

AAHSA Homecoming Celebrates Quality

From coast to coast, providers brought fun and community to their residents and clients with Homecoming celebrations.

by Maggie Flowers

Homecoming invokes warm feelings and memories of times gone by. It's a time to reminisce, share and enjoy one another. It is always about our own community and the sense of pride we get from it.

That's why AAHSA began its annual Homecoming celebration last year. We wanted to showcase our members' commitment to community, both inside and outside their walls. This year the theme was *Leading in Quality, Changing Lives*, and over 300 events were held in celebration.

Over the next few pages, you'll see pictures from only a few of our members' celebrations. If we had space to show them all, we certainly would, because AAHSA members are doing extraordinary things to create community.

To see all photos of members' Homecoming events, be sure to visit our photo stream at <http://tinyurl.com/2ndhomecoming>.

Ten Hebrew Home Residents Ring in 100 Years

The "Celebrating Centenarians" event at Hebrew Health Care, West Hartford, Conn., recognized nine residents and one adult day client who turned 100 this year. They collected stories and pictures from each centenarian's family and turned them into a video and booklet about each honoree. These stories were shared with the president's office, governor's office and the local media.



Hebrew Health Care

Anna Blumsack, 100, was one of 10 Hebrew Home residents or adult day clients who turned 100 this year. She is pictured here with (left to right) her daughter-in-law Judy and son Joel, and son-in-law Jerrold.

"We aren't just recognizing that older adults are living longer; this event is to show the community that older adults are still *living* at 100 and not just existing," explains Pamela Atwood, director of life enrichment and dementia care.



St. Martin's In-The-Pines

Care Manager Faye Wilson, a.k.a. "Lucille Ball," enjoys the '50's party with Robert Woods, a resident of St. Martin's Retirement Apartments.

Two Providers Team Up to Bring the 1950s Back Into Style

St. Martin's in the Pines and Episcopal Place, both in Birmingham, Ala., banded together to put on a 50s style party for their communities. They invited everyone from national leaders to church groups.

"The event is a great opportunity for staff and residents to get to mix and mingle, while also getting to know others in the community," says Jennifer Ray, director of development.

The CCRC campus was made over into a diner complete with soda shop girls on roller skates. There's a rumor that even Elvis Presley and Lucy Ricardo stopped by to get in on the fun.

And in the not-for-profit tradition, this event even had a charity component. Participants were asked to bring socks to the sock hop to be donated to a local homeless shelter.



Catholic Care Center

Residents of Catholic Care Center, Wichita, Kan., took a virtual “road trip” to New Orleans, Texas and Hollywood. Pictured: Resident Joseph Scherr (right) and CNA Edwin Onkeo enjoy the Louisiana Day Mardi Gras.

Honoring Veterans Through Dancing

The music was jumping and the people were swaying. The residents of Thompson Health/M.M. Ewing Continuing Care Court in Canandaigua, N.Y., were dancing their hearts out at the USO Canteen in honor of Homecoming.

Professional swing dancers were on hand to give refresher courses. A recently formed chorus of residents made their performance debut at the event singing “God Bless America.”

Each veteran in attendance received a flag pin from the administrator. The emcee read each veteran’s name throughout the night to recognize them and thank them for their service.

Not only were veterans of past wars honored, but the Blue Star Mothers attended the event to collect donations to their “Summer for Soldiers” campaign to aid soldiers currently overseas. The price of admission to the dance was donation of items or money to the campaign, which resulted in a carload of items for the troops.

A Taste of Europe in Connecticut

“With so many of our residents being from Eastern Europe, what better way to celebrate Homecoming than to bring Eastern Europe to them?” asks Randi Kass, recreation director at Westfield Senior Housing in Westfield, N.J.

The event featured Zlatne Uste, a Balkan folk brass band, as well as Eastern European food such as stuffed grape leaves and pierogies. It’s a fantastic opportunity for the staff and residents to have fun together; eat, dance and be merry.

Simple Fun

Brewster Place, a CCRC in Topeka, Kan., created a full day of events to bring the community out. They started off right with a little exercise, followed by a quilt and art show, a cooking demonstration with a gourmet chef and an all-American cookout. The cookout featured vintage pickup trucks, the crowning of the Queen and King and a performance by the Topeka High School drum line.

“Our goal is simple. It’s to have fun with the community. We laugh a lot around here which is so important,” says Jeanene Johnson, Brewster Place’s social director. 🎉

See the next page for more Homecoming photos.

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Randi Kass

Members of Zlatne Uste entertain residents at Westfield Senior Housing during their Homecoming event celebrating Eastern European culture.



Brewster Place

Brewster Place residents Donna Low (left) and Julie Reeves admire the quilts on display at the community's Homecoming celebration.



Anne Johnson

Thompson Health residents cut a rug as they celebrate Homecoming and honor military veterans and active troops.