Creating New Holiday Memories

By Michelle Houriet, Executive Director
Independence Hill Retirement Resort Community
(210) 209-8956

When we say, “We’re like a great big family here at Independence Hill Retirement Community,” it’s the truth! And with these kinds of relationships, we have the opportunity to make some very special holiday memories.

Alan, our Director of Safety and Night Management and 17 year employee, recalls a funny memory that has stuck with him over the years.

“One of our residents would always try to ‘out tease’ me,” Alan explained. “One day, he was sitting in the dining room with his wife and friends. It was Christmastime and everyone was laughing and having a good time. I approached the table and with an unusually straight face, I told him that I appreciated his friendship and that I had a gift for him. I don’t give gifts to just any one. I handed over a gift bag to him. The resident was touched that I would give him a gift. That changed after he opened the gift, because inside the bag was a lump of coal. We all had a good laugh. The following year at Christmastime I had forgotten about the coal I had given him. He handed me a gift and to my surprise, inside the ornately decorated gift box, was that same lump of coal. He and his wife moved away before I could give him the lump of coal back so I sent it to his family with the story. Now they could share in some of the fun that their dad was so fond of.”

And it’s not just special moments between our team and our residents that live on in our memories. Alan shared another favorite when his then nine-year-old daughter accompanied him to the Independence Hill New Year’s Eve Party.

“She was all dressed up and had so much fun serving drinks and food, as well as visiting with the residents,” Alan recalled.

It seemed to have had an impact his daughter because she joined the Food and Beverage Team at Independence Hill as soon as she turned 16 and worked here for five years!

Carolyn, Activities Coordinator at Independence Hill Assisted Living for the past 14 years, makes great memories for the residents each year dressing with her brother up as Mr. and Mrs. Claus. And there are many other yearly traditions she organizes much to everyone’s delight. One favorite is based on “Elf on the Shelf,” or in our case, “Upstairs Elf” and “Downstairs Elf.” Every night, the elves move to a new hiding place and each morning the halls are buzzing with activity as the residents search for them. Once they find an elf, they win a prize. One of Carolyn’s favorite hiding spots was when “Downstairs Elf” hid in the Activities Room freezer wrapped in a blanket. Carolyn keeps the excitement level high and the holiday spirit alive and the residents just love it!

These relationships and memories are so very important to everyone’s happiness and we encourage our team to savor those special moments. Call us or come by and see for yourself. Be sure to plan to stay for lunch!

Independence Hill is located at 20450 Huebner Rd., San Antonio, TX 78258. For more information, call (210) 209-8956 or visit www.independencehill.com.