

Browning Masonic Community

It Doesn't Get Much Better

When Brother Bob Nation (Wakeman #522) retired from Columbia Gas after 30 years of



Brother Bob and Helen Nation moved back to Ohio from Florida to be near family and enjoy the activities and lifestyle Browning Masonic Community offered.

service, the Toledo native and wife Helen bought a home in Zephyr Hills, Florida. They enjoyed ten years in the south, where Bob was active in Scottish Rite. Ultimately, however, they were drawn back to Ohio, where

their three daughters and five grandchildren still resided.

They bought a home in the Toledo area but found the responsibilities of maintaining a house and a yard to be more work than they wanted. That's when they realized the perfect place for them was the Browning Masonic Community in Waterville.

"We didn't even look anywhere else," said Bob. "We knew the Browning Masonic Community was here and would be the perfect place for us."

Helen, a member of Eastern Star's May Elliott Chapter, enjoys the social aspects of the Browning Masonic Community. "We love it here," she said. "We get so much joy from the staff and fellow residents."

The Nations appreciate the steady schedule of fun activities and outings organized by staff. "We want in on everything that's going on," Bob said.


Additionally, Bob said, they appreciate the comforts of their villa home. "It's huge," he said. "We have two bedrooms, a nice size living room, a bathroom with both a tub and a separate shower. Even with all our furniture, there's plenty of room."

"And we have a skylight in the living room," Helen said. "We love that!"

The Nations also like the meals served in the Browning Masonic Community dining room. "They have great cooks," Bob said.

Bob learned about Freemasonry from his co-workers at Columbia Gas. "A Mason shows respect for others," he said. "He's good to his wife, his friends and anyone else he meets."

Bob said he's always been impressed with the good works of fraternity members. "Masons are always trying to help others," he said.

Through his volunteer work at the Scottish Rite's 32° Masonic Learning Centers for Children, Bob sees the benefits first-hand. "Children walk in there looking dejected and depressed," he said. "Once they've been tutored, they walk out with their chin up and a smile on their face. It doesn't get much better than that!" 



Stronger Than Ever

Sometimes painful reminders of the past may mean a better future for someone else. Toni Whalen, who works in housekeeping at Browning Masonic Community, lost her daughter Mindy at age 17 to Cystic Fibrosis. Now she wants to help others learn from what she's been through.

Mindy was diagnosed with the disease when she was a year-and-a-half old. Cystic Fibrosis is a condition where mucus gathers in the lungs and digestive system. Although there is no cure, those afflicted can live a better life than previous generations with it had. Toni said many wouldn't live past kindergarten age.

"When the doctors first told me she had it, I didn't really comprehend what it meant," she said. "I didn't know you could die from it. It was rough."

Each person is different as far as the severity of the disease goes. Mindy's was severe enough that she had a lung transplant at age 14.

Although not really an upside, knowing you could pass at anytime helped prepare for the end. "When you have your faith," she said, "you don't let it come to 'why did this happen?'"

Working in a place that stresses Masonic values helped Toni during her time of need. She said she appreciated the kind words of Browning's employees and residents, who included her and Mindy in their prayers.

When their lives are touched with tragedy, some people react by blaming or turning away from things.



Toni said her situation with Mindy reinforced her faith.

Whereas Toni will never forget her daughter and the brave struggle faced in her illness, she is willing to keep it in front of her rather than put it behind.

Toni now volunteers, educating other parents on how to deal with having a child with Cystic Fibrosis. And her long-term goal is to begin taking classes at a local college to become a home health aid, so she can put her experience into action.

"I didn't know if I wanted to do that, but some people don't have others to help them and I want to be there to do that," she said.

Toni said the best thing to do is keep your faith, love and take care of that child as they are and don't isolate them from the world. "I'm stronger than I ever thought I was and my faith is stronger," she said. ✧

Toni Whalen, who works in housekeeping at Browning Masonic Community, spends time with resident Barb Robertson and Donna Davis, Director of Housekeeping.