



Life is like
a box of

Chocolates.

2017

THIRTEEN EXTRA SPECIAL
GIFT OF A DAY TREATS FOR YOU.



A *Sweet* Gift of a Day for:

Joan Tovissi

Green, OH

Classic Cinema Comes to Life.

Joan loves movies, especially classic musicals, but she hadn't been to a movie theater in ages. It was one of those small, timeless pleasures that Joan dearly missed. For her birthday, Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care hatched a plan for a very special Gift of a Day.

Crossroads arranged for a private screening of Joan's all-time favorite film "Singin' in the Rain," starring Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, and Debbie Reynolds. Joan, her son Reverend Craig Tovissi, six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and dozens of friends arrived at the theater to find a long red carpet rolled out in their honor. Crossroads even hired a professional singer; dressed in the same bright yellow raincoat Kelly wears in the film, he performed a live rendition of the title song!

Joan was giddy, if not flattered – it was as if the original actors were performing their song and dance numbers just for her! The smile never left her face, and she laughed at the O'Connor's famously funny antics during the number "Make 'em Laugh." Of course, she also savored traditional movie treats of hot, buttered popcorn, soda and candy including Sno-Caps (Joan's favorite!).

Watching the film was the focus of the day, but the best part for Joan was sharing the experience with her closest loved ones. It was truly "a glorious feeling," smiled Joan, "I'm happy again!"



A *Tasteful* Gift of a Day for:

Ruth Ledwith

Cleveland, OH

Awarding the Top Dog.

It is estimated that there are 80 million domesticated dogs sniffing around this country. But, only a small fraction of these beloved pets make it to the annual Westminster Kennel Club Show – the second longest continuously running sporting event. Here, judging the top dog comes down to the tiniest deviations from their parent breeds.

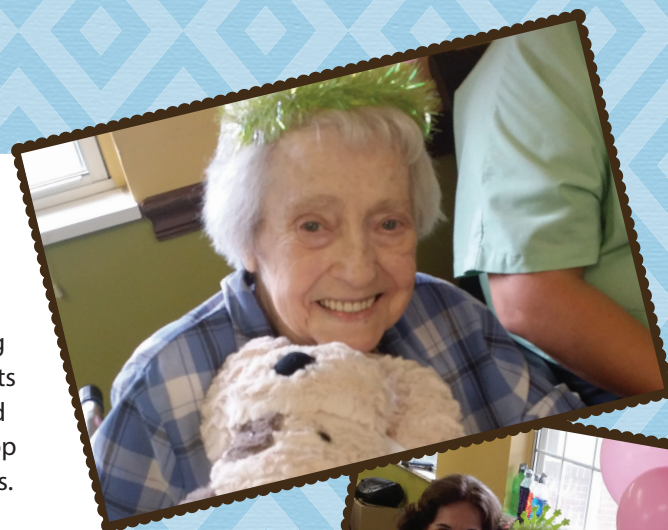
But, not all canine competitions are so finicky.

Patient Ruth Ledwith had a lifelong passion for tail-wagers and had always wanted to attend the famed dog show in New York. She lived a life wrought with strife, but always found comfort in the unconditional love of dogs.

Still, at age 93, Ruth adored dogs so Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care surprised her with a personal dog show. Her face lit up when three dogs and their handlers were paraded in to her nursing home – a bubbly white German Shepherd, Lassie-look-alike Border Collie and mixed-breed rescue dog all bounded in for belly scratches.

No time for nuzzling, though...Ruth needed to judge! She watched carefully, and finally awarded each participant top marks in their own special category: Cuddle Bug, Best Behaved, and Show Stealer. After, Ruth enjoyed playtime with the pets – giving out treats and receiving sloppy puppy kisses in return.

Ruth went home with a new stuffed dog, which she named "Junior." She now sleeps with it every night, enjoying sweet dreams of her special day with new furry friends.



A *Delightful* Gift of a Day for:

Herbert Bahr

Dayton, OH

Disney Comes to Ohio.

It's nearly 1,000 miles from Dayton to Orlando, but Herbert Bahr can make the trip in the blink of an eye. All he has to do is conjure up wonderful memories from years ago.

For Herb, 89, the best time of his life was when he worked as landscaping supervisor of Florida's Walt Disney World. The best part of the job wasn't manicuring lush greenery aside famous rides like "It's a Small World," and "Space Mountain;" rather, it was seeing kids' beaming smiles as they bounced around the park with their families. "Their eyes would light up at the rides and characters," he says, "and that would light up my day."

