

# Two vaccines and two weeks later, Palo Alto seniors celebrate and hug

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**Palo Alto senior living community celebrates after getting fully vaccinated**

KTVU's Emma Goss reports.

**PALO ALTO, Calif.** - About one in four of Santa Clara County residents over the age of 75 are fully vaccinated with two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Monday marks two weeks since many seniors at Moldaw Residences, a senior living community in Palo Alto, got their second dose.

An injection of normal life came rushing back to the community last Monday, as the fully vaccinated enjoyed margaritas and mariachi music outdoors while doing their best to wear masks in between the sips of their drinks.

"We are still keeping the protocols that we had before, but just being able to be out amongst each other, it's a ray of sunshine," Harriet Weiss, 73, a Moldaw resident, said.

Last Friday, in celebration of the Jewish holiday of Purim, a belly dancer performed for residents outdoors.

The safe and celebratory environment is a bit surreal to residents who spent nearly a year isolated from friends and family.

"There's so much potential risk to health and adverse effects of isolation, it's just a thrilling opportunity that we can get life back going again," Elyse Gerson, executive director of Moldaw Residences, said.

Gerson brought a vaccine clinic on-site with help from the Palo Alto JCC to make it easy for residents to get the Pfizer vaccine. Now nearly all Moldaw residents are fully vaccinated, according to Gerson.

For resident Jackie Hamburg, 75, the second vaccine brought long-awaited relief.

"When I got the shot it was just like the first time, and then I sat down and I started to cry because I was so grateful," Hamburg said, "and just relief that we had actually done it."

Up until last month, the retirement community had zero cases of COVID-19. But emerging variants infected a handful of residents in early January. Two residents died.

Norman Rosenstock, 83, and his wife are still recovering from the virus, and won't be vaccinated for several more weeks after undergoing monoclonal antibody injections.

"It was quite severe, the worst thing that we have experienced," Rosenstock said.

Residents say the music and entertainment coming back to Moldaw are refreshing, but the campus is not "party central," and very little will change for seniors living there, who have grown accustomed to life with masks and social distancing.

Going forward, there will be hugs, small gatherings for games of bridge and Mahjong, and communal holiday celebrations.

"The light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter, thank God," Frank Weiss, 82, said.

"I'm a people person, I love to touch and hug, and that's been very very hard," his wife Harriet Weiss said. "I'm looking forward to that, and living the rest of our lives in as normal a way as possible."