



Video games a hit with seniors at Valpo retirement community

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VALPARAISO | The crack of the bat of 84-year-old Carl Templeman raised a buzz among spectators at Pines Village Retirement Communities on Monday afternoon, but, alas, the ball went foul.

Still, making contact for the first time was an important step.

The game was all virtual, as members of the Benjamin Franklin Middle School Builders Club traveled to Pines Village to introduce residents to Wii, a Nintendo video game system that follows players' movements rather than just thumb clicks.

The cross-cultural encounter linking veterans of the 20th century with technology of the 21st seemed to be a hit.

"That will really go over here," Templeman said. "That will be popular."

The seniors also tried their luck at Wii bowling, bursting into applause as 79-year-old Betty Tank succeeded in rolling her pink ball down the alley to pick up the afternoon's first five pins.

The Pines bought a Wii console for residents for the benefits of interaction, exercise, concentration and fellowship, said program and events coordinator Laurie Custer, who took a turn herself.

"Now I'm getting it," she said after a good roll. "This is really fun. I love it."

"It was fantastic," resident Nancy Stoltz, 80, said. "It is going to be wonderful for us."

"With a little practice, you could get really good at it, I think," 88-year-old Vera Rowe said.

The teens said their students got the hang of it.

"They caught on pretty quickly," said eighth-grader Nicholas Smith, who's been playing Wii since it hit the market about two years ago.

"We hope they'll come back because we're not going to learn this all in one session," Tank said.

A self-professed fan of baseball and televised games on ESPN, Tank said she could get into the Wii version.

"Oh, I think so," she said.

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