



The Illuminator

Sharing What We Do with What We've Been Given

Quarterly Donor Newsletter

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Starting Over

Volunteer Q & A

Michael Venaccio

Feeding Furry Companions

Spotlight on Staff

Ranea and Amber

Fantastic Friday

Thank You to Our Donors

An Enhanced Sound Experience

Donor Q & A

Janell Martin

Starting Over: Finding a Community of Support

Lynn could barely contain her emotions upon hearing a familiar voice. During a Grand Forks Senior Center Fantastic Friday event, she saw Harold (not his real name) dressed well and smiling from ear to ear.

"I was overcome with emotion. I typically don't see the result of our work come full circle," shares Lynn.

How They Met

Lynn, a Grand Forks Senior Center Resources counselor, met Harold a few years ago when he was in a completely different situation. "Harold has advanced dementia and lived in rural Grand Forks County in extremely poor conditions," recalls Lynn.

Poor living conditions might be an understatement. The home he personally built 50 years earlier had a hole in the roof and the walls were crumbling. The water and power had been turned off.

He collected drinking water in his yard using buckets and spent most of his days looking for firewood and trying to secure food and water.

It was a warm August day when a Sheriff's deputy found Harold wandering a country road looking for food. He brought Harold to the closest town for a meal before driving him home. The deputy then made a referral to the Vulnerable Adult Protective Services (VAPS) program, which runs out of the County building. Bernie, a VAPS staff member, contacted Lynn at the Senior Center and together they reached out to help Harold.

It was a warm August day when a Sheriff's deputy found Harold wandering a country road looking for food.

Building the Groundwork

Lynn remembers developing the groundwork with Harold. "In the beginning we would bring him emergency food boxes. He was always very nice and cordial when we would visit, but he rarely remembered who we were." Developing a groundwork of trust

(cont. on the next page)

YOU are making the lives of older adults in our community better and brighter. **THANK YOU!**

Starting Over

(cont. from previous page)

with a client is important, but extremely difficult when the client has advanced dementia. "It took a while to build trust with Harold," states Lynn.

Making the Move

Just like most older adults, Harold wanted to stay in his home. However, in spite of his dementia, he finally realized one cold October day that he just couldn't live in his home any longer. With the help of Lynn and Bernie, Harold received a court-appointed guardian, completed some medical testing, and moved to an

assisted living facility in Grand Forks.

Despite challenges, people can be resilient when they're in a familiar setting, such as their home. But when surrounded by unfamiliar surroundings and new people, it can be difficult and scary, especially for someone with dementia. Thankfully, Harold has been thriving in his new home. He is always helping

out around the facility. The staff are appreciative and thankful for him.

"Now he has a community of support in his new home. He knows he's in a safer place and it's so heartwarming to see him thriving."

"Harold's situation has completely turned around," remarks Lynn. "He was all alone and faced a life-threatening situation for quite some time. Now he has a community of support in his new home. He knows he's in a safer place and it's so heartwarming to see him thriving." ■

Volunteer Q & A: Michael Venaccio

How did you learn about the Grand Forks Senior Center?

It's hard to say exactly. I think it was because my wife, Vicki, started some of the exercise classes here and then I joined her for Chair Yoga. Then I decided I wanted to volunteer. I was retired and finally had time on my hands. I wanted to help people and give back.

In which areas do you volunteer?

I volunteer in multiple areas of bingo: caller, floor walker, and payout. I have also assisted with the MySeniorCenter program, both inputting information and training

seniors on how to use it. When needed, I help out at the front desk. And I am a Board member and serve on the finance and gaming committees.

Why do you volunteer at the Grand Forks Senior Center?

Because I came here and asked the question, "Is there a need?" When Vicki was using the services and I started using the services, then I wanted to give back. You can't always be a taker. I like



Michael Venaccio

coming here and helping people who have worked hard all their lives. There isn't enough staff to do it all.

What advice would you give someone who is thinking of volunteering at the Senior Center?

My pastor says, and I agree with him, that there are a lot of opportunities to help. See if you fit with one of them. Not everything is right for everybody. You will feel happier and more fulfilled by volunteering. Be active and use your gifts. ■

Feeding Furry Companions



A new partnership between the Grand Forks Senior Center and the Circle of Friends Humane Society ensures homebound seniors are providing their pets and themselves with proper nutrition.

Homebound seniors, thanks to your support, get the nutrition they need through our meal delivery programs: Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals. Now the pets of some of these seniors are also receiving proper nutrition through a new collaboration with the Circle of Friends Humane Society.

"We believe in companions for life," states Lauralee Tupa, executive director of Circle of Friends. "I learned about homebound seniors sharing their food with their companions because they could not afford pet food any more. We want to make sure seniors who qualify for Meals on Wheels or Home Delivered Meals are able to get all the nutrition the meals provide."

Once a month, Sandy, a volunteer with Circle of Friends,

makes the rounds to thirteen homes with food, treats, toys, and litter for the furry companions of meal delivery clients. "My mom had Alzheimer's and she loved cats," explains Sandy. "I know first-hand how important pets are for emotional health. When I heard about this opportunity I knew right away this is how I wanted to volunteer."

