

Jerry Johnson recognized for service to others

Whether it's pushing folks in wheelchairs to potluck dinners or slicing up and taking cucumbers to neighbors, Jerry Johnson never quits.

"Whether it's carrying out someone's trash, collecting items for the recycle bins, hanging curtains, grilling for a special Hillcrest dinner or delivering fresh vegetables from the garden, you'll see Jerry with a smile on his face and a warm greeting for everyone he meets," said Anne Franzen, director of Gothenburg Housing Authority that oversees Hillcrest Apartments where Jerry lives.

Johnson's caring ways recently earned him the "Resident of the Year" award from more than 100 housing authority organizations across the state.

The prestigious recognition is by the Nebraska Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.

Johnson said he was speechless when the award was announced in Kearney. He traveled to a fall conference banquet under the ruse he was accepting an award for Hillcrest.

During a cake and coffee reception for Johnson at Hillcrest, several residents shared their thoughts about Jerry's thoughtfulness.

Gloria Makey talked about a community garden behind Hillcrest tended by several Hilltop residents.

Help from the heart

Written by Elizabeth Barrett Thursday, 18 October 2012 14:21 -

"Jerry rototills between the rows of everyone's gardens and hauls off trailers full of debris in the fall," Makey said. "When I need to be away, he waters and tends my vegetables."

Makey went on to describe Johnson as a "spontaneous, spur-of-the-moment kind of person" who invites neighbors over for visits in the apartment he shares with his wife, Lois.

The 73-year-old also gives away all of the produce he raises to Hillcrest residents and to friends and acquaintances in the community.

"He found out what kind of squash I liked and left some on my table," said Pauline Sukraw. "He's a generous and giving man."

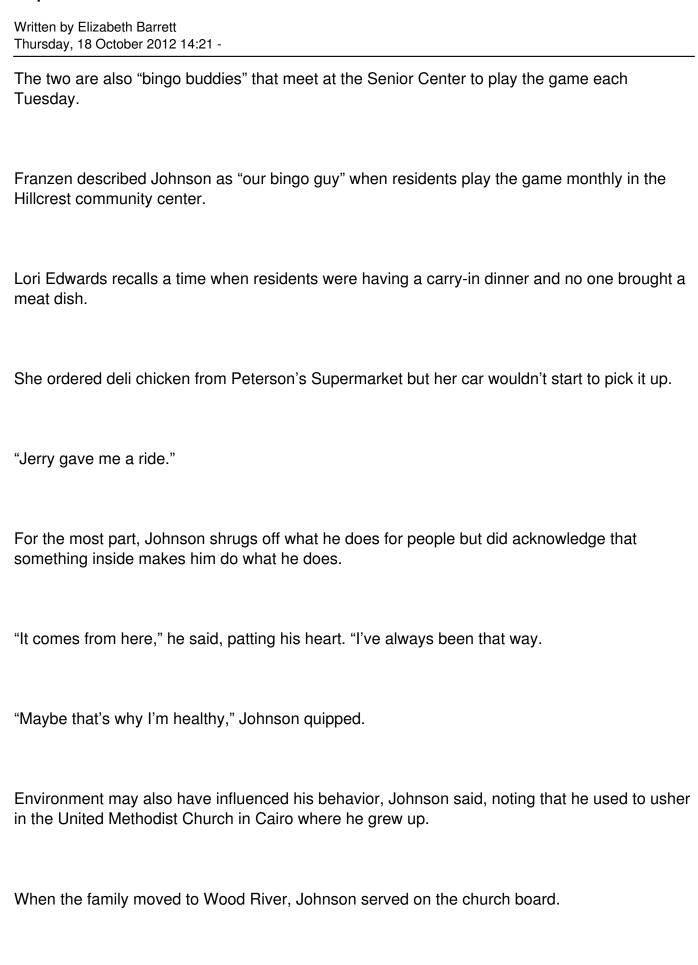
Marge Plank tells how Johnson has sliced and peeled cucumbers and watermelon and put the garden treats in her refrigerator.



Another Hillcrest resident, Gary Everitt, said Johnson has gotten him "unstuck" a few times in his apartment.

Everitt, who has cerebral palsy, is in a wheelchair.

Help from the heart



In 1974, Johnson took a job at the Farmland feed mill and the family ended up in Gothenburg

Help from the heart

