

Riverfront Manor Tenant Honored For Her Spirit Of Aging

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We all hope one day we can age gracefully and remain active well in to our golden years. While that may come easier to some, a Pelican Rapids senior is showing everyone that age is just a number. Carolyn Borgen Heintz recently celebrated her 94th birthday and shows no signs of slowing down. Life is meant to be lived to the fullest each and every day and the lively Riverfront Manor tenant tries to keep her days busy. So, when staff at Pelican Valley Health Center heard about the Spirit of Aging award, they knew exactly who they were going to nominate. “I am always amazed at how much Carolyn does in a day and how involved she has continued to be in the community,” said Executive Director Barbara Axness. “We can always count on her to be the life of the party or have a great story to share. She’s truly just an exciting person to be around and will leave you with a smile on your face.” The Spirit of Aging award is created by Leading Age Minnesota, the largest association of organizations serving Minnesota seniors. The award looks to recognize seniors who embodies the concept of active aging by engaging in activities that challenge the traditional stereotypes of aging and also makes a positive difference in the lives of other seniors. While Carolyn didn’t take the top prize, she was recently honored with a certificate of recognition for her inspiring nomination.

Housing Coordinator Renee Evenson describes Carolyn as a petite yet classy lady with her own style. “Carolyn brings so much life, a positive spirit and a strong energy to our building,” said Evenson. “Her zest for life and seemingly limitless talents make us all feel a little younger.” Carolyn’s talents include quilting, she has donated as many as 70 quilts in a month to local organizations. As soon as Children’s Corner opened in Pelican Rapids last year, Carolyn went to work right away with her quilting group and made child sized quilts for every child and doll at the center. Some other talents of hers include Norwegian Rosemaling, any kind of art, researching her ancestry and making the Norwegian favorite, Krumkaka. If you step inside her apartment, you will find several samples of her work from over the years, one of her paintings even adorns a wall in the common area at Riverfront Manor as well. Her story telling talents are always impressive. Just a few years ago, Carolyn decided to start writing books. She has created several different stories that get sent to her great grandchildren. Before she mails them off though, she is sure to share it with her fellow tenants. Each book is one of a kind with a unique story line and hand illustrated drawings. The former teacher embraces creativity and encouraging children to read. Technology may be challenging for many people to learn but Carolyn has figured out how to do many things on her iPad, including FaceTime, so she can communicate with family and friends across the country. Carolyn also lives for a good party. “At our Christmas party last year, she was without question the best dressed one there. She also brought out a box of wine with her very

own stem wear, set up on a hand rosemalled platter,” said Axness. “She wanted to make sure everyone got a little extra holiday cheer.” Carolyn is always willing to lend a helping hand or share a piece of advice. Some of Carolyn’s words of wisdom include, “When life takes a turn, we are in charge of the steering wheel.” She always advocates the importance of taking a good, healthy walk and she practices what she preaches by walking almost everywhere she goes.

Aging has tried to slow Carolyn down, her eyesight has started getting worse as the years go on, she lost her husband years ago, she has moved from the country to town then to assisted living. But, the spirited and strong Norwegian doesn’t let that keep her down. “Don’t let your handicaps handicap you” was a piece of advice a relative once shared with her. And with that advice, Carolyn has adapted her outlook and her attitude to see the good in life and share her positive outlook with everyone in her presence, embracing the true spirit of aging.



Carolyn Borgen Heintz, left corner, pictured with her certificate of recognition and friends and family at Riverfront Manor.