

Neighbor & Classifieds

Batavia resident takes a spin for 95th birthday

Submitted by Wendy D'Alessandro

With her 95th birthday approaching, Winnie Kreitzer had big plans. There was the birthday party her family had planned, of course, but what she was looking forward to most was riding on the back of a motorcycle.

"It started off as a joke," explained Winnie. "While in the hospital January 2015, I told my son that if I was well and able to celebrate my 95th birthday (on April 16), I wanted to ride on his motorcycle. The grandchildren thought it was a terrific idea!"

Once released from the hospital to Michealsen Health Center, The Holmstad's physical therapist Chris Sykstus worked with Winnie to help her regain strength and mobility.

"She was an inspiration to all of us," she said. "We always set goals for residents, and riding that motorcycle was hers."

Winnie forged ahead with her physical therapy and remained optimistic throughout.

"She was extremely focused and never complained," Sykstus said. "In fact, she would have the nurse call down to us to find out when we were coming to get her."

Winnie achieved her goal. For her 95th birthday celebration, she donned her daughter-in-law's black leather jacket and a pink scarf and, with the help of her grandsons, she climbed onto the back of her son Ken's shiny black motorcycle.

"I wasn't scared. I just hung onto my son and enjoyed the motion of the bike and wind," Winnie said.

Following behind Winnie was a small motorcade of grandchildren and their spouses riding their own motorcycles. Winnie's three daughters and their spouses cheered from the sidewalk and took photos. A group of neighbors lined the sidewalks and cheered.

"It was supposed to be just one loop around the neighborhood," said granddaughter Kristin Gonzalez. "But Grandma kept telling Uncle Ken to keep going, so he did!"

Several weeks later, Winnie was on the back of a motorcycle again, this time at The Holmstad, the senior living community she's called home for the past 17 years. Her physical therapists and Holmstad staff members watched on with pride and joy.

"Mom said the PTs are the



COURTESY OF KREITZER FAMILY

Winnie Kreitzer celebrates her 95th birthday on the back of a motorcycle with her son, Ken.

ones who helped her get strong enough to ride the motorcycle. Mom had so much fun, and so did we watching her," said Jan Gustafson, Winnie's daughter.

"This was a happy ending," said Sykstus. "Winnie had the right mindset. She was focused on returning back to her prior level of function and she wanted to be with her family

and in her own apartment doing the things she enjoyed. I told her, 'You did it!'"

The Holmstad is a faith-based, nonprofit continuing care retirement community at 700 W. Fabyan Parkway, Batavia. It is administered by Covenant Retirement Communities, one of the nation's largest nonprofit senior

services providers.

Covenant Retirement Communities serves 5,000 residents at 14 senior living communities nationwide and is a ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

For more information on The Holmstad, call (877) 226-7310 or visit www.TheHolmstad.org.