

## An Ordinary Grace

If any of you have ever met the ‘pop’ man Danny, had him call you a “nidiot,” or tell you to “drink more pop,” then you know that he is on a mission...to collect as many pop tabs as he can. It would be hard to find another who is so driven and dedicated for a cause. Danny searches for cans day and sometimes night. He goes around grounds and searches the occasional office, desk or garbage can. The soda can doesn’t even have to be empty for him to collect that pop tab. Danny makes lots of rounds and visits people daily looking for soda cans and if you do not produce enough, he will gently scold you and tell you to “drink more pop.”



So how did this all get started...well it began with another group of individuals with ordinary graces themselves. For all the years that Danny has made SWC his home, he has been collecting cans just like he used to do at home with his family. This driven behavior to collect was modified to collecting soda cans to be taken in for recycling. Danny soon made the connection that soda cans equal money and money equals a chicken dinner that he so enjoys.

Sometime in 2006 it was suggested to Danny that he begin saving the pop tabs as they were

much smaller and worth more in money. With the help and creativity of the ladies at SWC’s Communication Center and special friend Rita M., four large containers were made and a pop tab donation station at Wallace was designated. Rita was aware of a great program at the Ronald McDonald House Charities called the Pop Tab Collection Program. She took time to make Danny aware of this great program and how the pop tabs he was collecting could help many children who were affected by a serious illness or disease. When Danny’s four containers were filled, Rita brought Danny to the Ronald McDonald House to drop them off. Danny appeared to have so much pride in giving them his four containers of pop tabs. Since 2006, Danny and Rita have made 4 separate trips to Milwaukee to make donations. Danny was even greeted by Ronald McDonald himself during one visit.





Although Danny collects these pop tabs “just because” and for no recognition, his ordinary act has not gone unnoticed.

On September 12, 2008, Danny was nominated by SWC’s Chaplain Theresa Johaneck to be recognized and honored as a special guest at the Works of Mercy – Ordinary Graces Dinner in Kohler, Wisconsin at The American Club. Danny was among 5 other special persons with disabilities who have in one way or another extended their ordinary graces to help others in need. During the week prior to this event, Danny was made aware that he was

going to be attending a special dinner where he was going to be the special guest. Danny’s special friend Val helped him prepare by buying a new outfit, getting his hair cut and practice using nice words.

The evening of the event, Danny was accompanied by one of his best friends, Matt, and several other people who enjoy having a relationship with him.



Upon entering the grand hotel, Danny appeared to know he was in for something special. As one of the guests of honor, Danny on some level understood that this was an important event. On his best behavior, using good words, he said hi to people and shook many hands. Danny and his guests sat in elegance, tasted new food, and shared many smiles as they sat through presentations, listened to a motivational speaker, and understood they were a part of a greater presence.



When it was time for the six persons to be honored, Danny appeared to know it was going to be his time to shine. When Chaplain Theresa began to speak compassionately about Danny, he was escorted to the stage and received a star and trophy for his ordinary grace. Everyone present was taken back by all the guests of honor; however Danny's guests were very proud of him.



To us at SWC, Danny's soda collection obsession and rough around the edge's demeanor may appear like this is "just who he is." But Danny's ordinary behavior is really extraordinary and selfless. So when your half drunken soda can disappears, when there is a trail of soda drips on the floor and your feet stick the next day, remember that Danny means well and is doing something for a greater good.



So a big "THANK YOU" to all the extraordinary people in Danny's life who visit with him daily, support his can collecting, take time out of their day to take him on special outings, clean up soda drips on the floor, and to those who take a deep breath when their pop tabs (and occasional item) disappears. You are all a special part of HIS family here at SWC.