

Celebrating Rain Day

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WAYNESBURG - As Greene County residents prepare for this year's Rain Day festival, residents at the Golden Living Center in Waynesburg are eagerly putting their spin on the annual event.

Each of the residents' doors sport Rain Day-themed posters; there are competitions predicting what time it will rain Sunday; and they are hosting their own Miss Rain Day competition Friday.

Jill Wolfe, activities director at the Golden Living Center, feels it is important for the residents to be involved in community events.

"The reality of it is that out of our residents here at the home, at least 85 percent are from Greene County, so they already know about Rain Day," she said. "We just want to bring the festivities to them because a lot of them can't leave."

This year the center participated in the window decorating competition for the first time by creating a Rain Day-themed bulletin board with pictures of residents, umbrellas and of course, rain drops.

However, this is the second year that the Golden Living Center is hosting Rain Day festivities of its own.

Ashly Summersgill, activities assistant at the Golden Living Center, was responsible for making the celebration even bigger and better than last year.

"I just think Rain Day is important because it's been a holiday that's been going on since before I got here," she said laughing. "It's something the residents reminisce on. It's a holiday that they all have in common."

Like last year, all of the money raised through different Rain Day activities will be donated to the Alzheimer's Foundation. The money is raised through each event that the center hosts, but the primary event is the Miss Golden Living Center Rain Day.

Friends and family members nominate residents through a \$5 donation. Each nominee has a jar with their name on it where people donate money to the resident that they would like to see crowned Miss Rain Day.

Last year's Miss Golden Living Center Rain Day, Grace Johnson, did not expect to win the competition, even after her son and his fiance nominated her. In fact, she told employees that they didn't need to do her hair the day of the "pageant" because she wouldn't win.

After her name was called and Miss Rain Day 2011 Joanna Allen presented her with her crown, both she and her son cried.

"I was very happy," she said. "I was surprised that they nominated me. I never had anything like that before."

During the Miss Rain Day competition, the center will host its own Baby Rain Drop competition featuring the children of employees.

For some residents, the activities take them back to their youth, when they walked the streets of the Rain Day festival.

“I love Rain Day. I just love rain. I used to sit on the porch and watch when it came down. I loved when it hit the awning on the porch when it came down,” resident Sophie Kania said. “We used to put plastic rain capes on and the rain would hit the plastic on our heads. We used to love that.”

Nellie Haines recalls Rain Day as a special time because it was her mother’s birthday as well.

“I think it’s very special,” Haines said. “It was always fun to go uptown and see how people reacted. I think it will continue to be fun as long as we all participate in it.”

Frances Christy remembers what a good time the festival was, but she is appreciative of the activities in the center, too.

“The people can’t get out so they have all this to notice,” she said looking at the poster on her door. “The poster’s are beautiful. The volunteers really have talent.”

Some residents, like Rose Votuc, are learning about Rain Day for the first time, and are equally impressed.

“It’s amazing all of the stuff I’m learning about,” Votuc said. “What Rain Day represents is a lot more than jokes. It’s about God and the way things are intended, and what you can learn from it.”

Votuc also boasted that the poster on her bedroom door was, by far, the best.

Vicky Bedillion, activities assistant, was surprised with the success of last year’s events.

“Last year they didn’t think it would be as big as it was. A lot of them don’t have much,” she said. “I just can’t believe it caught on and stayed this big.”

Thanks to volunteers and the employees who coordinated the activities, Rain Day will be filled with fun and prizes for residents at the Golden Living Center.

The center will also have a booth during the Rain Day festival Sunday, and some of the residents will get to attend the celebration as well. Copyright Observer Publishing Co.