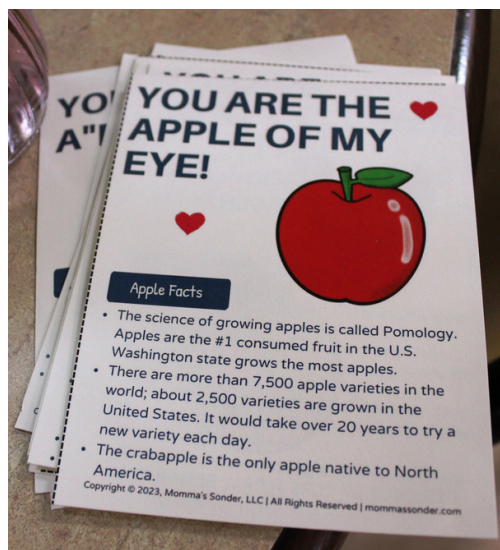


# "MAKE MY (VALENTINE'S) DAY": FLORAL DESIGN CLASS DOES JUST THAT



**Above:** Each gift was accompanied by a special card with a horticultural theme, such as this one with apples. (Photo by Ron Barry)

## By Ron Barry

*You know that old trees just grow stronger  
And old rivers grow wilder every day...  
Old people just grow lonesome,  
Waiting for someone to say,  
"Hello in there - Hello."  
-- John Prine, "Hello in There"*

On Valentine's Day, residents at the Alamo Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center encountered their "someone": the Floral Design class from Crockett County High School, led by teacher Ashley Moore.

Although structured as a class assignment - in which students not only had to create designs for floral Valentines in a vase, along with a business model (cost, product source, distribution, etc.) - it was obvious these young people were interested in much more than a mere school task.

Moore's class is a senior elective (although there were a few undergrad students in the mix), taught as part of a Horticulture sequence in the CCHS Agriscience program. On this particular holiday, however, her students turned into wonderful ambassadors from the younger generation to the older ones.

Students filled enough vases to gift every single individual at the ANHRC, with a few extras to be used as decorative placements in the facility. Each design was paired with special cards that outlined some horticultural facts, along with a Valentine greeting, and each was hand-delivered by the various class members as they took time to interact with the grateful recipients.

"Some of these kids have never been in a nursing home before," Moore said, "so it was an eye-opening experience for them. But it was also an opportunity for each of them to uplift residents and show them special attention on a day when they might often feel left out."

For student Haley Aldridge, it was a fulfilling event.

"We believe in giving back to the community," she smiled, "and honoring those who have made this county such a wonderful place to live." Based on the smiles on the faces and the warm words expressed by the recipients, the class easily achieved this goal.

Class members not only presented flowers to each of the residents gathered in the facility's main meeting area, but also hand-delivered vases to each room down the halls for those who were unable to get to the primary celebration.

"These wonderful students put in lots of work and thought into these arrangements and it made the day of these residents," Moore said. "In addition to making the bud vases, other Ag classes helped in processing the flowers to prepare them for the arrangements. And the Agriscience classes made 'cupcake' arrangements for our teachers and rose arrangements for our administrators."

"I've heard so many good things about this project by this class," said CCHS Principal Jerrod Shelton. "The students' hard work and caring spirit was greatly appreciated."

John Prine would have been pleased.

*So if you're walking down the street  
sometime  
And spot some hollow ancient eyes,  
Please don't just pass 'em by and stare  
As if you didn't care,  
Say "Hello in there - Hello."*



**Above:** Together, the designs create a table full of Valentine beauty, soon to be enjoyed by the residents. Moore said doing individual vases with a three-flower design is the simplest first task in her course; more complicated training is forthcoming as the school year progresses. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** Ashley Moore's Floral Design class is ready to distribute their Valentine creations at the Alamo Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center Wednesday (from left, front row): Sarah Danehower, Lindsey Fabian, Hadleigh Sanders, Haley Aldridge, and Jorge Matias Leon; (back row) Jiorgia Elmore, Sujei Zurita, Avery Brown, Adam Booker, Adam Clark, Antonio (AJ) Reeves, and Moore. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Jorge Matias Leon and Sujei Zurita retrieve the individual designs to place on a central table prior to distribution to the residents. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** The flowers are ready for distribution as Adam Booker (left), Hadleigh Sanders, and Avery Brown conclude a final count. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** Class members unload three large containers of Valentine vases from Ashley Moore's vehicle for distribution at the facility. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Adam Booker (flowered shirt) and AJ Reeves prepare to carry the containers into the ANHRC to give the individual Valentines to the residents. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Sarah Danehower readies a gift Valentine as she searches for the next available resident. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** Jiorgia Elmore makes a gentleman's day as she presents him with his Valentine design. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** Lindsey Fabian gifts a resident as the Valentine program begins in the gathering area of the ANHRC. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Adam Clark greets a resident and presents her gift as an example of how the students interacted with the residents. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** ... and then both gives and receives affection which was apparent throughout the facility on this day. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Haley Aldridge showed the personal touch many of the students displayed as she first greets a couple of the residents who were seated together... (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Left:** This resident specifically wanted her picture taken with her gift because she said she appreciated it so much. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Residents enjoy the gifts created by the Floral Design class just prior to the group's departure. (Photo by Ron Barry)