

A Joyful Burst of Energy Arrives

There was an invasion of extraordinary energy on Tuesday afternoon, April 4. For an hour, we residents inhaled a spirit of joy and delight brought by a merry little band of students from the Montessori School in Great Barrington. The students came at the invitation of Sharon Lazerson, Outreach Director for Kimball Farms. The title of the program, "Intergenerational Singing," did not reveal the delights we were to enjoy. It seemed that we elders were to share singing with the children; some of the songs we may have recognized from our childhood, but it turned out to be much more. We were an audience of four; what a surprisingly good time we had.

Sixteen students arrived, accompanied by several adults; the youngest was Maddox, age 6, and the oldest was Honora, 11. Soon the floor was covered with jackets, boots, hats and show-and-tell articles. Children gathered around without any regard for the number in the audience; they were on an adventure. Andy Kelly, guitarist, was there to accompany the singing; his skill as a musician was equaled by his love of children and the ability to guide us all into a different experience. He molded an hour of delight.

The children came armed with surprises – most with little albums of their baby pictures and their families, to show and tell. They also performed for us; four young ladies demonstrated some Irish dancing they were learning. I remembered Tara, our front-office Fiona's daughter, now a college graduate, when she danced with such skill as a young girl.

There were budding violinists and a flutist ready to share, and a drama group who performed a bit of *Hamlet*, soon to be performed at school. In order for as many students as possible to participate, there were five Hamlets!

There was more, and that was a true surprise. Our little audience of four sat clustered together with the children, and Andy with his guitar, at our feet. Max Silver, who knew Andy, had brought his own show-and-tell to share with them. It was arranged before the children came. Andy asked Max to share his pictures that showed him as a handsome, cocky young soldier and one of Max and his bride.

Andy noted that we all grow old and our looks change but we can still be recognized by our eyes and our smiles. He asked the children to look at their pictures and then look at our eyes. He spoke of the wrinkles that come when we're old and how sometimes if we push our face up, the wrinkles



Max Silver shares his photos with the students

vanish a bit. We all sat together and pushed on our cheeks, then found how funny it was to push our wrinkles away. Indeed, we looked younger and our smooth-faced, vibrant young friends assured us that they would still recognize us just as we are. It was an intimate, quiet moment with our young guests, one I will not forget.

The activity resumed with lusty singing, dancing the "Hokey Pokey" around the auditorium and a rousing singing of "Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes."

These bundles of delight and energy, who held a bake sale so they could come an extra time, will return for three more Tuesdays: April 25, May 2 and May 9. Their warmth and happy exuberance ignited our energy. Under Andy's gentle guidance they were able to relate with us and leave us relishing life with smiles and eagerness to greet them again and to breathe in their bursts of life's energy. Time spent with these children is not to be missed.

Gwen Sears