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Helping to brighten days

Volunteers help out at Freedom Pointe

JOE KIESER • SUN NEWSPAPERS

For the last seven years volunteers at a local assisted living facility have been scratching their itch for volunteerism.

Freedom Pointe Assisted Living and Alzheimer's Community in Minnetonka depends on volunteers to enhance the stay of its residents.

"These volunteers are really making a difference," said Marie Kessler, volunteer coordinator for the facility.

The four volunteers are Katherine Turner, Kate and Frank Gleason and Bill Alexander.

Every Wednesday morning Turner visits Freedom Pointe to teach an hour-long painting class to residents.

Turner, a Minnetonka resident, asked Kessler if she could volunteer, Kessler said. The product of Turner's teachings may be seen each year when the facility puts residents' artwork on display during an art showing.

"She is an amazing artist and has had such an amazing impact on the residents' artwork," Kessler said.

The Gleasons help residents exercise their bodies as well as their minds. While Kate Gleason teaches an exercise class Mondays and Wednesdays at Freedom Pointe, Frank Gleason plays piano for the residents on Fridays. "The residents really love his piano playing," Kessler said.

Frank added to his duties when he took over offering communion and rosary prayer to residents.

The Gleasons also approached Kessler to ask if they could volunteer.

"When they came to volunteer I thought I was really lucky to have them," Kessler said.

When Alexander began volunteering at Freedom Pointe by dealing blackjack every other Tuesday evening, he lived in a nearby apartment in Minnetonka.



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An evening for pooches

The Hopkins Center for the Arts and The Greater West Metro Society hosted its second annual Pets and Picasso fundraiser Saturday at the center. The event included a canine fashion show, live music, a silent auction and more. Among those taking part in the fashion show were Karen Howe and her Yorkie, Phoebe. (For more photos, visit our online Photo Gallery at www.mnSun.com.)