



ESH as Unique, Charming as Residents Who Call it Home

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ALTON, IL -- Residents of the Eunice Smith Home have lived exciting lives and have many stories to share about the past. That includes service in Vietnam and World War II as well as fascinating accounts of the history of Alton.

One such resident, Melvin “Jack” Weller, has the distinction at age 97 of being one the area’s oldest living Eagle Scouts, receiving this honor in 1948 upon returning from Europe in World War II. Weller served as a Scout Master of Troop 59, his boyhood Scout Troop in Jerseyville, until 1954. He also served in the Army during World War II, receiving a Bronze Star and Purple Heart after shrapnel injured him on D-Day.

Pete Basola Sr. played the accordion in a band called The Rhythmaires upon returning from service in World War II. Later he formed the Pete Basola Orchestra, playing “too many venues to remember” for more than 40 years. He speaks fluent Italian and will give the ESH staff mini-lessons in the art of Italian language and culture. Pete has entertained the staff and residents of ESH with his accordion, along with his son Pete Jr. on the saxophone.

“I love to hear what the residents have done throughout their lives,” says Hazel Morgan, Admissions and Social Services director for ESH. “They grew up in a time of great change and discovery. They were responsible for inventing many of the comforts that we take for granted today.”

Morgan also said that it’s important the residents bring these talents and experiences into the nursing home with them.

“It keeps them feeling vibrant and contributes to the wonderfully diverse culture at Eunice Smith,” she said.

One program developed for residents at Eunice Smith is called “Bits of Wisdom.” This program utilizes a scrapbook and a video diary to illustrate the lives and experiences of the residents told in their own words. These items are then presented to the families of their loved ones to provide a unique history to be passed down and enjoyed.

“Each person here is a treasure of knowledge, information and experiences,” said Jody Baalman, activities director at ESH. “This program allows us to capture these experiences with all the wit, charm and personality of the resident telling the story.”

Baalman says that residents often will remember things they haven’t thought of in years. “They love to reminisce, and we laugh and cry right along with them,” she said.

ESH residents enjoy a time-honored tradition for quality care, and the home receives high marks from residents and their families. Additionally, it was named to the US News and World Report’s “Best Nursing Homes” 2011 list for Illinois and received outstanding marks for nurse staffing and overall care.

For more information about Eunice Smith Home, please call 618-463-7330.





**Jack Weller with some of his World
accordion**

**War II memorabilia and his Eagle
residents.**

Scout plaque from 1948.

Pete Basola Sr. plays the

for fellow Eunice Smith Home