



Reagan Makes A Rattle At Independence Hill

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



The boys joined in on an energetic water aerobics class.

It's always magical when people of any age visit us at Independence Hill Retirement Community. It's so hard to explain, but everyone feels it. We don't have to have a big plan for entertainment because what happens naturally is so much better.

We have enjoyed visiting elementary students on numerous occasions, and most recently, the Reagan High School football team walked over to our community one day after their early morning summer workout. We are talking a lot of boys... around 65! Juniors and Seniors visited our independent retirement community and the Freshmen and Sophomores visited assisted living. As always, the magical interactions happened organically. From the moment these young men walked through our doors, their manners, genuine eye contact, and connection with the residents was palpable.

During their visit, our water aerobics class was in full swing led by our energetic instructor, Leticia. You should have seen the faces as the boys walked out to the pool area and heard the lively disco music blaring. Forget the football drills... they surrounded the pool and started doing all the moves, giving a "whoop whoop!" here and there, and basically turning the exercise class into a massive party! Some of the other students joined residents at Sittercise.

"We learned you have to keep exercising no matter what age you are," the boys explained. "One man was barely able to bend over to get his exercise ball, but he never gave up, he just kept doing it at his own pace. We were even getting tired doing their exercises!"

"I saw the residents' energy level go up, and I am sure they were reaching and kicking a little higher," added Evonn Short, Director of Activities.

The Reagan students took plenty of time to say "hi" and spark up conversations with the residents. Preston, a Reagan High School senior who is not only in football but also choir, had a great time talking with a resident who has his PhD in music and had enjoyed a colorful musical career himself. The two talked about the best colleges to attend for this type of degree. Another young man named Travis, a quarterback at Reagan, ate breakfast with a resident who was a pilot during wartime. Travis' family is very interested in the WWII efforts and the two connected on the topic.

"It was cool to hear about what they had to deal with at that time," Travis remarked. "My generation has no idea what being in a war is like. I was able to share those stories with my family."

For these young men, hearing the life stories of their elders made helped them make comparisons to their own lives. They discovered they had a lot more in common than they ever thought. They even learned some new things about themselves, their interests and even their future options. That is the real magic: how, in this large group, the connections of those with similar interests seemed to just find each



Reagan football players and residents at Independence Hill bonded over similar interests, learning from one another during the football team's recent visit to the retirement community.



The music and energy of the senior was too much for the team to resist!



There were plenty of smiles and tons of fun during the Rattlers' visit.



Some of the football players also joined in on a Sittercise class promoting functional fitness.

other.

Overall, the teens gained an appreciation of the abilities of older people. Their misconception of residents eating alone and not being active is now gone.

"They are with groups of friends at breakfast, talking and laughing," the teens noticed. "They seem to all know each other and are very social."

After the visit, the team truly had a feeling of "giving back" and loved the smiles and hugs they received. As they continue to grow up and become working adults, let's hope they think back on these memories and continue to give back to the senior population; making the magic happen!

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