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Assisted living facilities ensure residents get to celebrate holiday

Jessica Horne Staff writer



Stephanie Ward, Health Center Activity coordinator at Wesley Pines Retirement Community, stands Friday with health care resident during a Valentine's Party on Wheels at Wesley Pines in Lumberton. The party included the distribution of snacks and soda to residents in celebration of Valentine's Day.



Hunt

LUMBERTON — Local assisted living facilities staged Valentine's Day celebrations Friday to let residents know they are special and loved amid the challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

Residents at Morning Star Assisted Living, located on Goins Road in Pembroke, weren't able to take part in their annual Valentine's Day dance party this year, said Karen Hunt, owner and administrator. But staff members passed out soda, cookies, cupcakes and chocolate to each resident on Friday.

Residents also made valentine cards and artwork earlier in the week, which were on display at the facility, she said.

Since COVID-19 forced a change in visitation protocols, the staff has worked to celebrate each holiday, and keep residents in good spirits, Hunt said.



"We just love doing that for them," she said of celebrations and parties.

The facility soon will receive Echo devices from the North Carolina Assisted Living Association to help residents participate in video call visits with family members, Hunt said. Staff members previously allowed residents to use their personal phones to FaceTime family members.

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Shooter

The facility will hold its second vaccination clinic for residents and staff members on Friday, she said. The first was in late January.

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While the estimated 30 residents seem to be in good spirits, many miss their families and in-person visits, she said. Before the weather turned cold, residents could see family members in-person through socially distanced outdoor visits. Hunt hopes that vaccinations will help slow the spread of COVID-19 and allow residents the chance to better interact with family members.

Greenbrier, a DePaul Senior Living Community in Fairmont, hosted Valentine's Day celebrations on Thursday and Friday. Residents made valentines crafts that included a Valentine's Day centerpiece, cards, a candy-filled mailbox, and a Valentine's Day gnome, which they all helped decorate, said Amy Cavalier, Communications coordinator.

Wesley Pines Retirement Community in Lumberton has seen an influx in valentines and flowers sent to residents by family members, said Amy Shooter, director of Marketing. Handmade cards from children in Wake Forest and other areas also have been delivered to residents.

"They mailed beautiful cards to every Wesley Pines resident in our health center, assisted living and independent living levels of care," Shooter said.

Residents also enjoyed Friday's offerings of the movie "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and a Valentine's Party on Wheels that was put together by Stephanie Ward, Health Center Activity coordinator, Shooter said. The mobile party featured Cupid Floats, puffcorn, cupcakes and cookies, which were sponsored by a resident's daughter.

"We also had Sugar Savage make cake pops that we will share with our assisted living and independent living residents," Shooter said Friday.

Like Morning Star Assisted Living, Wesley Pines staff members continue to make much of holidays and even "random moments" in order to show residents they matter and are cared for, Shooter said.

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