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CHELSEA: Girl Scouts donate Nintendo Wii to Pines residents

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Hannah Adkins (left) teaches Barbara Springborn how to bowl from her wheelchair. Photos by Crystal Hayduk

Excitement was in the air on June 7 as residents of the Pines Senior Complex in Chelsea made their way to the community room for a special presentation by Girl Scout Troop No. 40363. The fifth-grade group of junior Scouts had donated a Nintendo Wii gaming package to the seniors at the Pines, a United Methodist Retirement Community.

The Girl Scouts donated the Wii Sports and bowling game to earn their Bronze Award, which involves creating a lasting and sustainable project.

"The girls began last September to work on the project that has to meet a need in the community," said one of the troop leaders, Jamie Adkins. "They had to work

together as a team, brainstorm ideas, create a budget, raise funds and follow through."

When the Scouts called the Pines, they learned about the need for the gaming system from Kristy Collins, executive director of the complex. Because the Pines Complex is an entirely independent living facility, it does not have the entertainment or activity budget that other retirement facilities have.

"We suggested the bowling game so that our seniors would be able to compete in leagues with those at Chelsea Retirement Community and Silver Maples, but the Girl Scouts went and bought us the whole system," Collins said.

The Girl Scouts hope that the Wii will promote a more active lifestyle and help the seniors

continue to stay active.

"The great thing about the Wii is that you can play from a seated position, so you can do this even if you're in a wheelchair," Adkins said during the Scouts' presentation.

Girl Scout Caroline Hearth said she thought the seniors would have fun with the system, too.

Hirth does not have a Wii at her home, but has played at friends' houses.

"It's hard at first until you learn, but it's good exercise," she said.

In addition to the Wii gaming system and bowling game, the Girl Scouts also donated four controllers, rechargeable batteries and a charging station. The total value of the gift was \$350.

The troop raised the majority of the funds for the system through a bake sale held at South Meadows Elementary School.

"In two and a half hours, the girls sold over 600 items and raised \$210," Adkins said.

The balance of the funds came from a can drive, with a small percentage from cookie sales.

After the presentation, the Scouts spent time teaching the residents how to set up and play the games, while those waiting their turn cheered on the participants and enjoyed cookies and lemonade. The residents were eager to learn, with several commenting that they have seen the Nintendo system but had no personal experience with it.

Pines resident Bernadine Hafley said that she is also looking forward to learning Wii golf.

"They did a beautiful job bringing it in for us, and we want to thank the Girl Scouts very much," she said.

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