

Resident Stories

Meet Clara Braun Her motto is, "I'll try it!"

Since moving to Touchmark in the fall of 2011, Clara has taken advantage of nearly every exercise class, social event, group activity, and bus excursion the community offers.

In fact, if it's on the Touchmark Full Life calendar, Clara has probably tried it.

"I join everything that I have time for. I always have from day one when I moved in here," she says. Then, she begins listing her current activities: "Posture & Balance. Fit to be Strong. Qigong. Water exercises in the pool ... I also play cards and board games. We recently started a singing group, and I go to the coffee hour every afternoon. Let's see," she pauses to think, "There is Brain Builders as well as the Bone Builder exercise class I go to twice a week. Whenever the leader can't come, then I lead the group," she adds.

"And I join all activities connected to arts and crafts. I also enjoy all of their socials here. Wine socials. Birthday parties. Wonderful entertainment comes in. And a group of us takes the bus out to eat twice a month."

There are so many things going on around her that Clara often must choose between two or more activities. "I'm lucky that my community has a pool, but sometimes, I can't get into the pool, because I have something else I want to do."

Clara is also on the Touchmark Resident Council and works with residents, team members, and administration.

"I like it here. I liked it from the day I moved in," she says.

A long life of farming and hard work

Born and raised on a farm in Napoleon, about 75 miles southeast of Bismarck, Clara moved to Bismarck after high school. A year later, she married a farmer whose farm was just seven miles out of town.

Clara and her husband raised corn, wheat, barley, oats, alfalfa, and cattle. They also raised one son and three daughters.



After Clara's husband passed away in 2010, she remained on the farm for about a year and then decided to move into town.

Her daughter encouraged her to move into town, reminding Clara that she was in town almost every day anyway, so she might as well move there.

“So I thought, OK; I want to move into a retirement community, so I won’t have to move again. I went and looked at all of the retirement homes in Bismarck with my daughter, and I decided this was the nicest. I know I chose the right place.”

She explains, "I could have moved to an apartment or bought a condo, but I would still be alone. Here, I have a lot of companions."

And so many things to do right outside her front door. Clara especially appreciates the Touchmark bus service. "They take us nearly everywhere we want to go. I like that very, very much," she says. "I also like that they come in and clean my home. I worked hard all of my life, and now I let them come in and clean. And they do the cooking for me, too!"

Clara cherishes time with children, grandchildren, and siblings

While her companions and activities within Touchmark offer more than enough to keep her busy, Clara is also blessed with having a big family with whom she keeps in close touch.

Many of Clara’s close-knit family live nearby. Two daughters live within a short distance of Bismarck: one just a mile away, and the other 13 miles out. Her son lives only 45 miles away, and her other daughter is in Virginia. Grandchildren also live within visiting distance. Plus, she has 10 living siblings, eight brothers and two sisters.

Clara participates in a lot of family birthday parties and holiday celebrations throughout the year and enjoys traveling with family. She recently toured Israel with one of her daughters—and rode a camel. She has taken her four children and their spouses to Alaska and Hawaii.

A time to fully enjoy life

Living on a farm all of her life except the one year she lived in Bismarck between high school and marriage meant Clara didn’t have extra time for personal pursuits.

"When I was younger, I was lucky if I got to travel outside of North Dakota. We didn't travel until the last 25 or 30 years."

Once their son was old enough to stay home and take care of the farm, Clara and her husband started traveling quite a bit, including trips to Europe. They also went to Arizona for 14 winters to escape the cold and snow.

Now, Clara is enjoying the freedom to pursue a variety of activities.

“My approach to life is to exercise and eat healthy," she says. "And live life to the fullest!"

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