

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Joseph Gyulay



Joseph Gyulay may be the oldest resident at New Community Associates, but he still goes ballroom dancing every week.

Joseph Gyulay may be 96 years old, but that doesn't stop him from remaining active. He goes ballroom dancing every Tuesday at Starlight Dance Center in Nutley and participates in activities at New Community Associates, where he's lived for the past seven years.

Gyulay is well known at Associates, 180 South Orange Ave., Newark. He's the oldest resident in the building and catches the attention of neighbors when he gets dressed up to go to the dance studio.

Associates Care Coordinator Anne Moran called Gyulay a nice gentleman who tries to get along with everybody.

"Whenever he comes down to the office, he always tries to make us laugh," she said.

Gyulay used to live in Hawthorne with his family. Since his wife passed away in 1998, he's been living alone. He has four children (two sons and two daughters), six grandchildren and one great grandchild, though he only sees them for special occasions.

In his younger days, Gyulay described himself as a workaholic. He spent 10 years as a police officer and did additional work on the side. When he felt he couldn't advance as a police officer, he left that career behind and began doing ceramic tile installation full time. He also remodeled homes.

"I built 13 homes and lived in three of them," he said.

The activity he loves the most, however, is ballroom dancing, which he's been doing for 78 years.

"Ballroom dancing is the best thing that ever happened in my life," he said.

His wife was his partner for many years and the pair danced professionally, winning numerous competitions.

"I'd have to have a room just for the trophies," Gyulay said.

While some might think continuing to dance would be a burden at his age, Gyulay said it helps him.

"I enjoy it. It's invigorating," he said. "When I get dressed, I feel I'm on a high."

Gyulay keeps busy in other ways as well. He rides his scooter around, filling the basket with cans and metals. He donates the money he gets from what he collects to the Boy Scouts because he used to be a scout leader years ago.

He attributes his good health to his good genes and a multitude of vitamins. His mother died one month before she turned 100. When he turned 60, Gyulay began taking vitamins and now takes about 60 per day.

"With all the vitamins, I'm feeling even better than I did before," he said. "So now I'm shooting for 105 and I honestly feel I'm going to get it."