

Community Organization Spotlight: Never Too Old to Dream



Janice dreamed of meeting an Elvis impersonator. Barbara wanted to go to Dairy Queen for a banana split. Mary wished for a new Bible. Elmer just wanted to see a good movie in a theater. And Sylvia wished for a trip to Belterra Casino in Indiana.

For the past three years, Second Wind Dreams has been helping make such wishes come true for many of the nearly 60 residents at Homestead Nursing Center in New Castle, Ky. The 100th dream was recently granted.

Maryellen Garrison, the Henry County Cooperative Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences, learned about Second Wind Dreams from the program's founder, P.K. Belville, at a professional development meeting and decided it would make a good project for the Henry County Extension Council.

"Basically, it's run like a lot of the Dream Factory programs for kids, but it is designed to provide dreams for individuals who live in nursing homes," Garrison said. "We're kind of the dream weavers."

With help from Homestead Administrator Don Dalger and Activities Director Crystal Aldridge, the Second Wind Dreams Committee compiles a resident wish list and finds local sponsors willing to help make the dreams come true.

"They're not impossible dreams," said Garrison. "Somebody wanted to go to Cracker Barrel; one lady wanted to go to the Henry County Fair; two ladies wanted haircuts and perms; somebody wanted to go to Wal-Mart; somebody wanted a new pair of blue jeans; and somebody wanted White Castle's."

When the Christian Church in Eminence granted Barbara's wish for a banana split from the local Dairy Queen, they took Barbara and 11 of her Homestead friends there for ice cream. Dairy Queen's manager heard what was happening and picked up the tab.

And when 83-year-old Sylvia and eight other residents were taken to Belterra Casino, she hit one of the penny slot machines, winning \$240.



Several residents accompanied Second Wind dream winner Rosa on a trip to the county fair where the plan was to attend a talent show -- until some of them heard there was wrestling at the other end of the midway. "Three of them (including Rosa) went to the wrestling ... and when it came time to go home, we couldn't get the three at the wrestling match to leave," Garrison said. "One of the women who went to the wrestling said she just loved to see those men in tights."

The philosophy of the program is that you are never too old to dream, and that by granting these dreams, the resident, the staff and the community as a whole benefits. It highlights the positive aspects of dreaming and encourages the community to become involved in the lives of seniors by making their dreams come true. A lack of motivation or dreams has both physical and mental

consequences. By fulfilling dreams, residents are stimulated both physically and mentally by giving them the special attention they deserve. As each dream unfolds, members of the local community experience the perspective of older adults and gain a greater appreciation for their stage of life. Long after the dream has been fulfilled, the effects linger, giving all involved a "Second Wind."

As baby boomers age, the number of individuals who will spend their final years in nursing home facilities will increase. Not many of us want to think that either we or our family members will end our lives in an institution. The Henry County Second Wind committee instituted this program because they recognized that if we or our loved ones do, indeed, need nursing home care -- we want it to be in facility that has a "Second Wind Dreams" program in place.

To learn more about Second Wind Dreams®, go to the national website at <http://www.secondwind.org/>.

Visit the Henry County Cooperative Extension and see their 100 dream list at <http://www.henrycountyky.com/extension/secondwind.htm>.

Download a full copy of the November 2010 edition of The Heart Line newsletter at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/newsletter>.