"Our clients are so grateful," shares Sue Quirk, a Grand Forks Senior Center staff member. Knowing their trusted companions are well fed is one less thing for seniors to worry about. "One client told us that the special food she received for her dog has improved his arthritis so much and he has so much more energy!"

"Our investors are dedicated to keeping seniors and companions together and ensuring they have

the necessary supplies," reveals Lauralee. "We also have a wonderful group of volunteers, including Boy & Girl Scouts and other youth programs, who make special bags and toys for these seniors and their special pets."

The Grand Forks Senior Center is grateful for this partnership with the Circle of Friends Humane Society. Thank you to their supporters who are helping keep our seniors' pets healthy and happy. ■

No GF Senior Center funds are used to purchase pet food or supplies for senior clients. The Circle of Friends Humane Society reached out to us in their desire to make sure the needs of senior pet owners were being met. This program is only for clients of Meals on Wheels or Home Delivered Meals.

Spotlight on GFSC Staff: Activities Dept - Ranea and Amber

ACTIVITY MANAGER RANEA JOHNSON

How long have you been working at the Grand Forks Senior Center?

Ranea: I've been here for six and a half years.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Ranea: I like getting to know all the seniors. In my previous job I worked in Crookston for so long that everyone I meet here is new.

What is one fun fact about you?

Ranea: I am a very fun grandma! And I like going on our Senior Center trips. It's fun to get out of the building so I don't have to behave as much!

What is something you want people to know about the Senior Center?

Ranea: There are so many opportunities here that people aren't aware. You just need to come in our doors. It's fun here!



Top photo: Recent photo with Ranea on the left and Amber on the right. Bottom photo: From Halloween a few years ago, Amber on the left and Ranea on the right.

ACTIVITY ASSISTANT AMBER HAHN

How long have you been working at the Grand Forks Senior Center?

Amber: I've been here for three years.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Amber: I really like introducing seniors to new things that may be outside their comfort zone, like playing Molkky. And I love when they ask, "When are we doing this again?"

What is one fun fact about you?

Amber: I have three jobs because I love working and keeping busy!

What is something you want people to know about the Senior Center?

Amber: You don't have to be old to come here, you only need to be 55. Come join us now so you don't miss out on any of the fun!

Fantastic Friday: A Fun and Popular Way to Spend Friday Afternoons

Listening to music can transport someone to a different time and place: a special event you attended, a family trip you took, or simply cherished memories of a loved one.

So it's not surprising Fantastic Fridays at the Grand Forks Senior Center are a big hit. Most Fridays at 1 pm a musician takes the stage to entertain the crowd with their wonderful talent. Whether you prefer country western, rock 'n' roll, or something in between, we have it.

"The variety of music is great," states Gloria. She and her sister, Gail, often come to Fantastic Friday events together. "I really love the music, but also getting to see friends and meeting new people," shares Gail.

"Everyone is here to have a great time."

Many groups and individuals have performed over the years. Some regular entertainers include Paul & Larry, Peat Moss, Theresa & the Plow Boys, Too Old to Die Young, Chuck Gust & Sharon Myron, and Dan Lee.

From a performer standpoint, it's also a fun experience. "It's a great creative outlet for me to develop a performance," explains Paul, of Paul & Larry. "I try to relate a lot of the songs to the crowd.



Lately more people seem to appreciate rock 'n' roll music, which is great because it's my favorite type of music to sing!"

It's also pretty common to see people get up and dance along to the music. "Fantastic Fridays are full of upbeat energy," shares Michelle, another regular at Fantastic Friday. "It's a great place to come for live music. There aren't many places in town that offer this great option, especially during the afternoon."

Come see for yourself just how fantastic Friday can be! To see who is performing next, check out www.gfseniorcenter.org/fantasticfridayscalendar. ■

"It's a great creative outlet for me to develop a performance," explains Paul.

FANTASTIC FRIDAYS in August 1 pm - Treats served

August 2: Larry Wheeler & Paul Beland at LINCOLN PARK

August 9: "Pain Management" presentation by Nicole Morgan from Altru

August 16: Baby Boomer Karaoke

August 23: "Singing Cowboy" Jim Dalglish

August 30: Performer TO BE ANNOUNCED

Thank You to Our Donors

Below is a list of donors and their **cumulative giving from April 17, 2019 to July 21, 2019.**

Gift designations, including memorials, are listed in the monthly Silver Express newsletter.