It was only fitting that Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care find a way to bring that happiness back to Herb through its Gift of a Day program, which is based on the question: "If you had one perfect day, what would it look like?"

Herb's perfect day involved a magical Disney party featuring themed treats, posters, balloons and an autographed photo of Mickey. In fact, the legendary character himself (actually, Crossroads Chaplain Chad Vickers in iconic Mickey garb) visited Herb to celebrate his life, a humble life spent giving to others with nothing expected in return.

Now, as Herb journeys the 1,000-mile trip to Orlando in his mind, he can simply look across his room at a framed photo of Mickey to happily recall both distant memories and magical recent ones.



An *Amazing* Gift of a Day for:

Camryn Cruz

Philadelphia, PA

Our Own Superhero Appears at Comic-Con.

The word 'superhero' conjures thoughts of Marvel characters like Iron Man, Spider Man and The Incredible Hulk. But anyone who knows nine-year-old Camryn Cruz will tell you he was born with real superpowers that he uses to battle a debilitating disease. But all he really wanted was to go to the legendary Comics Convention.

Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care made it happen.

Camryn could not wait, as he and his siblings, cousins, mother, stepfather and grandmother trekked to The Great Philadelphia Comic-Con in Oaks, PA. The group received VIP treatment, including a special visit from Camryn's favorite character, Foxy, from the "Five Nights at Freddy's" video game.

After hearing about Camryn's magical powers, a college student from Maryland created an original Foxy costume especially for the big day. Then, Crossroads' Kim Mumper made the long drive to Maryland and back so Camryn would have the costume when he met Foxy.

After spending time with Foxy, Camryn beamed as he was given the character's famous headpiece. Before long, Snake Eyes of the "G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero" cartoon series joined the fun and posed for pictures with Camryn and his family. For over two hours, Camryn met with his favorite superheroes, temporarily getting a reprieve in his daily battle.

Superheroes at Comic-Con are well-known for their courage, determination and strength.

Camryn fit right in.



A *Drizzled*, Gift of a Day for:

Curtis Bryant

St. Louis, MO

Rain Delay Doesn't Dampen Spirits.

On the day Curtis Bryant headed to the ballpark for sun, fun and a great game, Mother Nature had other plans.

Curtis, a patient of Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care, was eager to cheer on his beloved St. Louis Cardinals for his Gift of a Day celebration – it was his idea of a perfect day.

Proudly wearing Cardinals jerseys, Curtis, his wife Alissa and his son Manuel took their seats in Busch Stadium, ready to savor a victory over the Cincinnati Reds. But in the first inning, the skies opened up and torrential rain drenched the field. The downpour started and stopped over and over, and the tarp that protects the field was rolled out twice.

But, the rain didn't dampen Curtis' spirit. He was determined to watch his team play with the people he loved the most. The Bryants waited patiently and finally the rain stopped – overpowered by the sheer will of Curtis' spirit! Echoing Curtis' determination, the Cardinals battled through the soggy conditions to beat the Reds. Curtis' eyes remained glued to the field...only occasionally pulled away to gaze on his other loves.

The family shared a day of baseball, but the most important thing they shared was time together. Once more, Curtis enjoyed everything that's near and dear to his heart: baseball, his sweetheart and his son.



A *Savory* Gift of a Day for:

Maurice Ouellette

Atlanta, GA



4 Generations Tackle a Mountain.

Where can you find an attraction suitable for four generations to enjoy together? Atlanta!

Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care patient Maurice Ouellette didn't care whether he was sitting on a curb, eating a burger at the mall, or lounging outside as long as he could spend one day with all four generations of his beloved family. Crossroads made it happen.

Early one mid-summer morning, as a picture-perfect, magenta sunrise greeted Maurice, his son and daughter-in-law, granddaughter and six-month-old great grandbaby, the Ouellettes piled into an RV heading to Stone Mountain Park.

For the next 10 hours, Maurice relished precious time with his family as they explored the 3,200-acre destination. They rode the Skyride to the top and snapped many photographs – after all, this was a rare gathering.

When that same ball of fire which lit the sky that morning eventually set, the family became entranced by a mesmerizing laser light show that was capped off by fireworks. Maurice looked on the whole scene with immense love as his great granddaughter opened her eyes wide and whispered “ohs” and “ahs.”

During the show, patriotic music played and the fiercely stoic Maurice – who served in the U.S. National Guard for 33 years – was suddenly overcome. Tears quietly slipped down his cheeks as his heart overflowed with love for his country and love for his family.

An *Assorted*, Gift of a Day for:

Beverly Cannon
Kansas City, MO

A Visit to Santa's Workshop.

