



## *My Story*

Written by: Cathey Russell, Grand Regent  
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Think back to when you were a little girl. What were your dreams for your life when you were growing up? Perhaps you wanted to be a doctor, a lawyer, CEO of a major company, or perhaps even a world leader. As for me, I wanted to be a teacher. From the time I was in kindergarten I had always dreamed of being a teacher. So many of my teachers inspired and mentored me, and I wanted to be just like them. When I went to college that dream changed and I developed an interest in the medical field. I focused on diagnosis coding, which is a constantly changing field, and that is the field I continue to work in to this date. I also dreamed of being a wife and a mother. I didn't have world-altering dreams, they were pretty average dreams, but they were my dreams.

In 1987 a friend of mine asked me to join the Women of the Moose. She was very active in the chapter and immediately got me involved also. She was an excellent mentor and told me all about Mooseheart and Moosehaven. She also told me about the dreams of one man, James J. Davis. His dream for making the world a better place was truly bigger than life. The first time I walked on the Mooseheart and Moosehaven campus it was like a dream to me too. I couldn't believe that I was actually visiting one of the campus' that I had heard so much about. I couldn't help but wonder what he would think if he could walk on each campus, talk to the residents, and realize the number of lives that his dream has impacted.

In the past 100 years Mooseheart has served a large part of the dreams of over 12,000 children. To find out the huge impact that Mooseheart has had on their lives you only have to take the time to hear their story. For many of them it has provided the opportunity to take part in a sports activity, to play a musical instrument, to attend a camp, to sing in a choir, ride a horse, practice a religious faith, and many other activities that so many children take for granted. For each of them that graduate from Mooseheart they are ready for their next step in life. Many have vocational training in an area of interest, and many will be able to attend the college of their dreams in an area of study they are interested in. With their hard work and dedication to their studies they are awarded scholarships to help them with the cost of their education. In talking with a couple of the Seniors that have graduated I am aware that they are much more capable of taking on the world than I was when I graduated. They have also told me that until they came to live on the Mooseheart campus the dream of a college education was never even possible. Every student truly knows what the Women of the Moose contribute to their lives at Mooseheart, and are so very appreciative of each and every big or little thing that we do. Each and every one of us are a big part of making their dreams come true.

The vision did not end with Mooseheart. If you are looking for another day in paradise you will find it at Moosehaven. Our Senior members at Moosehaven are also thankful for the part each of us play in their dream of peace and contentment in their sunset years. If you think that Moosehaven is only a retirement community it is obvious you have never been on campus to see what their lives are like. The campus is bustling with activities and the residents there have a level of energy that I am not sure I could keep up with. The activities center, woodworking shop, crafts and beauty shop areas get a lot of use. There are dances, special outings off campus, special meals, and of course fishing!! The Moosehaven campus is known as the heart of the community and is a special place to celebrate Halloween, Easter, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and enjoy the Christmas lights. Most residents come because they have visited the campus previously and want to be a part of all that it has to offer. I, too, one day dream of going to live on the Moosehaven campus. I loved my visits there, and know that my dream for the future is to live in a safe and comfortable place where the worries of the world are no longer mine. I look forward to sharing my Moose experience, as well as listening to their experiences. So much of the knowledge and history of our organization can be found on the Moosehaven campus. The residents are still a vital part of this organization.

Thank goodness for the dreams of James J. Davis. His dreams have changed literally thousands of lives and have made the world a much better place. It is up to each of us to make sure that every person we come in contact with has "Heard of Moose" so that we continue to grow as an organization. His dream is one that must flourish and grow with each passing year.

As for me and the dreams I had as a child. Well, five years ago my dream of being a wife and a stepmom came true when I married Ray. Along with this marriage came the fulfillment of another dream – being a grandma!!! I love being grandma Cathey. As far as being a teacher – the Women of the Moose made that dream come true when I was asked to teach Training sessions, something I love to do!!

The beautiful thing about life is that events change our dreams and gives us an opportunity to dream new ones. Sometimes life gives us the opportunity to live out a dream we never knew we had. This past year I have had the opportunity of serving as Grand Regent. It is something I never dreamed would happen to me, but it has been the most magical, wonderful year of my life. I say to each of you never give up your dream, never be afraid to dream big and definitely dream often. The love and friendship that has been shown to me by the co-workers in the states I have visited have been such a blessing in my life and has made me a better person. The Grand Council and International Boards that I have had the opportunity to work with have inspired me with their knowledge and dedication. To each of the co-workers that have touched my life thank you SO much.

Special thanks and gratitude to the co-workers of Missouri, and Kirksville Chapter for inviting me to serve. Your faith in me has always been more than the faith I have in myself.

Thank each and every one of you for serving the Women of the Moose – I love you all!!!!