

## Valley Vista Care

Once in a while in this life someone exceptional extends a hand in giving to someone he doesn't know and creates something extraordinary. On July 15, 2009, Gary Stueve, owner of 3 Heart Outfitters donated a pontoon boat fishing trip to residents on Valley Vista Care Center, a 24-hour skilled nursing facility located in Sandpoint, Idaho.

When Gary offered this trip, I jumped at the chance to give our residents a unique experience beyond their immediate world. Knowing Gary, I had a reasonably good idea of what this trip would be like and Gary did not let any of us down. Gary is proof positive that the best reason to do something is because you love doing it and the courteous attention and solicitation Gary and his crew gave to our residents and staff demonstrated the high caliber of 3 Heart Outfitters.

As Gary and I planned this trip, we focused on this being another adventure for our residents, with the primary goal being one of simple enjoyment that would allow our residents to participate in something they loved and had never done or been unable to do for some time. There can be perceived fragility attributed to residents in nursing facilities and, while that might ring true for them physically, never underestimate the power of the human spirit!

On a more personal note, whenever someone is willing to flood our residents' lives with light and inspiration, I am all for moving mountains to ensure that happens. Gary was perfectly comfortable with any medical and health issues of our residents and 3 Heart Outfitters was uniquely capable of working with us in that regard.

Of course who our trip mates were added tremendously to this outing as I dubbed one boat the "Gilligan's Island Three Hour Tour Boat"! Well, you had to be there... sorry Don! Several of us engaged in the theatrical and amplified hoots echoed down the river and out into the valley.

At VVCC we are often entertaining for our residents and this day was no different. Being able to participate in an outing of this magnitude with our residents gave me a deepening appreciation for living and for that basic human need of contact with another person. And the hint of triumph on the face of a resident when the reeled in a fish generated awe for the was simplicity inspires feelings of greatness.

About halfway through the trip, we tied the boats together and enjoyed a home-cooked chicken dinner and desert. Everyone ate heartily, even one of our picky eaters when we continued on with our fishing. The insularity on the Kootenai Valley nestled in the shadows and the weathered beauty along the banks of the Kootenai River are snapshots our residents will carry in their memories until their memories fail them.

As the first twinges of twilight blanketed our river world in shadows, Gary and Don headed the boats back to the docs. There is an undeniable fact that there is an innate goodness in Gary Stueve that is said to his face would leave him blushing. What Gary gave to our residents and staff that day was so much more than a fishing trip. His giving resonates within and is magnificent inspiration to the rest of us. A simple act of kindness is never simple and radiates out to touch even unintended recipients.

The rare blend of heart and knowledge that Gary brings to the table is a recipe for surefire success of any outing that 3 Heart Outfitters does and as the telltale remnants of a remarkable day slid behind spectacular mountains VVCC thanked Gary Stueve for being the uncommon man that he is.

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