicate to families about resident needs like furniture changes, new care plans, hospice, and different mobility aids. Based on these results, Eskaton committed to provide SafelyYou to all residents in memory care, but stories like this can make it seem like innovation is easy. We tried something, it worked, and our residents and staff lives are improved by it. The truth is innovation isn't easy. Trying something new requires time, money, and a willingness to fail, but when it works, it's incredibly meaningful. In fact, in one instance, if we had waited one more month for SafelyYou, we may have not known we had a resident falling in his room and getting back in bed without telling anyone.

To innovate, you have to try things that might not work while doing everything in your power to provide the best chance of success. The best way we've found to do so is choosing the right partner. If you find a partner who shares your culture, values, and priorities, they will go the extra mile everywhere they can – just like we ask of ourselves and our staff.

