



Johnsonville student throws unique senior prom

by Jordan Schuman

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It's not unusual to see prom preparations this time of year, but in Johnsonville, those who dressed up Saturday aren't the crowd you'd expect.

Johnsonville High School senior Lucas Paquette wasn't thinking about a tuxedo, a corsage, or even a date when he envisioned his senior prom. He was thinking about people nearly 50 years older than him.



Inspired by his grandmother, Paquette threw a senior citizens prom in Johnsonville.

He thinks senior citizens in his area aren't being taken care of, so he organized the dance to help raise awareness.

"I just feel very honored that he thought it was worthy enough that I was his inspiration to do this prom," his grandmother told us.

The senior prom was Paquette's service project for the Riley Institute at Furman University. He was one of only 16 students in the state selected to attend the Emerging Public Leader program last summer.

The Riley Institute awarded Paquette a \$1000 grant to further the project. He hopes it will become an annual event.

"There's no question that our student population is caring and committed not only for each other but for the others that are around us," said Johnsonville High School Principal Sam Tuten. He said this is just one of the primary examples of that.

The event only cost Paquette \$30 out of pocket. Decoration and food were donated.

This event is only the first step in letting the seniors know he cares. Paquette hopes this senior prom is a stepping stone on the path to a new senior center in Johnsonville.

"The closest one is in Florence which is over an hour away," Paquette said. With

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most functions held at night, Paquette said it makes it harder for seniors to get there.

A new facility comes with the price tag of about \$850,000, but Paquette isn't discouraged. "I believe we could do it. It's feasible in the next five years," he told us.

It's the payoff from a good deed that he says is priceless. "I encourage you to go out there, and I promise it will touch your heart in a way that you won't understand," he said.

Saturday an 18-year-old student realized the Senior Prom only gets better with age.

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Mary Moody

Such a wonderful young man. I am sure he will go far in life. Maybe I can go next year, I finished high school, but never attended the prom. This story was very refreshing.

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Richia Greyhawk Clatterbuck · Horry-Georgetown Tech, Conway, SC

How wonderful! I wish even 1/4 of the teens out there would think about doing something for others. Just FANTASTIC!

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Peri Appollo Schacknow · South Huntington, New York

What a sweet story! Congratulations to Lucas and everyone who helped put this wonderful event together!!

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Mary Moody

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