

Harvey's Philosophy: 'Share What You Have'



"It's been my philosophy that if you have something and don't share it, you don't have anything at all," said Harvey, who always strives to have time for others.



Daughter Nancy Burrell, left, stops by to visit her parents Tom and Thetis Harvey, who have been married 57 years. The 74-acre ranch, which is a visual paradise, reaches into Delaware. The Harveys freely share their home with others, believing that if you share with the expectation of payback, fate will pass you by.

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KENNETT SQUARE (Chester Co.) — Cheers of 125 children rang throughout the hills of Gateway Riding Stable recently.

They rode horses, watched vaulting teams, swam, took both a hayride and a fire engine ride, participated in a magic show with Alonza the Clown, and had the run of the farm.

It was the fifth year Tom and Thetis Harvey held the day-long event on their horse farm for underprivileged kids. The Harveys invited children helped through Delaware Catholic Charities and those who have a parent in Coatesville Prison.

The 74-acre ranch is a visual paradise. Trees and perennials grow proliferously around neatly kept meadows with board fences.

Harvey is 77 years old. While many his age might find the commotion of so many children traipsing around the family pool and grounds bothersome, he finds it delightful.

"It's wonderful to see the kids having a good time instead of on the streets with someone offering them drugs," Harvey said.

The event for the disadvantaged children is typical of how Harvey finds ways to help others.

He said, "A lawyer did some work for me. He didn't want any pay, but in the course of conversation, he mentioned that he had been an orphan who was helped by Catholic Charities. It was his hope that someday he could do something special for the organization to help pay back the positive influences it had upon his life."

Harvey offered to throw a party at his home for disadvantaged children in honor of the lawyer Christopher Amalfitano. The party was so much fun, the Harveys have been doing it for five years, not only in the summer but also in the winter. The winter party is thrown at a restaurant where the children can order whatever they want on the menu.

"They are so excited. For many of them, it is the first time, they have ever eaten in a restaurant," Harvey said.

He also has been generous in helping with other projects also. "If the agency works with a protestant child, they won't try and convert them to Catholicism but will take him or her to the church of choice. That really impresses me," Harvey said.

A modest man, Harvey shies away from talking about himself, but as children and adults came and went, stories of Harvey's generosity escaped.

Throughout his conversation, Harvey often refers to his wife of 57 years. "Without her, I wouldn't have been successful," he said. "She is really a positive person. And she never was one to spend a lot of money."

Thetis enters into the enjoyment of sharing their home with others. Her own mother had died when she was five years old, and she remembers the pain associated with that. That and the fact that Harvey remembers as a child desperately wanting a pony to play a role in opening their farm to children.

Harvey said that in the hopes of purchasing a pony, he was determined to earn enough money to buy one. When he was in fifth grade, he started using his wagon to haul neighbors' trash to the dump.

He had 15 customers who paid him 15 cents a week.

"I took a lot of ribbing from other kids," Harvey said. "They'd ask me how business was doing. I'd say, 'It's picking up.'"

Business indeed picked up—although he never did get the pony. When he was in college, Harvey paid \$35 for a Model A to which he hitched a cart to pull garbage.

"It cost more money to pay for insurance than the car," Harvey said.

But he could haul away the garbage of 50 customers each Saturday and was making a commendable amount of money for one day's work.

Lured by the opportunity Harvey envisioned in the garbage hauling business, Harvey transferred from premed studies to a two-year business college while he continued to haul garbage and do other odd jobs. "You name it, we did it," Harvey said. For a period of time, his truck had inscribed on the side, "What we don't do isn't worth doing."

Business grew and grew. Today his son has 200 trucks running full-time for the disposal business.

Despite the monetary success of his business, Harvey's parents were a bit embarrassed to have a son hauling garbage instead of achieving a professional degree.

Although Harvey feels some disappointment that his parents never approved of his career choice, he is pleased to report that



At a recent party thrown for underprivileged children at the Harvey's Gateway Riding Stable, Alonza the Clown performs his magic.

he did receive an honorary business degree from Goldly Beacon.

He has dabbled in some other businesses such as operating a fleet of 125 school busses, but the mainstay has always been the garbage business.

Harvey delights in giving opportunities to those who seemingly would have no chance. He hired a Latvian immigrant to manage the stables. Harvey gives glowing reports of her ability and success with the stables, where 50 horses are used for riding lessons.

Harvey has also been instrumental in having seven prisoners receive governmental pardons for crimes. While many might take the attitude of "commit the crime and pay," Harvey is merciful when he hears of stories of those who made bad choices.

He tells of a 17-year-old who was imprisoned for 30 years for

being caught with some cocaine in his pocket.

"What 17-year-old hasn't done a dumb thing?" Harvey asked.

After the man had served 20 years of his sentence, Harvey convinced the governor to pardon the man. He also petitioned the governor on behalf of a businessman that swindled thousands of dollars from the government.

Harvey reports that none of those who were pardoned ever got into trouble with the law again.

In recent years, an illegal Mexican immigrant approached him about a job. Harvey helped the young fellow receive legal immigrant papers, paid him a good hourly wage, and even purchased a pickup truck to give to him. The fellow was arrested for driving with an open beer can in his hand.

Harvey defends him. "He didn't know better," said Harvey. He doesn't understand all the law

because of the language barrier."

Harvey paid for legal help to defend the Mexican employee and is confident he, like other employees will do well when given another chance.

Harvey doesn't keep close tabs on follow-up with former prisoners. "They have a heart, a soul, and the ability to know the difference between right and wrong," he said.

"If you share with the expectation of payback, fate will pass you by," Harvey said.

At the same time, he said that it is necessary to differentiate among those who respond to help and those who are, simply, leeches.

Harvey said that his parents, cautious from memories of the Great Depression, were appalled when he took out a \$15,000 mortgage on his house. Since then, he has added several rooms, a veranda, patio and sun porch onto the

(Turn to Page B21)

