Saint Simeon’s Celebrates Western Days: Take Me

Saint Simeon’s Foundation is thrilled to announce that Western Days 2013: Take Me Back to Tulsa! was an huge success, with early totals indicating more than $558,000 raised. The event, held on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at Central Park Hall at EXPO Square, marked the 17th annual milestone of the fundraising event. Funds raised through Western Days directly support capital investments at Saint Simeon’s.

“The gracious support of Saint Simeon’s patrons means a great deal to us,” said Blake Atkins, who chaired the event with his wife Mandy. “Each gift will be put to good use at Saint Simeon’s.”

Approximately 700 people attended Western Days 2013: Take Me Back to Tulsa!, which featured a marvelous Silent Auction with well over 100 items, as well as the always entertaining Live Auction, led by volunteer auctioneer Tommy Williams. The evening also featured the traditional General Store stocked with handmade items from residents, and a delicious dinner. In addition, Western Days attendees were entertained by a musical performance by Shelby Eicher and his full 11-person band, the Tulsa Playboys.

Mandy and Blake Atkins served as Event Chairs, and Phyllis and George Dotson served as Patron Committee Chairs. Rev. Irv Cutier once again served as emcee for the event. William S. Smith was selected as Honorary Chair, and celebrated for his long-time leadership, friendship, guidance and support of Saint Simeon’s.

This year, the Pioneer Spirit Award was presented to Saint Simeon’s Resident Marie Millar in appreciation of her dedication over the last 10 years crafting
Successes of Back to Tulsa!

thousands of beautiful items to sell as Western Days auction and General Store items. Saint Simeon’s is grateful for the contributions of the many sponsors and donors of the event, as well as the hard work invested from the Western Days Committee Members and other volunteers. Serving as Patron Committee Members were Phyllis and Steve Anderson, Lucy and John Barker, Kristin and Jim Bender, Sarah and Paul Dougherty, Jane and Lowell Faulkenberry, Helen Jo and Jim Hardwick, Mary Ann Hille, David Hogan, Kelly and Tony Jezek, Leslie and Stephen Lake, Pat and Kip Leikam, Rob B. Lyon, Jr., Lee Lobeck-Marks and David Marks, Annette and Kevin Mury, Lisa and Tom Schooley, and Margaret and Ross Swimmer.

Advisory Committee members were Eileen and Don Atkins, Anne and Bob Burlingame, Janice and Jay Cline, Liz and Charlie Cohlmia, Mary Deisenroth, Pat Deisenroth, Jim Dempster, Anne Evans, Donna and Will Fairgor, Toni Garner, Nancy and Jim Gustine, Brenda Haesloop, Elaine and Ted Hanner, Jana and George Harrington, Marlo and The Rev. Bill Holly, Debbie and Bishop Ed Koneczny, Deborah and Dorian Kurin, Judy Lawson, Debbie and Dean Luthey, Marcia and Ron MacLeod, Lindsey and Fr. Stephen McKee, Millie Millsbaugh, Dona and Judge Joe Morris, The Rev. Canon John C. Powers, Ann and Britt Radford, Peggy and Tom Schroeder, and Becky and David York.

Steering Committee Members included Chairs Elect, Kristin and Jim Bender; Debbie Baker, Revelle Clausing, Sheri and Chuck Colpitt, Andrea and Fr. Irv Cutter, Mary Dotson, Karen and Rick Garren, Marilyn Morris, and Trudy and Tommy Williams.

Be sure to save the date for Western Days 2014, which will be held Tuesday, Sept. 9.
Dear Friends,

“I see friends shaking hands, saying how do you do? They’re really saying, I love you.” If Saint Simeon’s Western Days had a theme song, it wouldn’t be country music. It would be the “What a Wonderful World,” lyrics by Bob Thiele and George David Weiss. For 17 years, Western Days has reunited friends. Friends from all generations and all over the country come together the second Tuesday of September to celebrate Saint Simeon’s.

EXPO Square’s Central Park Hall was filled this year with smiles, hugs, and friends “shaking hands saying how do you do.” All 700 really were saying “I love you.” Our party tends to be the first event of Fall, with all the enthusiasm the season holds. In fact, the happy greetings make encouraging guests to make way to their tables a great feat. I don’t think there is a better reason in the world for being late for dinner than having to say “hi” to just one more friend.

You will notice in the following pages the hundreds of generous donors who acknowledged a friend when making a gift to Saint Simeon’s. It is a remarkably nice thing to do. One of the highlights of my job is letting someone know a gift has been made in their honor. It’s as though each envelope carrying these notes carries a hug and a smile. In my brief tenure at Saint Simeon’s, I have learned people here are very good friends.

It is with grateful hearts we tuck Western Days 2013: Take Me Back to Tulsa! into the record books. Early totals show $558,379 was raised for Saint Simeon’s to help continue its tradition of extraordinary care. Special thanks go to Mandy and Blake Atkins, Event Chairs; Phyllis and George Dotson, Patron Chairs; and the Western Days Volunteer Committee, with special thanks to Karen Garren, Judy Lawson, Sheri Colpitt, and Marilyn Morris. Special thanks also to Rev. Irv Cutter, emcee for the event; and Tommy Williams, auctioneer. It was a joy honoring good friends to Saint Simeon’s, Will Smith, Honorary Chair; and Marie Millar, Pioneer Spirit Award Recipient.

