



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 10, 2020

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Harold Hansen, Woodbury Resident, Receives Spirit of Aging Award from LeadingAge Minnesota

Saint Paul – (February 10, 2020) – Harold Hansen, who lives at Saint Therese of Woodbury, was recently honored by LeadingAge Minnesota with the Spirit of Aging Award. The Spirit of Aging Award honors an older adult who exemplifies the concept of positive and active aging. Hansen was selected from a pool of nominations submitted by a field of 750 senior care organizations throughout the state.

“Harold Hansen is the embodiment of active and vibrant aging. He is an advocate, a collaborator and the go-to resource for creative ideas, always demonstrating a willingness to support all who live and work at Saint Therese of Woodbury and do what he can to build a better community,” said Gayle Kvenvold, President and CEO, LeadingAge Minnesota.

Hansen moved to Saint Therese of Woodbury in 2016 with his wife, Delores. Now, at 92, he doesn't let aging slow him down. Hansen volunteers his time and his skills each day, his charismatic spirit is infectious throughout the entire community, and he is an advocate for residents and staff alike.

A few examples of Hansen's selfless acts of kindness:

Writer: Hansen participates in the Resident Writing Group at Saint Therese of Woodbury and co-writes the “Get to Know Me” articles that feature residents and staff for the community's newsletter. He asks questions that are thought provoking and spark conversations throughout the campus, from what's on a someone's bucket list to their individual values. Hansen is also known for sharing words of reassurance and compliments with staff that have left an impression on those who work at Saint Therese.

Craftsman: Hansen's incredible craftsmanship can be found throughout Saint Therese of Woodbury. Using a woodshop located within the community, Hansen has built many projects for residents and the organization, including kneelers for the chairs in the chapel; a leisure cart that travels throughout the nursing home filled with magazines, books and games; magazine holders in the library; raised garden beds for the residents to enjoy; and hard-carved birds to help raise money for the Saint Therese Foundation. When Hansen sees that something his needed, he creates it and, in turn, is creating a culture of pride in the community.

Safety Advocate: Hansen created a Buddy Block system after meeting with an EMS Commander in Woodbury. He realized that independent living tenants may often be alone during a medical emergency and wanted to be a part of the solution. The Buddy Block is a handmade square that is yellow on one side and black on the other. Residents are asked to turn their block to yellow during the day and to black at night. Each resident has a neighbor that looks out for the block each day and night. If they notice it is not turned over, they will check in on the resident by knocking on the door or calling them. If the resident does not respond, the neighbor immediately reaches out to an assigned staff at Saint Therese of Woodbury for assistance.

“Harold Hansen is truly the spirit of aging. His generosity is unmatched. Harold is always willing to support our community and is shaping the culture of caring that is so important to our organization and all who live and work here,” said Katelyn Nowack, Executive Director, Saint Therese of Woodbury.

To learn more, watch [Harold Hansen – Spirit of Aging Award](#).

Photo Caption: Harold Hansen accepted the Spirit of Aging award at the LeadingAge Minnesota Institute & Expo, the state’s largest and most comprehensive aging services conference attended by more than 4,000 older adult services professionals. Pictured (l to r) Sara Sterling, Chair, LeadingAge Minnesota Awards & Recognition Committee, Harold Hansen; Nancy Stratman, Chair, LeadingAge Minnesota Board of Directors; and Gayle Kvenvold, President and CEO, LeadingAge Minnesota.

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About LeadingAge Minnesota: Driven to transform and enhance the experience of aging, LeadingAge Minnesota works alongside our members, caregivers, advocates and consumers to collectively shape the future of aging services and ensure older adults in every community live with dignity, meaning and purpose. Together with more than 60,000 caregivers, LeadingAge Minnesota members provide quality services and supports to nearly 70,000 older adults every day in all the places they call home including independent senior housing, assisted living communities, home care, adult day and skilled nursing settings.