

Masonic Village resident spends time helping others

BY VINCE RUSSO

Tracy Miller has a passion for giving back to his community.

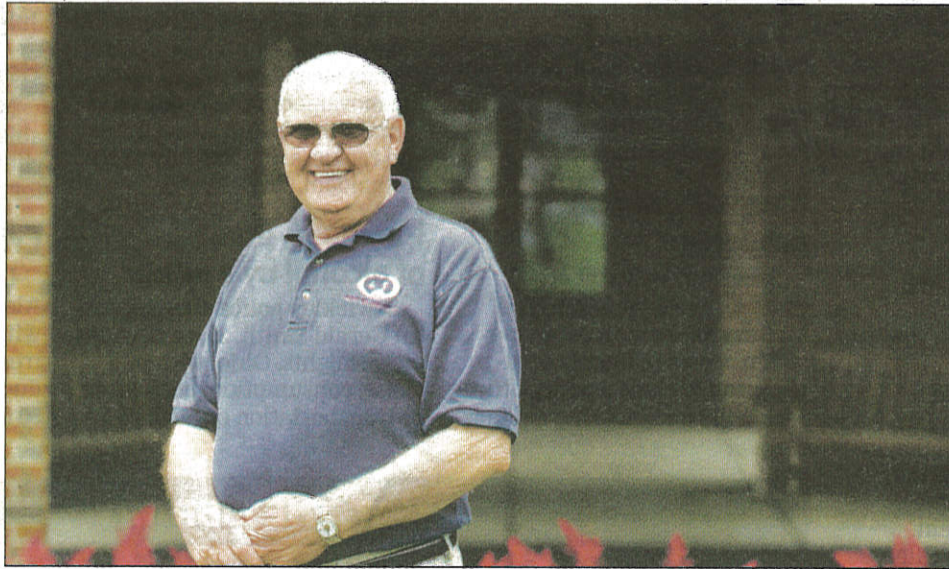
While much of this desire to give may come from simply who Miller, 73, is, these actions are not without influence. Miller attributes much of his giving nature to a time when he almost suffered a great loss.

Miller's passion for selfless acts was inspired in part, he says, by an evening where his mother had a severe allergic reaction to an antihistamine that put her "near death."

"Her airway was almost completely blocked off and an ambulance from the little fire company responded and transported her to the hospital," he said. "I was always impressed with those volunteers that came that night, and I'd like to think that they helped save my mother."

Miller now spends his days helping at Masonic Village, a retirement community in Aleppo where he and his wife, Sandi, live. The couple has been married for 53 years.

Their efforts range from dressing up as Mr. and Mrs. Claus around the holidays, helping with medical emergencies and transport,



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Masonic Village resident Tracy Miller was recently honored with the 2016 Volunteer of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society.

giving tours to potential new residents and inviting single residents to dinner, to organizing an elegant dinner for more than 100 residents.

"Well, I guess I get a lot of personal satisfaction out of helping others," Miller said. "Mentally it helps me — doing something worthwhile and making other persons feel recognized, and just doing something nice for somebody else. I've always enjoyed doing things like that."

Miller was recognized last month as the Pennsyl-

vania Recreation and Parks Society 2016 Volunteer of the Year.

Miller said he accepted the award on behalf of all those at Masonic Village who help him to give back. He views himself as a representative for all of the residents, staff and volunteers at Masonic Village, and said he thinks the award is a byproduct of all the work he is able to do with their help.

As much as Miller enjoys what he does for the community, those around him say they enjoy reaping

what Miller has sown.

"[Tracy] probably was a big reason I moved here because he was the tour guide when I was first strongly interested in coming here," said Claudia Brenneisen, who serves the Masonic Village residents herself as the president of the Retirement Living Association (RLA).

Brenneisen remembers the energy and down-to-earth personality as being what stuck with her not only about Miller, but about her future residence as well.

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CLAUDIA BRENNEISEN

PRESIDENT OF THE RETIREMENT LIVING ASSOCIATION

Miller is not a part of the RLA, but lends a hand to the group.

"He's more of an ambassador, a good Samaritan — he'll do a favor for anyone who needs a favor," Brenneisen said. "Without thinking, he just does good stuff. He doesn't even stop to think about it — he's like a magnet, he just goes to it."

Miller said his favorite event he's involved with at the village is the "Enchanted Evening." Since its inaugural evening in 2008, the event offers women of the village a chance to dress up for an elegant meal, live musical entertainment, a wrist corsage and photos.

Miller describes the event as "prom night for these ladies all over again." Nearly 140 residents participated this year, he said.

To lead such an event, Miller says, planning takes place almost two years in advance, with a lot of the work coming

from fundraising efforts to finance the event, inviting all of the guests, holding committee meetings and getting the word out on the event.

"It makes me very proud of him," his wife said. "I do realize how important it is to him, and if there is anything I can for him — address envelopes on the invitations, go up to the Enchanted Evening, check to see if the ladies need anything else, I'm glad to do those things for him."

She said she not only is happy to help her husband's efforts, but is inspired by his work.

"I just know how much that he does give and what he does, and people can see that," Sandi Miller said. "I'm glad to be able to do whatever I can in little ways, but I'm very proud to see his likeness for volunteering and helping other people."

Vince Russo is a Tribune-Review contributing writer.