

Big rig wish granted for 71-year-old Judy Sharpe

By Melody Burri, staff writer

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Canandaigua, N.Y. — Some wishes really do come true — 71-year-old Judy Sharpe can attest to that. The former **Victor Farmington Ambulance Corps** member, now a resident of the **M.M. Ewing Continuing Care Center** in Canandaigua, had a very specific wish — she wanted to ride on a Victor-Farmington rig once more.

Thanks to the continuing care center's Wish Upon A Star program and Victor Farmington Ambulance employees, Sharpe's dream was realized. The former medic and dispatcher, escorted by her son, David, was recently treated to not only a ride aboard one of the corps' finest rigs, but also a reunion with one of her old teammates, Tom McGrath, a paramedic who now serves as deputy director of operations and remembers serving years ago with Sharpe.

David Sharpe said the experience meant a lot to him as well, as he was able to see his mom relive some of her fondest memories.

"Anyone who has ever been a part of one of these wish fulfillments can tell you what a heartwarming, uplifting experience it is," said Jaclyn Rugg, a development specialist with the Canandaigua health care system. "The smiles on the faces of the residents and their family members really let us know that this program has a big impact."

The Wish Upon A Star program, a little more than a year old, has fulfilled dreams for about 40 continuing care residents so far.

"The wishes are as unique and varied as our residents," said Recreation Therapy Manager Wendy Ubbink. "We truly never know what kind of wish we're going to be planning next."

Some of these included a celebration of a resident's Ukrainian heritage, a former hockey coach's trip to a Rochester Amerks game, and a Star Trek-themed party that included guests in costume.

"When we started this program a little over a year ago, we never could have dreamed that it would have taken off the way it did in 2011," Ubbink said. "We're hoping to fulfill residents' wishes for a long time to come."

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