

# Whippany, NJ: Seniors at Lester Senior Housing sing to stay young

BY MINHAJ HASSAN • STAFF WRITER • NOVEMBER 19, 2010

HANOVER — Centenarian Stella Deutsch doesn't think about her age all that much. She said she is too busy playing piano for her friends.

Albert Bornstein feels the same. The 102-year-old attributes his longevity and happiness to having a strong support system of family and friends — and singing songs.

The two centenarians' love for performing is much appreciated by their fellow residents at the Lester Senior Housing Community, where both performed at "In Celebration of Aging," a cabaret show.

Deutsch said playing the piano gives her great joy, and turning 100 last April hasn't slowed her down.

"I feel like 99 years old,"

Deutsch joked. "It's more of the same."

She started playing the piano by ear 95 years ago at an aunt's house. The residents enjoy her performances so much, she said, that she plays two sing-a-longs per month.

"I play for pleasure," she said. "I play songs that were part of their youth. The songs they hear today they can't sing."

Her fellow residents performed as "The Maalox Group," singing a parody of "The Sound of Music" song entitled, "A Few of My Favorite Things."

"When the pipes leak, when the bones crack, when the knees go bad, I simply remember my favorite things," the lyrics go.



The seniors at Lester Senior Housing's independent living facility rehearse for their cabaret show. Singing their own version of "A Few of My Favorite Things" are, from left, Pearl Barell, Ida Bakalar, Rae Benet, and Beatrice Freiheiter. (dawn benko/staff photo)

Among the songs Deutsch played were "Getting to Know You" and "Home Sweet Home."

Deutsch, a former teacher from Brooklyn, said that while she doesn't drink alcohol, smoke and avoids salt, it's difficult to attribute her longevity to any particular thing. "It's a matter of pure luck," she said.

As Bornstein skillfully sang his song, "I'll See You In My Dreams," Deutsch accommodated him with her piano-playing, not missing a single scale.

Bornstein said he doesn't have a secret to living to 102.

"I live a normal life," said Bornstein, who uses a walker. "I love people. I love kids. I love life period."

Bornstein said he struggled with the passing of his wife four years ago. The former Springfield resident and salesman, however, moved into the apartment complex and said he cannot think of a place he would rather be.

"It's one of the greatest places for senior people," he said.

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