



Senior Wishes makes dreams come true for Western New York seniors

Friday May 9, 2014 | By: Orchard Park Sun Staff | News

At the end of the day, can you smile knowing that your one dream has been met in your lifetime? The United Church Home Society of Orchard Park hopes to help those 65 and older in the area make it so. The Senior Wishes program was launched in 2013. Modeling similar programs throughout the U.S., its founding intent is to recognize a specific population by granting life enriching wishes for those unable to fulfill them on their own.

Senior Wishes is sponsored by UCHS, Inc., the parent company to Fox Run of Orchard Park and The United Church Manor of West Seneca, a Housing and Urban Development agency program for low-income seniors.

"We feel that so often the elderly are forgotten, and we want to remind the public that even as you age, there are still life enriching experiences that people would like to have," said Wendy Miller Backman, director of programs and development for Senior Wishes.

Wishes can be as fanciful as a hot air balloon ride or as practical as an air conditioner.

"It is about changing the quality of life for someone who does not have any other means to do so," said Backman.

Funding is provided by private and corporate sponsors, fundraisers and donations, Backman said. Major area sponsors include M&T Bank and Morrison Food Services. Events are successful due to donations from such local vendors as Firefly Cupcakes and Flying Bison Brewery. One major fundraiser, "Sips, Suds & Sweets," in March 2014, allowed Senior Wishes to grant their first wish to a woman always wanting to take a professional photography session.

"We feel honored to bring Senior Wishes to this community," Backman said. "Very often, a wish is to have a reunion with a loved one, especially when it is a financial hardship to travel."

Based on available funds, some of the wish guidelines include age, income and being able to coherently communicate and experience the wish. Applications are being accepted on an ongoing basis.

For more information about this unique program, call 508-2121 or visit www.uchsinc.org.