



Participant Moment with Robert T. January 2025

Bowler. Car aficionado. Fisherman. Swimmer. But maybe most of all, proud grandfather and friend to all.

Meet Robert T., whose contagious smile and positive attitude help make Care Resources an even brighter place to spend time and receive care.

“If you haven’t got anything to do, and you want something to do, this is the place to make that change,” he says of the day center, where you’re apt to see him swapping stories with men and women who obviously enjoy the company of others.

“The people here? Well, I’d have to say they treat you more than good. I’d say it’s like love!”

Robert is Grand Rapids through and through, even though he was born in Arkansas. He moved here at a young age and attended Jefferson Elementary and the now long-gone South High School, dropping out so he could take a job at Comet Lanes, once a Grand Rapids bowling institution that operated for nearly five decades before shutting down in 2008.

Robert worked there at the start as a dishwasher, eventually earning enough coin to buy his first car – a 1966 Buick Wildcat convertible. He smiles at the memory: “I was somewhat of a wild child,” he says with a chuckle. “I fished, I bowled and I chased girls.”

But he also found time to devote to movies, noting: “At one time, it was all I thought about. I started recording movies when I was 16.” His all-time favorite is the 1998 flick “Blade,” starring Wesley Snipes as a half-vampire and half-mortal.

After leaving Comet Lanes, Robert worked as a parking lot attendant and later took a third-shift job at a foundry. The divorced father of nine makes his home in Grand Rapids and has fond memories of teaching all his children how to bowl and swim and fish, pastimes that he is now handing down to his 26 grandchildren.

He loves all his grandchildren dearly, but can’t help singling out brothers Jorden and Durrall “Phat Phat” Brooks, both of whom were standout basketball players for Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School and have gone on to play college ball.

Durrall earned his unusual nickname from his days as an especially chubby infant who was known to eat nonstop.

These days, Robert fishes whenever he can and has no less than a dozen poles ready to go, standing tall in his dining room. "I love to catch catfish the most," he says, and has favorite spots on Reeds Lake, at the Grand River, and at an unnamed lake some 90 minutes north of Grand Rapids.

Just recently, he took a granddaughter out and she came away with a haul of 25 bluegills and speckled bass.

Robert loves to reminisce about swim lessons he's given the grandkids, though he doesn't get in the water as much as he used to. He shies away from ponds and lakes where the water's cloudy, saying that "Ever since that movie 'Jaws' came out, I don't go swimming in water I can't see through!"

At Care Resources, Robert enjoys bingo, playing trivia and being surrounded by people who care about him. Though a disease left him blind in one eye, he insists on staying active and has memorized virtually every city bus line so that transportation is rarely a problem.

The secret so far to his longevity? "I try to stay in good shape," he says, adding with a smile that "You just need to keep movin'."

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