



Laverne, 87, is full of joy telling us about how the recent bathroom renovation, funded by this community, has made life so much safer and easier.

Your Support Brings Big Smiles to a True Pioneer.

Laverne recalls childhood days of having no electricity and lighting the way by oil lamp. Not having a fridge to keep things cold also meant her mom had to store their fresh milk in the creek just to keep it from spoiling. And if they wanted a new outfit, out came the sewing machine.

It's hard not to compare her growing up stories to the ones of "Little House on the Prairie." She quite literally walked 3 miles to school, uphill, both ways. And weather (and farm life) permitting, their whole family would walk that same route to the schoolhouse on Sunday mornings for church.

When her sister married a "neighbor" boy who lived 4-5 miles across the creek, she

would visit them often. It was there she met and became fast friends with her brother-in-law's younger brother, Bill. Childhood friendship eventually turned into love, and she would end up saying "I do" to her playmate.

Bill and Laverne married and settled quickly into building their own homestead . . . a life that very few these days can understand or appreciate. **And while the physical landscape and structures have changed over the years, there's evidence everywhere you look of the life they built for themselves and their two boys.**

In fact, when you pull into Laverne's driveway, you're quick to notice two large chicken houses, worn and rustic from age and weather. Old wooden barns are tucked in the corner of the property as well, and one gets to wondering what tools used to hang on the walls in those structures.

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She and Bill worked hard to provide for their family. They milked cows - 8 at a time, 2x a day - for a few years before they decided to raise chickens. And raising a family on a chicken farm isn't for the weak . . . especially during a time when automated feeders weren't the norm and houses had to be kept warm in ways that increased the risk of fires (which ended up claiming one of their houses).

The day-to-day needs of their animals kept them busy and rarely allowed for a weekend off; let alone a vacation! But Laverne doesn't complain as she shares these stories. In fact, she recounts the memories with a smile on her face and a sense of pride in her heart.

Because all she has to do is look out her window and remember all the ways that, through the work of their hands, God provided for them over the years.

In the same way that their homestead has changed over time, so have their lives and their health. Bill passed away in 2002. And Laverne faces growing mobility challenges that require the regular use of a walker and wheelchair ramp. It wasn't until she experienced multiple falls getting in and out of the shower, however, that she decided it was time to ask for help.

You see, Bill built the place she calls "home" in the prime of their lives. She shares, like so many others have, "We never thought about things like having a bathroom door that's wide enough to get a walker through." And really, who does?

Well, God does!

He knew that, one day, Laverne would need someone else to "light the oil lamp" for her. He knew she would need a bathroom that would reduce her risk of falling and improve her quality of life. And He knew who He would use to make that happen!

It's been AMAZING to watch God meet Laverne's needs through a loving community.

"We never thought about things like having a bathroom door that's wide enough to get a walker through."

Facebook friends raised money for the walk-in shower insert. A local couple asked others to help fund her door-widening project in honor of their anniversary (blessings to you, Michael and Amanda Barnett). And community leaders like Jim Hendren (Arkansas State Senator, pictured below right) and Netzel Cabinets gave of their hard-earned resources to make sure all her home modification needs were met.

We can't thank this community enough for STEPPING UP to take care of one of our many pioneers. Laverne feels so incredibly loved!





A faith-based fitness gym **CLIMBS MOUNT EVEREST** to raise money for local seniors

This Fall, the Upward Fitness community participated in a **unique stair-climbing fundraiser** to raise money for seniors and individuals impacted by mobility impairments.

Erik Leetch, gym owner, challenged Upward teams of various sizes to make **at least 492 trips** up the infamous JBU stairs . . . the distance equivalent to summiting Mt. Everest at 29,029 feet. Participating "climbers" then asked friends & family to **financially support their "expedition"** by making a donation to Kind at Heart.

Altogether, their community "ascended the mountain" 15 times! That's equivalent to 751,541 steps . . .



Erik Leetch, owner of Upward Fitness, poses with the top fundraiser for the Everest Challenge . . . his daughter Kate.

STEPPING
FOR SENIORS

Kind At Heart
MINISTRIES



over 3/4 of a million!!! In addition, Upward members and friends collectively **raised over \$17,000** to support the needs of seniors and individuals who, at times, simply struggle to put one leg in the front of the other.

When asked about why he chose to do the Everest Challenge, Erik had this to say:

"Upward Fitness is so much more than a gym, so finding ways to pour back into our community is important to us . . . Our desire was to take Kind at Heart's "Step It Up" campaign and add visibility to it by means of "climbing Mt. Everest" and asking our community to join us in stepping up for those who have gone before us!"

We can't thank the Upward Fitness community enough for the strength and perseverance it took to accomplish this goal!!!





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The Everest Climb.

132 HOUSEHOLDS
served despite Covid-19

Supporters who
have "Stepped
Up" in 2020

326

458

*Feet of Ramp
built for those in
greatest need*

**Volunteers Invested
2400+ HOURS**

WILL YOU STEP UP?

We are blown away by the support of businesses like Netzel Cabinets and Upward Fitness who champion the needs of local seniors.

Like so many nonprofits around the globe, Kind at Heart faces unique challenges in the midst of Covid-19. Your financial support ensures we have the resources needed to meet the increasing needs of a population at greatest risk.

Would you consider STEPPING IT UP for local seniors like Laverne who need help navigating their homes safely?

There are more doors to be widened, more handicap showers to be installed, and more wheelchair ramps to be built.

But we need your help to make all these things happen!

Visit our website at www.kindatheart.org to make a donation and/or learn more about how others like you are impacting the lives of our greatest pioneers and trailblazers.