We simply could not ask for better friends.

Carolyn Blair
Executive Director
Saint Simeon’s Foundation
At Saint Simeon’s I have the privilege of seeing friendship displayed in the lives of Residents and staff each day. One Auxiliary member is known for frequently bringing cookies to her Resident friends gathered at Carla’s Corner. Saint Simeon’s vegetable garden was full of wonderful produce this summer due to the hard work and collaboration of our Resident gardener and Saint Simeon’s Education Director. I enjoy going to the Wellness Center and hearing the laughter (and a few groans!) as Residents work with the Wellness Center staff to improve their health. As well, it is so rewarding to see a Resident’s face light up when their favorite staff member enters the room. In a thank you note I received recently, a family member stated, “At this stage in my mother’s life, her best friends are the staff of Saint Simeon’s. They are my friends, too. Thank you for both of us.”

I know I speak for my colleagues when I say that Saint Simeon’s Residents are an important part of our lives. Just last week, I was visiting with a Resident and we were discussing how much she loves to sing. I asked her what type of music she likes best. Her answer was hymns. I told her I like hymns, too. Before long, the hallways echoed with the sound of us singing Onward Christian Soldiers (one of her favorites). As I headed back to my office, I thought to myself, what a great way to spend the morning with a friend.

Lindsay Hurley Fick, President/CEO
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Behind every successful event is a high performance team. Our own Carolyn Blair and Saint Simeon’s Staff prepared for and delivered a terrific Western Days 2013 evening for 700 guests! Thanks for our memories of a great evening together.

Sincerely,
GeorgeDotson, President of Saint Simeon’s Foundation Board of Trustees
RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Jean King

Mrs. Rebecca Jean King has been a Saint Simeon’s Resident since 2008. She and her husband, the late William Robert “Bob” King, had the opportunity to live all over the world as a result of Mr. King’s work with Phillips Petroleum Company. Mr. King worked extensively in the areas of plastics and carbon black, where he contributed to 36 U.S. and international patents. Just after World War II, Mr. and Mrs. King lived in Bristol, England through Mr. King’s job with Phillips. After their three children, Joan, Ann, and Bill were born, the family lived in Cali, Colombia, where Mr. King was responsible for building a carbon black plant. They later lived in Madrid, Spain, where Phillips also had interests.

Experiencing a number of different cultures was certainly challenging on the family, but eldest daughter Joan says her mother adapted beautifully to every new location and even helped other American women become adapted to the new cultures. “Mother was always very welcoming and helpful to new American women who had just moved to Spain or Colombia and needed help getting settled,” Joan said.

In addition to being a congenial woman, Mrs. King is also very well-educated, holding a B.S. and M.S., both in U.S. History and Government from Kansas State University. “My grandmother was very pro-education,” Joan explained, which had a great impact on Mrs. King and her daughters, who both hold Master’s degrees.

Since Mrs. King is fluent in Spanish, she was often able to help other Phillips’ wives in Colombia and Spain with translating when it came to shopping and other business matters.

Eventually, the Kings moved back to the U.S. and settled in Bartlesville, Okla., where they were active parishioners at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church for many years.

“Jean King was unshakingly committed to our parish and involved in many ways,” said Father Lee Stephens, priest of St. Luke’s. “Her attention to detail was known on the Altar Guild and in the parish kitchen. In all things, Jean was a ‘proper’ Episcopalian and respected by many.”

Although the family made Bartlesville home over time, their love for foreign cultures did not wear off, and they continued to make frequent trips back to Madrid. The Kings’ love for foreign cultures also had a great impact on their children; especially Joan, who has lived in South Korea for two years, teaching Spanish at Daegu International School. “We loved living overseas, especially Spain, which was and still is ‘home’ in many ways,” Joan said. In addition, Mrs. King’s granddaughter Rebecca (Ann’s daughter) has participated in study-abroad programs in Spain and India.

Bob and Jean were married 65 years. Mrs. King is an active Resident at Saint Simeon’s, and staff members describe her as “the sweetest thing,” as she’s always smiling, kind, and gracious to everyone she encounters.

Saint Simeon’s Healthcare Center Gears up for Great Changes

Renovation of Saint Simeon’s Healthcare Center, home to 55 Residents, began in August. The goal of the renovation is to create a more comfortable area that de-emphasizes the clinical aspect. The future Healthcare Plaza will reconfigure the common and dining areas and establish an airy, openness with a home-like atmosphere.

One special feature, the “Open Kitchen,” will provide fresh, made-to-order food and wonderful aromas. The Open Kitchen will offer a cozy counter for Residents and families to enjoy a cup of coffee or freshly baked cookies. This new space will create a hub of activity and warmth.

