

The Big Reward

By: Ellen Roberts
Honorable Mention

I've always shared what I have, sometimes to the expense of my home, my job, my health and my peace of mind. I'm a doormat. Just walk on me. No more! I now give because it is not demanded. I want to bring pleasure and laughter to the people I now call my friends and satisfy my own needs while doing so.

When I was sixty-four, I had been a widow for sixteen years, unemployed for three. My home was empty of people and their problems. I was lonely but at peace. My loneliness sent me to seek others. I went to the senior center closest to my home.

My encounter with this center wasn't very enjoyable. Most of the people were bossy and cliquish. After more than a year, I went looking for a different center. I started attending Sunday Anderson Westside Senior Center where I was welcomed and treated with friendliness and respect.

After a few months of daily attendance, I was asked to do a volunteer board. This would include pictures and writing. I call my board "In the Spotlight." I interview the volunteers about their service and things that interest them, such as hobbies. I encourage each person to write a personal quote about why they volunteer and how it makes them feel. Everyone seems to enjoy this board. I have learned to use a digital camera and a computer. I feel rewarded.

About his same time I started an acting group. I call it the Senior Comedy Club. I get input of ideas from my cast before I write the play or skit. The play we just finished was titled; "Flower Garden Senior Center" and it received a lot of laughter and applause at the centers where we presented it. I receive such great support from the staff and Sunday Anderson plus the Tenth East Center. This is very encouraging and I feel appreciated.

Recently I became the historian. The pictures I receive or take myself are first hung on a bulletin board for everyone to see. When I put them in the scrapbook, I add other memorabilia and small individual pictures with their names. These people are the reason I enjoy this center and I want them to enjoy the scrapbook.

I am also a member of the exercise class. It keeps my not so healthy body going. I enjoy this class, plus the choir and the new Wii bowling game for the benefits I receive from sharing time with my friends.

My personal philosophy is, when there are friendly smiles and laughter to be spread around, friendships emerge and everyone benefits. I know the things I do have enriched my life. This is my way of growing old gracefully. I look forward to turning seventy soon. I am having the best time of my life.