



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SHOW PERSONAL CARE HOME RESIDENTS SOME LOVE**

**Uniontown, PA** – The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard on everyone, not least of all residents in personal care and nursing homes, who have been separated from their loved ones for nearly a year. Most nursing and personal care homes have been on lockdown since last March, meaning that family members and friends have not been permitted to visit residents since that time, with the exception of glances through windows and glass doors.

Now, thanks to a group of elementary students, Valentine's Day will be just a little brighter for some of those residents.

Students in Mandy Lynn's third-grade class at West Crawford Elementary school in Connellsville created Valentine's for the residents of Hillside Estates Suites, a personal care home just down the road from the school.

A parent approached Lynn with the idea, and she took it from there.

"I thought it was great," Lynn said. "It's nice to be able to help people in the community and get kids at a young age to think about others."

Lynn, who teaches a departmentalized third grade, along with Terri Pritts, Lisa Evans and Billie Jo White, said she encouraged the students to make cards in their free time.

"All of my third-grade students, when we were finished with our work, I would tell them that they could make cards for the elderly in nursing homes in their spare time," she said.

Lynn said many of the students included kind messages in their valentines, wishing residents well and sending them love.

Hillside Estates supervisor Desiree Barron said the gesture isn't the first time the elementary school has brought some happiness to her residents. She noted that first-grade teacher Carrie Bartley and her students decorated the care home's windows at Christmas and dropped off gift bags, among other gestures.

"They've kind of adopted this personal care home," she said, noting that the students made residents' holiday season. "The residents had the time of their lives."

Barron said seeing the residents go without contact with friends and loved ones for so long is "the hardest thing ever," but getting a little attention from the kids really boosts their spirits.

"I absolutely love it," she said of receiving cards for her residents. "Any cards – they love them. Some of them here don't have much family, or don't have family that comes around much. For them to get cards, they light up like little kids."

Barron said the residents love being around and hearing from young people.

"They love kids," she said. "No matter how bad a day they're having, seeing the kids puts them in the best mood ever. It's better than any gift they could ever have."

Barron said she is planning a Valentine's Day party for the home's dozen residents on Sunday, at which time she will hand out the valentine cards.

"Things like this just make their days so much brighter," Barron said. "I just want to thank the teachers and the kids. This absolutely means the world to me and to them."

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