

Young Volunteers Bring Joy To Terrace Residents

By Katy Savage

Standard Staff

Carly Langan was looking for a five-letter word for Mr. Ford.

Her immediate thought was Henry, the founder of the Ford Motor Company, but those letters didn't fit into the crossword puzzle.

"Ernie," was the right answer — a name the Woodstock Union High School junior hasn't heard before.

"Oh, he's the musician," said Margaret Moore, a Woodstock Terrace resident, to Langan. "Another one before your time."

The high school student laughed Tuesday with a group of residents, who talked about the musician's deep voice. Langan has been volunteering at the Woodstock Terrace for just over a year.

She spends an hour there after school every Tuesday. She plays card games and reads crossword puzzles to the room with an enlarged puzzle

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Carly Langan, a Woodstock Union High School student, spends her Tuesday afternoons volunteering with the senior community at Woodstock Terrace. This week, she did a crossword puzzle with them.

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behind her. She does “whatever they feel like doing,” she said.

“I love talking to everyone,” said Langan. “They have such insight. It’s a completely different generation.”

Langan, the youngest in the room, encouraged the group when they couldn’t get clues from the book she was reading from.

“Good job, guys,” she told them. “You are on it today.”

When they didn’t understand a clue, she acted it out or thought of her own. Like the word “snag” for when a T-shirt that gets caught on something.

“Afternoon snack in Britain?” she asked.

“Tea,” they chimed.

Langan is one of two young people who volunteer at the Woodstock Terrace. Michael Leavitt, 27, reads to the elderly every Monday in the Alzheimer’s unit. Leavitt came to the Woodstock Terrace through involvement at Zack’s Place. He likes to read books such as the “The Grinch” to the people there because it lets him do accents.

The volunteers lift spirits for the seniors at the assisted living community.

“A number of folks don’t have a family member who comes...and don’t have any younger folks they can converse with,” said Woodstock Terrace Life Enrichment Director Briana Maxham.

Langan started volunteering after her friend told her about a similar

experience working at a senior center.

The conversations she has at the Terrace are different from the short ones she’s used to with her friends, which usually involve a text message.

“I love talking to people who want to have a conversation with me. It’s a completely different world from what I’m exposed to regularly,” she said.

The residents asked about her future after they saw her Boston College sweatshirt.

She wants to be a neurologist, she told them. Her volunteer work allows her to see the impact diseases like dementia up close.

“The brain is really intriguing to me,” said Langan to Moore.

She talked about how she loved Boston but was also considering going to Johns Hopkins University — a school Moore’s daughter went to.

Moore is a newer resident at Woodstock Terrace. She said she moved there three weeks ago.

“I love it. I love crosswords,” said Moore, who has a 150-page book of the puzzles.

“Oh she’s adorable,” Moore said of Langan.

Langan has also connected with fellow Barnard residents. She keeps going back.

“I enjoy going there and I enjoy getting to know the people there,” Langan said.