For Beverly Cannon, Christmas shopping was never just a mere trip to the mall. It was an experience!

Each December, Beverly would spend hours strolling through the brightly decorated stores in search of the perfect gift for loved ones, overflowing with the spirit of St. Nick. Heck, shopping was almost as fun for Beverly as Christmas itself.

This year, illness threatened to stop Beverly from her beloved, annual excursion. Not a chance – Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care couldn't deny the elf inside and brought Beverly to the mall once more.

Just like the old days, the stores were bedecked in red and green and buzzing with holiday tunes. The fresh scent of evergreen wafted from the giant, twinkling tree inside. Beverly savored every second. Best of all, she was joined by her granddaughter as they meandered from store to store – Macy's was a must! They stopped briefly for lunch, but went right back at it. Beverly wasted no time carefully selecting gifts for everyone on her list.

Suddenly, a handsome man appeared. Beverly was instantly smitten.

Wearing a red, velvet suit, Santa waved Beverly over to him. Beverly whispered something in his ear. They talked and giggled, and finally smiled for the camera.

So, what *did* Beverly ask Santa for Christmas? Nothing – she had all that she wanted right then, that day, that sweet moment.



A *Blissful*, Gift of a Day for:

Carole Rehagen
St. Louis, MO

When Love Becomes a Work of Art.

The Italian word 'opera' translates as work...as in, a work of art that combines poetry, dance, and music. More literally, Italians used this term to define this art form because opera requires an intensity of effort that may best be summarized as work.

Yet, for talented performers like Carole Rehagen...opera never felt like work. Carole had a passion for singing, which eventually earned her a music scholarship and coveted spot at Juilliard School.

Carole's soprano could stir the molecules of the soul, and carry even hardened hearts off on an emotive journey. She sang "Ave Maria" at her daughter's wedding, moving most to tears. More recently, Parkinson's robbed Carole of her gift but Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care aimed to return it, even if only for a day.

Dolled up in a bright yellow blouse and lime-green scarf, Carole and her daughters set off. When they entered the hall, Carole was instantly transfixed: Johanna Nordhorn, Mezzo-Soprano and member of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, resonated powerfully.

Nordhorn sang all the classics, including Handel's "Messiah," and "Ave Maria." Carole's family and friends gathered around, holding her hands and lovingly caressing her shoulders. She started lip-syncing along. This was as much a gift to those who love Carole as it was to Carole herself. Her children say she was enthralled. They hadn't seen her with as much expression since she became sick.

The event concluded with Johanna respectfully shaking Carole's hand. It was an honor...from one work of art to another.



A *Spicy* Gift of a Day for:



Nancy Cohen

Kansas City, MO

A Wild Girls' Night Out.

Who knew that country girl Nancy Cohen had a wild side?

As it turns out, everyone! This 76-year-old, coal miner's daughter had a special request: to see a male exotic dance revue. Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care just couldn't say no, so they brought Nancy to a local tavern for a crazy evening filled with hoots and gyrating performers.

Nancy, who was raised on a Midwestern farm, lived a humble, hard-working life and became a devoted mother, wife and friend – but she always lived with a unique zest for life. So it was no surprise when Nancy's gregarious personality bubbled to the surface with the Chippendales!

Before the show, Crossroads treated Nancy to a glitzy hairstyle, makeup and outfit featuring a tiara and pink boa (of course!). She was also outfitted with a stack of \$1 bills so when the compliant dancers cavorted for her, Nancy happily rewarded them – one precious note at a time.

The entire crowd roared with laughter – as did Nancy and her daughters-in-law. She let the racy comments fly and playfully begged for a private show. Much to the embarrassment of her son, Crossroads captured the evening in photos and left Nancy a keepsake album so she would never forget her wild night on the town.

It's hard to imagine anyone could ever forget that night...least of all Nancy, her contagious belly-laughs and her appetite for life.

A *Velvety* Gift of a Day for:

Carolyn Duran
Memphis, TN

Touring Elvis' Heartbreak Hotel.

Every morning, Carolyn Duran "grabs" Elvis...with a twinkle in her eye and impish grin on her face.

In this case, "Elvis" is Carolyn's bath towel and stand-in for the King himself. Carolyn idolizes Elvis Presley – always has. A fellow Southerner, full of swagger and singing blues laced with country and gospel notes, Elvis was unlike anything she had ever seen before. He became a hip-shaking symbol of liberation for the staid 1950s and the heartthrob of nearly ever teenage girl. Carolyn was no exception.

