

Friendly visits foster long-time friendship

by SUNITA KARIR
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Sitting for a cup of tea and a generous slice of raspberry pie with Elizabeth Alrutz and Beth Tuck is warm and relaxing. The two friends meet every Sunday afternoon to share stories and keep each other company.

Although they have become very close, their friendship did not start out in what would be considered a traditional way. They were matched up through Community Care's friendly visitors program.

Tuck was listening to Roxanne Casey's show on Canoe FM one Friday morning almost five years ago. Casey works at Community Care and she was interviewing someone who was volunteering as a friendly visitor.

"I made a mental note that in January it would be my New Year's resolution to go in and meet with Roxanne to see if she needed more friendly visitors because it sounded like something that I would like to do," said Tuck. "Since then I have discovered that it is something I love to do."

In July four years ago Tuck was matched up with Alrutz, who was 77 at the time, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Now I can't even think about not seeing

waiting for her when she comes in the winter time.

Two or three winters ago, Tuck arrived on a really cold day and Alrutz said she had her slippers heating up for her. Tuck wasn't sure what she meant until she saw Alrutz walk into the kitchen.

"She has them in the oven, she heats up my slippers so when I get here I can slip out of my boots and put on really warm, cozy slippers," said Tuck, laughing. "I've dropped that hint around the house a hundred times but nobody at home will warm up my slippers for me."

Some days the two friends will plan little excursions and go in to town but other days they just like to sit around the table and talk.

"We always have a cup of tea, and we always have something sweet," said Tuck.

"Especially at Christmas time, when Elizabeth makes some of her famous Hungarian treats, like cookies. If I arrive and I see that she has her coat on and her purse over her arm, then I know we're going out!"

The arrangement works out well for both women because although Alrutz no longer drives, she knows so much about the county



Sunita Karir/TIMES

Elizabeth Alrutz, left, looks forward to her weekly visit with her friend Beth Tuck. The two women were matched up through Community Care's friendly visitor program. At the moment there are seven people in Minden wanting to have friendly visitors of their own. The Alrutz family cat, 17-year-old Bear, sits with them as they have a cup of tea and slice of pie.

out there except when she goes on her weekly visits.

"Beth and I, we can really talk to each other about whatever, you know," said Alrutz.

Right now there is a waiting list of seven people in Minden who want friendly visitors.

If you are interested in becoming a friend-