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'Grandfriends' Wraps Up Another Successful Year *Partnership Between South Middle School and Dove Healthcare Facility Proves Beneficial for All Involved*

EAU CLAIRE - The "Grandfriends" program, which pairs sixth grade students from Sally Johnson's class at South Middle School with residents at Dove Healthcare Nursing and Rehabilitation, wrapped up its tenth consecutive year.

"Dove Healthcare is incredibly grateful for the time and dedication that the students and teachers at South Middle School give to our residents," said Kendall Duffy, Administrator at Dove Healthcare. "Their time truly makes a difference in the lives of our residents and we're confident it has a lasting, positive impact in the students' lives too."

Dove funds the cost of transporting the students to its facility once per month during the school year, starting in October each year. Each student is partnered with a resident and conducts interviews with his or her "Grandfriend" on topics such as what Christmas and school was like for the Grandfriend as a child, as well as general questions about the Grandfriend's life story. In addition, during each visit, the sixth-graders and their Grandfriends do arts and crafts, play games such as bingo, and enjoy a snack together. The students journal after each visit, and compile their writings and illustrations into books, which are presented on the last visit to their Grandfriend.

Bonnie Boortz, a resident at Dove Healthcare said, "My Grandfriend is like the daughter I never had. I love to make projects with her."

Sixth-grade teacher Sally Johnson says that in school, it is important to teach core values to students in addition to arithmetic and history. Johnson said, "Grandfriends allows students to put these values into action. In fact, some students who exhibit behavior problems in the school setting become more compassionate and respectful once they are dealing with their Dove Grandfriend." Kris Metcalf, Director of Activities for Dove Healthcare said, "Hopefully these core values of respect and compassion will be values they will carry with them the rest of their lives when interacting with the elderly."

Both Dove Healthcare and Sally Johnson intend to continue the Grandfriends program starting again in October 2008.

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