

The Living Center in Marshall is just across the road from the Saline County Fairgrounds. It is also just a short drive from Sedalia, where the Missouri State Fair is held. Participating in fairs is an important facet of the residents' lives. Since some residents are no longer able to travel to the fair, the fair comes to them. Fair week included four days of activities, such as a petting zoo, talent show, pie eating contest, and more.



*Residents enjoying Fair Days treats*

I attended the final day of the fair. Residents were viewing the exhibits, playing games, and eating funnel cakes, corn dogs, and cotton candy. I also had the honor of serving as one of the fair judges, alongside Fitzgibbon Hospital/The Living Center President/CEO Ron Ott and The Marshall Democrat-News Publisher Shelly Arth.

First, we selected the champions from the handmade hogs and cows at the livestock exhibit. Grand Champion cow was awarded to Team Special Care Unit and Grand Champion pig was awarded to Frances Swank.



*Livestock Exhibit*

Then we moved on to the craft exhibit, which displayed incredible examples of the residents' talent, including handmade clothing, quilts, wedding cakes, photography displays, and much more. First place was awarded to Bobbie French for her beautiful knitted sweater.



*First place craft exhibit – Handmade sweater by Resident Bobbie French*



*Third place craft exhibit – Photography entry by Resident Gene Cott*

The final exhibit was the homemade pie baking contest, which included entries from residents' family members and staff. There were so many delicious pies; it was no easy task choosing winners. First place was awarded to Betty Bishop, sister of resident Billie Ashford.



*Pie baking contest entries*

During my visit, I met resident Carl Wise. The Living Center staff recognized Carl's passion for farming and John Deere tractors. Under the guise of sending his wheelchair out for maintenance, they sent it to a local body shop for a total makeover. Now Carl has an extra little sparkle in his eye proudly showing off his shiny John Deere wheelchair. This is an incredible example of how person-centered care can bring joy into residents' lives.



*Resident Carl Wise and his John Deere wheelchair*



*Resident Carl Wise's John Deere wheelchair*

Several changes have taken place since I previously visited The Living Center in August 2011. It was nice to see the difference a year makes on the culture change journey. There was new paint. The previously numbered halls now have names like Cherry Blossom Lane. The “feeder tables” are gone from the dining room. I also visited the new snoezelen room in the Special Care Unit. I also learned that they have established a new partnership with a local kindergarten classroom that visits once a month for activities; a new partnership with the local library; and a new book club. You can see the previous blog post by selecting Culture Change in the Search by Topic drop-down box.