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### **GoldPine Home Wins MHHA Award for American Cancer Society Relay for Life**

GoldPine Home of Bemidji was honored with the Investing in Our Communities Award by the Minnesota Health and Housing Alliance (MHHA) at a ceremony in Minneapolis on Feb.9. The award recognized GoldPine Home's participation in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life in an innovative way that involved GoldPine residents in a meaningful activity.

Often, relay fund-raisers involve young people, particularly offering high school students a way to become involved in supporting the American Cancer Society. But GoldPine Home wanted a way for their residents to remain involved in their community, even though they have moved into the assisted living facility.

The Relay for Life at Gold Pine Home last August 8 turned out to be much more than a traditional relay; it turned out to be fun as well. Usually, a Relay for Life begins in the evening where candles are lit to celebrate cancer survivors, support those who fight cancer and remember those who have died. The next morning, teams conduct a walking relay. GoldPine Director of Nursing Clarissa O'Beirne related how participating in the usual way would have been difficult for the Gold Pine residents.

"This timeframe as well as travel to the event would have been prohibitive. By holding a daytime event, we made it possible for residents of GoldPine Home, Northview Manor and Cottage Park to gather in this worthy cause and have fun along the way."

The day began with a picnic lunch served under a tent and moved into a fun-filled event extravaganza. There were games, an animal parade, a photo booth, silent auction, dancing, live music, and a mini relay walk.

Local businesses got involved. McDonalds, Dairy Queen, Marketplace Foods and U.S. Foods provided food and refreshments. Volunteers and GoldPine Home staff made it all happen.

As Stacy Klema, community relations director for the American Cancer Society reflects on the day, she continues to be amazed that GoldPine Home took fundraising for the American Cancer Society to such a new level. She said, "These elders were able to show their support for an event that they might not have been to attend. They showed their involvement in the community and their support for cancer patients, programs, education, prevention and research. The event also demonstrated the dedication that Gold Pine Home staff have for the quality of life for the residents. It was truly enjoyable for everyone who attended."

GoldPine's Investing in Our Communities Award proves that older adults can continue to be involved in their community no matter where they call home. The award was presented at the 2008 MHHA Institute for Older Adult Services, the state's largest gathering of professionals working in care centers, assisted living settings and related services. The convention drew more than 3,000 people to the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Minneapolis under the theme "Building Blocks: Creating the Future of Aging Services." It focused on workforce issues, transforming aging services to meet the needs of a growing population of older Minnesotans and building public trust.

Over the three-day event, members of MHHA also honored caregivers, volunteers, organizational trustees, professional leaders, innovative practices and mission-driven work. To learn more about MHHA and to see consumer information on older adult services, go to [www.mhha.com](http://www.mhha.com).

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