

Goldsmith Center Youngsters Prove Love Is Ageless

On a recent afternoon when 18-year-old Westchester Campus resident Anthony O. walked through Rose's bedroom door in the senior assisted care center, Rose flashed a big smile. She remembered Anthony from his visits last spring. Rose's smile sparked Anthony's in return. It's obvious the feelings they have for each other are mutual.

That camaraderie is the hallmark of Love is Ageless, a program that brings together residents from Jerome M. Goldsmith Center for Adolescent Treatment with residents of the Willow Towers, an assisted living community for older adults affiliated with the United Hebrew Geriatric Center in New Rochelle, New York.

Goldsmith Center is a JBFCS residential treatment facility located in Hawthorne, New York that serves emotionally vulnerable adolescent boys, ages 12 to 21, who are challenged by a range of trauma-related and psychiatric issues.

Each fall and spring for the last eight years, Goldsmith Center youngsters have visited seniors at the center for two-hour visits a week for eight weeks. For the last seven years, **Jerome Pedroso**,

Milieu Counselor, has accompanied the young men and provided vital support for both the adolescents and the older adults.

This year 10 youngsters ages 14 to 18 are making visits during which they will read books or magazines to the older adults, play cards, or serve as escorts to the dining room or for walks through the assisted living center. The youngsters are also trained to help feed their older friends, if needed.

Phyllis Jenkins, MA, Vocational Supervisor for Goldsmith Center and Linden Hill Residential Treatment Facility and coordinator for the Love is Ageless program, sees firsthand how the young men get a sense of warmth by offering their time and companionship. "The youngsters learn they can make a positive difference in somebody's life," Phyllis says. "And that's an important understanding that they can help other people, despite the struggles they have experienced in their young lives."



Phyllis Jenkins, MA, and Anthony O.

"It makes me feel good when I come and see people that recognize me and know I'm there to help. It makes me happy to see the seniors smile."
~Anthony~

For Anthony O. volunteering at the assisted living center is treasured time.

"It makes me feel good when I come and see people that recognize me and know I'm there to help," Anthony explains. "It makes me happy to see the seniors smile."

