

Welcome home

Quilts preserve prolific artist's house drawings

By Jenny Recktenwald, Special to My Life
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Glenn Gibbons, a resident at one of Volunteers of America's homes for individuals with developmental disabilities, is often called "The Sheriff" because he proudly displays numerous badges on his prized baseball cap.



He is also known as a prolific artist who loves to draw houses for family members, care givers, and visitors. Gibbons' sister, Bartlett resident Alice Jackson, says she and her siblings have enough of his drawings to cover the walls in an entire house.

Gibbons has always been interested in houses, never failing to point out the ones he likes to his family and care givers. Jackson said he draws more now than he has at any other time in his life, and credits Volunteers of America staff with supporting and fostering his talent.

"He has lived in facilities where the other residents would tear (his drawings) up," Jackson says. "Now he is able to keep them and give them to people."

Gibbons' sister, Justine Soro, a resident of Natchez, Miss., pieced together quilts of his house drawings for each of their 14 siblings, even a brother who was reported missing in Korea in the early 1950s. Five other siblings have also passed away, but quilts were made for each to honor their memory. A few days after completing the quilts, Soro was hospitalized with a near-fatal heart issue but is now home recovering.



Glenn Gibbons (center) loves to draw houses. So one of his sisters, Justine Soro, pieced together more than a dozen quilts featuring his artwork. Kimberly Williams (left), direct support professional with Volunteers of America, admires one of the quilts with Gibbons' niece Linda Fay Medley and another sister Alice Jackson.

Gibbons is one of 103 individuals in the Memphis, Nashville, and Murfreesboro metro areas served by Volunteers of America. Gibbons lives in one of several of the homes operated in and around the Memphis area. His home is located in Bartlett. Forty-one homes house three residents each, where they receive around-the-clock care, nursing support, transportation assistance, and access to community services.

Jackson notes that Gibbons' care givers throw him wonderful birthday parties and even stop by on their days off to visit him. "They do more for him than anyone else has ever done before," she says. "I know he cares deeply for them because they treat him like family."

For more information about Volunteers of America serving Kentucky, Tennessee, Southern Indiana and West Virginia, call (502) 994-9167 or visit voaky.org.

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