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**One Summer Bridges Two Generations at Middlesex County's Long-Term Care Center**

**EDISON** – The 2014 seasonal employees at Roosevelt Care Center at Edison bridged a generational gap this summer, leaving an impact on the lives of residents and youth through the exchange of stories and ideas.

Some 20 summer interns, employees and volunteers were assigned to Roosevelt's Recreation Department taking on everything from bingo to manicures to entertainment.

With each activity carried out, the Middlesex County long-term care center's team of mostly young seasonal workers was chalk full of enthusiasm and a fresh perspective on resident care. In turn, the residents seemed more than receptive and grateful for their presence.

"They make me feel young again," said Roosevelt resident John Smyth. "They helped me in any way they could. Some even bring instruments in and entertain us."

For 22-year-old Justin Brown, a member of Rutgers University's theater and cabaret companies, this is the fourth summer he's worked with Roosevelt's Recreation Department. Only this year, Brown has found his niche, sharing his love of music with residents in the Alzheimer's and dementia wing.

"I'm essentially there every day and I have the ability to get to know the residents better this way," he said. "Every Wednesday, I give them a concert...I'll sing something by say Elvis and all of sudden, you'll see smiles or residents clapping along. It's generally a good time."

Like Brown, Natalie Nodarse, a 19-year-old Middlesex County College student, is a returning seasonal worker who has transitioned from clerical duties with Roosevelt's purchasing department to her most recent role leading recreational activities.

Studying to become a nurse practitioner, Nodarse hopes to someday apply what she's learned at Roosevelt to her future career.

"This is a little bit different, but I'm still experiencing what a patient might go through in a hospital," she said. "Plus, some people here don't have visitors, so when I spend time with them, it makes them happy and that's such a gratifying feeling."

If nothing else, these summertime employees make for an effective morale booster for residents like Bob Mooney

"They hold conversations with me every day and they really help me relive my past," he said. Roosevelt's Licensed Administrator and Director of Resident Care Dr. Frank Damiani has his own take on the summer program.

"The seasonal staff has provided great support to our residents, which manifested into an inter-generational exchange," he said. "The seniors learned about You Tube and Justin Bieber for example. The staff, on the other hand, has tapped into such a valuable resource with these seniors, walking away with some important life lessons. The synergy between the two groups has been such a bright spot here at Roosevelt."

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