

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: BARBARA SMITH



Barbara Smith has resided at New Community Roseville Senior for six years.

A serious injury on the job led Barbara Smith to live at New Community Roseville Senior.

Despite some physical limitations, Smith is someone who has played an active role within her building.

“As a floor captain, Ms. Smith is vital to the office of Social Services because anytime I need information or monthly calendars distributed, she always lends a helping hand,” Care Coordinator Alisha Chatman-Jenkins said.

Smith moved to first floor of Roseville Senior at 1 South 8th St. in Newark after what she described as an “emergency move” in 2011 following a major back surgery. She had part of her spine fused and her doctor said that Smith should not use stairs.

For 26 years, Smith worked at Seton Hall Law School. She worked with faculty and staff in her clerical role, producing booklets and packets of information. One day, Smith said she picked up a box and heard a loud snap in her back.

Following surgery, Smith applied for housing at New Community, which provides low-income housing for seniors, disabled adults and families as well as transitional housing for the homeless. NCC will soon debut its first housing facility designed for the chronically homeless, including veterans, this summer.

“They took me right away here. They were very kind,” Smith said of NCC. “I’m very comfortable here. I feel safe,” she added.

Despite walking with a cane, Smith, 63, has no problem keeping up with the happenings on the first floor of her building. She distributes information, calendars, participates in events, checks on fellow seniors and assists Chatman-Jenkins when necessary.

“She took on this position with no hesitation,” Chatman-Jenkins said of Smith.

A Newark native, Smith previously lived with her daughter on Irvine Turner Boulevard. The mother of six grown children, Smith suffered the loss of two sons in the past. In spite of Smith’s personal losses, “her faith keeps her going,” Chatman-Jenkins said. In her free time, Smith said that she enjoys watching action and horror movies as well as playing solitaire.