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Meals On Wheels America
Nielsen, Forrest and Emily

\$500 - \$999

Doble, Lloyd
Gate City Bank

\$250 - \$499

Kirkeby, Dean
Vaaler Insurance

\$100 - \$249

Altendorf, Diane
Kolstoe, Ralph and Carolyn
Mikkelsen, Merle and Kaye
Nelson, David
Robinette, Paul and Mary
Thrivent Choice allocation from
Harold Gangelhoff

Up to \$99

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Anderson, Byron
Anonymous
Applegren, Ralph and Dawn
Askim, Marian
Austin, Kevin and Joyce
Bartholomew, Laurie
Bondy, Pauline
Broadwell, Ray and Becky
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Hillebrand, Vicky
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Iseminger, Carl and Colette
Jensen, Marlys
Johnson, Diane
Johnson, Tori
Knain, Vidette
Langheid, Beverly
Lehn, Rich and Faye
Lindell, Neil and Kay
Lunde, Beverly
Mahnke, Vickie
Mattern, Roger and Alice
McGarry, Dennis and Lynn
Men's Coffee Group
Murphy, Spud
Nelson, Duane and Lila Jane
Ness, Ron and Darlyne
Pavelich, JoAnn
Rike, Else
Roberts, Don and Betty
Salimi, Akram and Elkhas
Sandberg, Curt and lone
Sather, Joan
Schiele, Kathy
Schumacher, Matt and Jami
Shea, Audrey
Slominski, Dan and Doloris

Stark, Irv and Sandy
Staveteig, Robert
Sturges, Denyse
Torrey, Dianne
Venaccio, Michael and Vicki
Walior, Mary

Grants

- Altru Health Foundation - \$1,608 grant for the Nutrition Pilot program
- UND Denim Day - \$871 grant from their Denim Day funds
- United Way - \$4,203 grant for Resources and Home Delivered Meals/Meals on Wheels
- US Bank Foundation - \$1,500 grant for the Activity Program

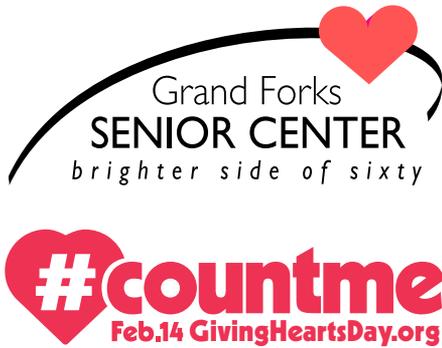
Brighter Side Society Members (sustaining monthly donors)

- Anonymous
- Broadwell, Ray and Becky
- Iseminger, Carl and Colette
- Kirkeby, Dean
- Mattern, Roger and Alice
- McGarry, Dennis and Lynn
- Robinette, Paul and Mary
- Sandberg, Curt and lone
- Schiele, Kathy
- Schumacher, Matt and Jami
- Venaccio, Michael and Vicki

thank you 

An Enhanced Sound Experience

Giving Hearts Day Funds Used to Purchase a Sound System for the Lower Level Garden Room



Things are sounding a lot clearer in the Garden Room (the large lower level room of the Grand Forks Senior Center) lately, thanks to your generosity. With funds donated on Giving Hearts Day, a sound system was purchased for the lower level to provide amplification for classes and presentations.

“Often seniors will tell me that they can’t quite hear what the presenter is saying,” shares Ranea Johnson, activity manager at the Senior Center. “We’re excited to have the new sound system so seniors can really benefit.”

So far the sound system has been used during presentations and to play music during exercise classes such as chair yoga.

“The small CD player we were using wasn’t really working that great,” reveals Amber Hahn, activity assistant at the Senior Center. “The sound only carried

to parts of the room so half of the seniors couldn’t hear the music. The new system is very user friendly and provides a much more balanced sound quality.”

“It feels like the music surrounds me, rather than yelling at me from one direction,” shares Emily, a chair yoga participant. “I was skeptical on why we needed

a sound system, but I understand now. It has made chair yoga so much more enjoyable for me.”

According to Ranea, “down the road we hope to add a large screen TV and projector to the Garden Room that will tie into the sound system and give even more options for activities.”

Have you heard the new equipment yet? Be sure to attend a

presentation or take part in an exercise class to experience your generosity first hand. Check out our website at gfseniorcenter.org/ activities for a schedule of events or just stop in and pick up a newsletter. ■



“(Previously) the sound only carried to parts of the room so half of the seniors couldn’t hear the music. The new system is very user friendly and provides a much more balanced sound quality.”



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Donor Q & A: Janell Martin

How did you learn about the Grand Forks Senior Center?

I grew up in western North Dakota around my grandparents. After my grandpa passed away, my grandma received Meals on

Wheels. I saw how much she enjoyed the variety of meals and how much they helped her. Currently, I work from home and decided I needed a reason to get out of the house so I started delivering Meals on Wheels; it's been about 12 years now!

What prompted your first gift to the Senior Center?

I saw the need, for instance when you needed to replace the dishwasher. And then I saw the result of my and others' giving and it felt good to contribute.

Why do you continue to financially support the Senior Center?

Because I know I'm helping the greater good. My donations make sure seniors have amazing activities and programs, but it also

gives staff the necessary tools (such as a new dishwasher) to be more efficient so they can help even more seniors.

When you think of the Senior Center, what words or phrases come to your mind?

Thriving, independence, and supportive. The Senior Center is a growing organization and reaching so many new seniors. All of the activities and services the Senior Center offers help seniors thrive, maintain their independence, and have the support they need to live, not just exist.

What do you wish other people knew about the Senior Center?

There is something for everyone of all ages at the Senior Center! Lots of volunteer options are available. Check it out! ■



Janell Martin