



# Celebrating Cornell Cares Day at Brighton Gardens

BY EMILY CHANG

Though it is no longer the holiday season, the spirit of giving is far from over. Recognizing the importance of public service and philanthropy, the Cornell Club actively engages with the community to create a meaningful impact on others and affect positive change.

Regional clubs participated in Cornell Cares Day on Jan. 20, an annual event connecting students, alumni and families to their community and demonstrating their commitment to service. The Cornell Club of Monmouth and Ocean Counties (CCMO) had 20 members attend Brighton Gardens of Middletown, an assisted living facility, where they spent quality time with the senior residents. Everyone enjoyed making origami, putting together jars of paperwhite plants, completing crossword puzzles, singing songs and having meaningful conversations with one another. The volunteers and residents forged lasting bonds, allowing this event to include both service and social connection.

"We've volunteered at Brighton Gardens many times over the last nine years, but this was the best yet," said Pat Reilly, president of CCMO. While she is always proud of the club's work and service, she is especially pleased by this year's "record turnout" that included many new faces. "One family of four even drove from NYC just for this event," she said. CCMO also welcomed returning members, such as their youngest volunteer: the daughter of an alum who is only 9 years old!"



In addition to Brighton Gardens, CCMO has spent Cornell Cares Day volunteering at many other local locations such as Lunch Break and OASIS Farm. While next year's volunteer site is not determined yet, CCMO hopes to return to Brighton Gardens in the spring for another community service day.

CCMO currently consists of 1,471 members, with more and more volunteers every year. They are excited to continue using their platform to spread service and positivity around Monmouth and Ocean County.

For more information, visit [CornellMonmouth-Ocean.org](http://CornellMonmouth-Ocean.org) or contact President Pat Reilly at [pareilly78@gmail.com](mailto:pareilly78@gmail.com)