



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A Beary Merry Holiday Brings Smiles, Snuggles, and Generosity to Wartburg Residents

Mount Vernon, NY (December 12, 2025) There was something especially meaningful about Zachary Stern's ninth birthday this year. Instead of focusing on gifts for himself, Zachary chose to give joy to others; sharing his love of teddy bears with older adults and asking a simple, heartfelt question: *If teddy bears bring me comfort and happiness, could they do the same for someone else?*

That question sparked a beautiful act of generosity that culminated in Wartburg Adult Care Community's *Beary Merry Holiday*, a campus-wide celebration filled with smiles, hugs, and holiday cheer.

With the support of his family, Zachary launched a Spotfund.com campaign called "Teddy Bears for All." His mother, Jenn, and stepfather, Brian Langergaard, helped turn his birthday wish into action, amplifying the effort through family connections and philanthropic support. When Jenn and Brian happened to meet Pastor Kimberli Lile, Director of Spiritual Care at Wartburg, at a local restaurant in their hometown of Port Washington, NY, conversation turned to family-and to Zachary's dream of sharing teddy bears with elders.

"*Come up to Wartburg in Westchester,*" Pastor Lile suggested. And just like that, the seeds of something special were planted.

Working collaboratively, Wartburg's Advancement, Recreational Therapy, and Spiritual Care teams designed a joyful afternoon that would allow Zachary and his family to personally deliver teddy bears across campus. The bears were supplied by the "Ms. Teddy Bear" company. On Friday, December 12, Zachary, his mom Jenn, stepdad Brian, and brother Nate arrived at Wartburg, where The Beary Merry Holiday officially began.

The tour visited four communities in one afternoon:

- Wartburg's Adult Day Services,
- Meadowview Assisted Living where Wartburg independent residents joined in,
- the Skilled Nursing Center, and
- the Berkemeier Living Center, Wartburg's memory care residence.



At each stop, teddy bears were greeted with laughter, smiles, and heartfelt embraces, clear signs that joy was indeed on the move. In all 285 bears were distributed.

“Zachary reminded all of us that compassion has no age limit,” said Pastor Kimberli Lile, Director of Spiritual Care. *“His generosity created moments of connection that transcended generations and brought pure joy into the lives of our residents and patients. This was ministry in a most beautiful form.”*

Wartburg CEO Dr. David Gentner echoed that sentiment.

“What Zachary and his family gave us was far more than teddy bears,” Gentner said. *“They gave our organization a reminder of the power of intention, and human connection. I’m so impressed with Zachary, and I sincerely hope we can repay his kindness someday soon”*

As teddy bears found new homes in residents’ arms and rooms, the day became a living example of Wartburg’s mission to foster connection, dignity, and joy at every stage of aging.

About Wartburg

Nestled in Mount Vernon, NY, Wartburg stands apart with its holistic approach to senior living and healthcare. Unlike other adult communities, Wartburg offers a vibrant 34-acre campus where residents enjoy integrated services that extend well beyond typical care. Whether it is independent living, assisted living, rehabilitation or adult day care, Wartburg's continuum of care is designed to meet diverse needs with excellence. Their dedication to families extends beyond medical care, providing robust caregiver support at every stage. Recognized as one of the "Best Nursing Homes in New York State" by U.S. News & World Report for a remarkable fourteen years running, Wartburg continues to set the standard in senior care, fostering a community where well-being thrives. Wartburg’s most recent development, the Berkemeier Living Center, features 64 state-of-the-art residences for those living with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementia. Each floor is designed as a small-scale household, providing an intimate and comfortable feel for the residents, staff, and families. Key planning elements such as short walking distances, oversized windows for increased natural light, and enhanced views are included in the design to help support a healing environment. Additionally, each household features its own living, dining and kitchen space, as well as gathering lounges. The ground floor includes an event space, music therapy and creative aging room.

Website: www.wartburg.org

Facebook: facebook.com/thewartburg

Instagram: instagram.com/wartburgadultcare

YouTube: youtube.com/wartburgny

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/the-wartburg-adult-care-community

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A Satisfied Adult Day Program Participant



Jenn Stern, Nate Stern, Brian Langeraad and Zachary Stern