

Business

Thursday, March 27, 2014

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Program reminds senior citizens it's never too late for wishes to come true

by JENNIFER WATERS
Reporter

Seniors in Western New York now have a chance for their unfulfilled wishes to come true.

Sips, Suds and Sweets, an event to benefit Senior Wishes, will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at Fox Run at Orchard Park, 1 Fox Run Lane, Orchard Park.

Attendees can enjoy samplings of fine wines, locally brewed beer and sweet treats. There will be live entertainment by Decades, a basket raffle and silent auction.

Senior wishes was started this past fall, and, according to Wendy Miller Backman, director of programs and development, the organization has recently granted its first wish.

"A woman with a lifelong love of photography always wanted to work with a professional to learn in-depth skills," Miller Backman said.

For this woman, her photography hobby took a backseat to

raising children and making a home for her family. Through her Senior Wishes application, she was granted the opportunity to take lessons with Katie Schneider Photography.

An eligible senior is someone 65 years or older and a U.S. citizen who meets income limitations of \$22,500 for a single person and \$35,000 for a couple. Miller Backman said the organization functions much like Make-A-Wish, but there is no medical diagnosis necessary for applicants.

"Applicants must also be cognitively and physically capable of experiencing their wish," Miller Backman said. Similar to other senior wish-granting organizations

around the country, there is a wish committee, which looks for individuals who do not have the means to fulfill the wish on their own, be it grand or simple. A wish as seemingly small as an accessibility item such as an air conditioner, walker or hearing aid will be valued the same as wishes for a family reunion or visit to a hometown.

"We see frequently wishes to see someone they haven't seen in years. It's touching," Miller Backman said. The goal of the program is to honor and recognize the lifelong contributions of seniors and promote their quality of life by granting them a meaningful wish that brings them joy while enriching

their lives.

Senior Wishes is a program from the United Church Home Society, the parent company to Fox Run and United Church Manor, and is an offshoot to the mission statement aiming to cater to seniors. In creating the program, it was decided to expand the eligibility to all of Western New York, as the next-closest program is in Erie, Pa.

"I'm excited we're able to bring a program like this to Western New York. It's a brand-new program for us, and it's hard to find something that isn't already out there," Miller Backman said.

Sips, Suds and Sweets is sponsored by M&T Bank, and tickets are \$40. Register by calling 508-2121 or online at www.fhyurl.com/seniorwishes event.

Miller Backman said it will be a fun evening featuring 40 wines, 20 beers, desserts and heartwarming wishes.

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Events

Forum offered on disability advocacy efforts

The Museum of disability History will host "Nothing About Us Without Us," featuring disability rights advocate Alec Frazier, from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 29, at 3826 Main St., Buffalo. Learn about what informs advocacy and self-advocacy, the University at Buffalo's only disability-run endeavor, the Diversity in Disability Symposia and various disability organizations, such as the American Association of People with Disabilities, the USA and National Council on Independent Living. The Person First Forum series focuses on advocacy efforts and the acceptance of disabilities. Admission is free to the Person First Forum. Call 629-3626 to register.