In addition to a cozier look and feel, the Healthcare Center will also be integrating Electronic Medical Charting, a software system that allows full electronic medical charting.

The entire renovation will total approximately $1.6 million and is expected to be complete in summer 2014. Many thanks to the generous donors for their support of these projects.

Another change will soon be occurring in the Healthcare Center, as Saint Simeon’s prepares to welcome individuals in need of Skilled Nursing. Saint Simeon’s is acquiring its Medicare certification in 2013, meaning we will soon be equipped to help individuals with short-term, acute needs (up to 100 day stays). This will be a great asset to current Saint Simeon’s Residents, as they will not need to leave campus in order to receive Skilled Nursing care.
St. Simeon’s is a place where some friendships are born, and where others take deeper root. Some friendships within the walls of this beautiful building have been flourishing for decades, others have just started sprouting. Meaningful friendships can be observed up among Residents, staff members, Auxiliary members, and even animals.

One friendship that has stood the test of time is that between Resident Paul McGraw and Resident Judge Tom Crewson. The two men met while Judge Crewson was in law school with Mr. McGraw’s brother Joe. Mr. McGraw has fond memories from the ‘40s when he and Judge went on double dates to Reservoir Hill with their girlfriends.

“Tommy has always been a joker,” McGraw said. “I’ve always been very fond of him.”

The men continued a friendship throughout their professional lives, and now, as Residents of St. Simeon’s, they still enjoy regular games of pool or dominos. “Tommy loves to cheat,” McGraw said playfully. “When we’re playing dominos, he takes his turn before it’s time.” McGraw said one of his favorite recent memories with Crewson was watching the Tulsa Drillers’ game on April 15.

Another long-time friendship at St. Simeon’s is that of Mrs. Hazel Richardson and Mrs. Mable Rice. Mrs. Richardson has lived at St. Simeon’s for two years, and Mrs. Rice for five years, but the two have known each other for about 50 years. Mrs. Richardson was an elementary speech teacher at the same school Mrs. Rice’s children attended.

Once, Mrs. Rice composed a patriotic play and asked Mrs. Richardson if her students could participate as actors. “Most of my students ended up being in her play,” Richardson said.

While the two women remained in contact over time, their friendship was truly renewed when Richardson moved into St. Simeon’s. “Mable’s living here encouraged me to move here,” Richardson said. “I’ve come to look at Mable as the little sister I’ve never had.”

The ladies enjoy chatting together during mealtime on a daily basis, but their favorite activity is watching Oklahoma City Thunder games together. “We yell at the players a lot,” Richardson said.

Many lifelong friendships have been formed through the committed group of volunteers who compose the
Auxiliary. One of many worth mentioning is that of Judy Lawson and Bud Martin, both former Auxiliary Presidents. Judy’s parents came to live at Saint Simeon’s in 2001. When Bud Martin’s mother moved to Saint Simeon’s in 2005, Bud looked like a lost puppy, Judy said. He didn’t know who to approach with his many questions regarding his mother’s care. “I showed him the ropes — where the laundry room was, where the extra blankets are,” Judy said. “I guided him and helped him get around.”

When their parents were Residents of Saint Simeon’s, the Martins and Lawsons would gather with their parents, along with other Residents and their families, for special dinners on Thanksgiving and Christmas. “We would be the first ones to open the dinners, the wine would start flowing, and we would be the last ones to leave,” Judy said.

To this day, the Lawsons and the Martins get together for regular meals. Judy was also responsible for encouraging Bud to join the Auxiliary.

Bud said he hopes more families at Saint Simeon’s will interact with each other and find friendship and support. “You need each other during this time. Having friends here can really help make what is sometimes a difficult situation more bearable and fun,” he said.

Of course, many Residents form special bonds with staff members over the years. Patty Flint, who has been a Saint Simeon’s Resident for 11 years, has found a special friend in Activities Coordinator Teresa Reno.

“She’s one of the people who makes me want to come to work every day,” Teresa said.

Patty participates in the majority of the activities offered at Saint Simeon’s, and therefore Teresa has the chance to see her often. “She’s very appreciative of all the hard work we put into the activities,” Teresa said. Teresa has learned ways Patty can participate in activities despite her disabilities. When it comes to painting with pastels, for example, Teresa uses a larger landscape and helps Patty with the strokes.

“Patty also changes the words to songs so they have my name in them,” Teresa said. “You are my sunshine, Teresa,” for example.

Another friendship common to Saint Simeon’s Residents is the friendship between canine and human. Simone, the Golden Retriever “mascot” of Saint Simeon’s, has become a true friend to many Residents, proving the saying that dog is “man’s (and woman’s) best friend.” One Resident, Mrs. Anne Evans, waits patiently at Carla’s Corner for the arrival of Simone and her caretaker, Kathy Hinble, each morning.

“Anne is the first person Simone sees at Saint Simeon’s each morning,” Kathy said.

Whether it’s a friendship with a fellow Resident, a staff member, or a furry friend, friendships are continually flourishing on the grounds of Saint Simeon’s. And for many, these precious friendships are a priceless gift that will continue giving back for the rest of their lives.