Carolyn still listens to Elvis hits all day. "Jailhouse Rock" and "Blue Suede Shoes" never fail to make Carolyn smile...even amidst her suffering. But then again, she's tough – worked tirelessly all her life, doing whatever it took to raise her three girls alone. That's why Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care couldn't wait to bring Carolyn to Graceland!

On a private tour through Elvis' 23-room estate, Carolyn stopped to caress furniture (Did Elvis eat at this table?), linens (Was this his quilt?), everything. Carolyn had never been this close to the altar of The King, so to share this experience with her daughter and granddaughter was nearly euphoric.

Elvis died on Carolyn's birthday, but four decades later his influence on music – and women – still reigns supreme. Carolyn even requested that Presley's "My Way" be played at her funeral... a touching, and fitting, tribute to them both.



A *Decadent* Gift of a Day for:

Susan Klein
Cincinnati, OH

Beautiful Again – Inside and Out.

Beauty may only be skin-deep, but it sure can go a long way towards happiness. Susan Klein, 56, was battling breast cancer for months before chemotherapy stole her hair. It was only then that she felt the all-out cruelty of her disease. Each look in the mirror was a devastating reminder. Susan forged on, but still wanted to forget... wanted to feel normal...wanted to feel beautiful.

This was an easy one. After all, when someone's filled with as much inner beauty as Susan – a devoted elementary school teacher for 15 years – outer beauty is a snap. Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care made a few calls, and before she knew it, a black limousine – her chariot for the day – arrived to whisk Susan off on a pampering, beauty retreat.

But, there was another surprise. All the way from Florida, Susan's beloved sister was waiting for her inside the car. It had been a while since they had spent time together, yet the two instantly reconnected, squeezed each other tight and started chatting, giggling, reminiscing.

The sisters luxuriated in manicures, pedicures, makeovers, massages and lunch at their favorite spot. Susan chose a rich, purple for her nails and a contour-enhancing makeup scheme. One look in the mirror and Susan recognized herself again. She felt great. Oh, and she looked positively gorgeous.

Then again, we knew that would be easy.



A *Satisfying* Gift of a Day for:

Jim Craig

Lenexa, KS

Hoops Heaven.

The University of Kansas basketball team plays about 38 games each regular season. Multiply that times 50 seasons and then tack on post-season games from 45 NCAA tournament appearances including three championships and it adds up to well over 2,000 games. And, Jim Craig has watched every single one.

Jim is possibly the BIGGEST Jayhawks fan ever. No matter how late a game might go, Jim watched, cheered, and then relayed the action, play by play, the next day without missing a beat. Lately, though, illness started to take its toll but he never gave up on one dream: to stand at half court in the Allen Field-house, where he had watched so many games.

Jim's Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care team scored big when they brought him on campus for a full tour of the famous field house. Then, he was handed a branded practice ball and invited to stand (with assistance) at half court. Tears filled his eyes.

What happened next was nearly too much. Much to Jim's surprise, Head Coach Bill Self sauntered out to shake his hand. Jim, choked a bit, but then wasted no time offering him some coaching advice! His boy-hood dream came true, and now a poster-sized photo of himself, posed to take a buzzer-beater hangs proudly above his bed.

3, 2, 1 – swish...nothing but net!



An *Indulgent* Gift of a Day for:

Kenneth Stratton
Kansas City, MO



A Real Man's Man Gets a Mani-Pedi.

Kenneth Stratton had always been a real "man's man". He bravely served his country in the Air Force and then made a living as a long-haul truck driver for more than two decades. Tough and burly, Kenneth's the kind of guy you'd want on your side in battle...but he also had another, unexpected side to him. Kenneth loved to get his nails done.

It started when his girlfriend, Lucille, gave him a gift card to a salon. Afterward, he couldn't stop talking about how relaxing it was to have his nails trimmed and polished, his skin exfoliated, his feet massaged.

So when the staff at Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care asked him what he wanted for his Gift of a Day, Kenneth didn't hesitate – he wanted to get a soothing manicure and pedicure with Lucille, then cap off the day with lunch at his favorite spot, The Pizza Ranch.

At the salon, Kenneth settled into a comfy massage chair and savored a full-service mani-pedi that lasted over an hour. The lines on Kenneth's typically hard-wearing face relaxed as he closed his eyes, laid his head back, and smiled contently. Pure tranquility. The day revealed Kenneth's softer side – something Lucille already knew.

To a man who gave so much to his country and family...this was a tiny bit of payback. If anyone deserved some pampering, it was war Veteran, Kenneth Stratton.