

Christopher Heights' first resident celebrates 100th birthday

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BELCHERTOWN — Christopher Heights of Belchertown celebrated a very special 100th birthday for their very first resident, Ann Genero, last Friday, and the room was filled with people who have known and seen Ann during their time at Christopher Heights.

"We had many encounters and time to talk, many conversations, and she had the opportunity to choose her own apartment," said Director Lorna Stone. "Ann, thank you for being a part of the Christopher Heights family."



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Senator Jake Oliveira wishing Ann Genero a very happy birthday.

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Christopher Heights opened in June of 2018 and welcomed Ann Genero into find her new home within its walls.

"It's an honor to be here and celebrate people reading their centennial," said Senator Jake Oliveira, who presented her with a letter from the Senate and one from the House of Representatives, and Aaron Saunders, wishing her happy birthday.

"What a beautiful milestone. Today is about celebrating you and your strength. We hope your day is full of laughter and celebration," said Select Board Chair Lesa Lessard-Pearson, who presented her with a letter from the Select Board on behalf of the town.

"Ann, you are the OG of Christopher Heights," said Mindy Slonka, Christopher Heights' resident hair stylist. "You are not afraid to speak out. You are my Wednesday at 9 a.m., and how I start every Wednesday. I love you."

Many residents also took turns sharing what Ann means to them on her special day, including Donna shared how she met Ann through being gifted warm clothes, Diana who is Ann's next door neighbor, and Alice, who Ann treats like a daughter.

The special day also featured the Happy Birthday song sung in Polish, as well



Ann with her new 100th birthday card.

as other wonderful Polish desserts, and of course, cake and ice cream.

"I want to thank Christopher Heights and all the staff and all the companions who have helped me these seven years I have been here, and everyone has been so wonderful. Everyone's been so wonderful. They kept me going," said Ann Genero.

Genero's family was pres-

ent, as well as her sisters Sally and Connie, and her four daughters.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

The room was full of special friends and family for Ann's special day.

to welcome everyone in and make sure they were well fed and healthy.

"When I was a child, I wanted to be a nurse," said Genero, who fulfilled that dream and worked as a nurse for 34 years in Palmer.

She had eight children, five daughters and three sons, who will be coming up for her actual birthday celebration on Nov. 22.

She shared how she remembered most the day her high school principal announced the United States was at war with Japan at the beginning of WWII, and then when the 9/11 attack happened, but also the wonderful memories, watching her children grow, and later her grandchildren.

"I'm happy here at Christopher Heights, and they've really taken care of me, and I'm glad I'm here," said Genero.

The special birthday card signed by residents.

