

*“Coming together to share  
the truth about retirement  
community living”*



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## Newton retiree is avid volunteer

By Nancy D. Borst

When Okuni “Nikki” Evans was searching for a new home several years ago, she and her daughter checked out retirement communities in Newton. Evans found a home at Asbury Park, a continuing care retirement community.

“We looked at different places,” said Evans, who moved to Newton to be close to her daughter. She said Asbury’s cottages offered an attractive and affordable option.

She made the move to Newton after her husband’s death in 2002. The couple had met in Japan. Evans was working in a U.S. Army mess hall and her husband-to-be, Wilfred, was stationed in Japan. They were married at the U.S. Embassy in Japan and returned to the United States with their 10-month-old daughter in 1958.

The young family lived in Washington, North Carolina, Texas and Alaska. They retired to Arizona. After her husband’s death in 2002, Evans knew she needed to find a new home and she found a welcoming one in Newton.

Evans is not one to be idle, so her days are filled with a variety of activities. She works at The Kansan several days a week, placing inserts into the newspaper.

She also is a volunteer at Asbury Park, helping set up weekly bingo. She makes beaded necklaces for bingo prizes. She also serves meals to healthcare residents on Tuesdays and prepares snacks on Fridays.

As an independent living resident, she enjoys the fellowship of monthly cottage carry-in potluck luncheons with her neighbors. Her one-level, two-bedroom home is near others like it, mirroring traditional single-family residences elsewhere in the community. She also participates in a monthly singles’ club.

She did not have any negative, preconceived ideas about retirement community living.

“Everybody’s friendly,” she says of Asbury Park. “I don’t mind living here. I came in with an open mind.”

This busy woman also finds time to help others in need. She cuts fabric for pillows for breast cancer patients. The fabric is taken to the senior center, where it is stitched into pillows. Evans then helps stuff the pillows.

She also helps make stuffed animals for children who are patients at Shriners hospitals.

“I like to keep busy,” she says of her full schedule. “I don’t like to just sit.”

She doesn’t drive herself, but never lacks for transportation. It is readily available either from friends or from Asbury Park.

She loves to travel and is a frequent participant in Harvey County Interurban trips. She also takes longer bus trips with a friend. She can travel without worrying about anything at home, because retirement community living includes all household maintenance, inside and out.

She has not been to her native Japan in several years but enjoys talking by phone with a sister who still lives there. She honors those roots and the new ones she has planted in Newton.