

Students host prom for elders

NSCS volunteers dance with seniors at adult care center

Elizabeth Sandhu
for the Index

Wheelchairs and walkers did not stop them from attending the dance.

In an effort to serve the community and promote organizational activities, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars hosted a prom for the elderly last Saturday, said senior NSCS president Kara Burns.

The senior prom took place at the Twin Pines Adult Care Center.

Initially meant to be a formal-attire dance, it took on a patriotic theme when the event's original date changed to Veterans Day, Burns said.

The volunteers, residents and Twin Pines workers were clad in red, white and blue in honor of the holiday.

Twin Pines' female residents also had the opportunity to have their hair styled, nails painted and makeup applied prior to the prom.

Several nursing majors and other campus volunteers who heard about the event assisted NSCS members in going from room to room, beautifying those residents who requested it.

Resident Irene Small said she enjoyed having

her hair curled and makeup applied, but she opted out of the prom.

"If I can't go and dance, then I don't want to go and watch," Small said.

Resident Fern Rea joked with the women applying her makeup that she would attend the prom, but she did not have a date.

After spending time doing hair and makeup for the ladies, sophomore Zenia Johnson said the humor and kindness of the residents made her re-evaluate what area of nursing she wanted to practice in the future.

"Before this, I wasn't thinking about doing anything in geriatrics, but now I would probably consider it because I had a good time tonight," Johnson said.

Residents and student volunteers chatted together over punch and cookies while tapping their feet to swing, jazz, and Sinatra-esque tunes.

Some of the physically able residents danced to the music while others started up a game of cards.

Although most of the residents at the prom were physically unable to dance, that did not prevent them from having a good time, said Ruth Anne Picker, Twin Pines' activity director.

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Ruth Anne Picker
Twin Pines Activity Director



Junior Megan Merrigan dances with Kirksville resident Harry Boughton at a senior citizen prom Friday hosted by the National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

some want to just visit with all the students, some just like being in this room because it's away from a different area," Picker said.

She said she was excited when junior Megan Merrigan, NSCS vice president of community service, approached her in September about a fall prom for the residents.

"There's a variety of different organizations that play a wonderful part in our facility," Picker said. "And we can always use more."

Merrigan said she hopes the fall prom will become

an annual tradition between Twin Pines and NSCS.

"I actually think it'd be neat to get some people coming here every week, and then by the time we have it again next year, we'd really have some relationships built, and they'd feel a little bit more comfortable with us all," Merrigan said.

She said she thinks it is important for campus organizations to connect with the community, especially the elderly.

"I know they really appreciate this, and it's good for

them to be around younger people," Merrigan said.

Only in its fourth year on campus, Burns said NSCS still is trying to expand its breadth of activities.

"We're still a relatively new organization, so we haven't done a whole lot of things yet," Burns said.

In addition to the prom, NSCS participates in several other charity events throughout the year, Burns said.

She said NSCS's biggest community service event is a charity walk they started last spring.

Aquatic Center remains open

Katie Curry
for the Index

Just because the weather gets colder doesn't mean people can't still get wet.

The Kirksville Aquatic Center will be open for business this winter, although last winter it was closed because of a staff shortage and low revenue, recreation specialist Robin Loft said.

"We were having problems finding qualified staff that was properly certified," Loft said. "At that time we didn't have an instructor on staff that could certify lifeguards."

Loft said the bad weather during the summer last year resulted in the shortage in revenue.

"The goal for this place when they opened it was for it to be open year-round," Loft said. "Last year was just an incredibly tough year."

During the time the Aquatic Center was closed last year, some needed improvements were made, including redoing the locker room floors and the indoor pool deck.

She said she has no intention of closing the pool during the winter anytime soon, and during this winter season, the Aquatic Center will offer a multitude of new classes.

"We are doing kickboxing in the pool, called Aqua-box," Loft said. "We are also doing yoga in the pool, which is called Fluid Yoga. Also, we are going to have Water Pilates."

Loft said she believes the new classes are a great experience.

"I think they are a very progressive movement in aquatic fitness that you aren't going to find anywhere else," Loft said. "They're things that our instructors have

been working really hard to adapt and make their own. It's something that everyone should experience."

Steven Bell, director of parks and recreation for Kirksville, said winter is a prime time for many people to use the indoor pool for exercise and recreation.

"We have a lot of people who like to come exercise, do aerobics and lap swim," Bell said. "We've added yoga and Pilates and those types of things to keep interest up."

Bell said the programs at the Aquatic Center change often to keep things interesting and even include certain classes that cater to preschoolers and senior citizens, such as Red Cross swim lessons and senior aerobics.

The Aquatic Center will be closed for Thanksgiving from Nov. 21 to 26 while the locker room floors are refinished.

"In the winter it's sometimes difficult to maintain exercise training," Bell said. "The Aquatic Center gives people an opportunity to do so. The opportunity to participate in water programs is normally limited, so it's very nice to have the facility open year-round."

He also said organizations on campus are welcome to rent out the pool after hours or on Sundays when the Aquatic Center is not open.

Junior David Mannell is one of the student lifeguards working at the Aquatic Center. He started lifeguarding there in mid-August and plans to work through his time here at Truman.

"I really like it here," Mannell said. "It's really laid back, and everyone does a good job. Everyone's really friendly here."

"We were having problems finding qualified staff that was properly certified."

Robin Loft
Recreation Specialist

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