

Bobby Townsend: You go those places and you don't even have to pack your suitcase.

Speaker 2: The pandemic is forcing many seniors to stay inside, but new technology is helping them feel a little more connected to the outside world. I talked with one woman who says that virtual reality is relieving some of that pressure and helping an entire community rebound in Tallahassee.

Speaker 3: The Rebound Tallahassee is sponsored by Perry & Young.

Bobby Townsend: It was the most amazing thing [00:00:30] that's ever happened to me. And I've done a lot of things and I've been a lot of places.

Speaker 2: Bobby Townsend is a resident here at Azalea Gardens Assisted Living and Memory Care. When the pandemic forced visitors out, virtual reality came to the rescue.

Bobby Townsend: This is the honest truth, it was out of this world.

Speaker 2: The experiences these headsets provide include African safaris, new cooking skills, and even a ride in a space shuttle.

Speaker 4: And lift off.

Bobby Townsend: It seemed like I was shooting off from Cape Canaveral.

Becky Preidis: It's been wonderful.

Speaker 2: Becky [00:01:00] Preidis is executive director at Azalea Gardens. She says the new technology is reducing stress and anxiety in the community, especially for residents with memory related disorders like Alzheimer's.

Becky Preidis: This stimulates their memories of things they may have done in the past.

Speaker 2: For Townsend, the virtual adventures recreate an actual scuba experience on the Great Barrier Reef from decades ago.

Bobby Townsend: It was as if I was reliving going there.

Speaker 2: Bringing a little bit of comfort during these difficult times.

Bobby Townsend: It's made me more [00:01:30] relaxed and more appreciative of things I've done.

Speaker 2: And studies have shown virtual experiences in memory care facilities can help caregivers learn more about their patients' lives, making for better interactions. That better quality of life can lead to less anxiety, depression, and hostility according to research published by the University of Kent last year.

