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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Old Bridge H.S. Spreads Early Holiday Cheer to Long-Term Care Residents**

**OLD BRIDGE** – The holidays not only came early for residents of Roosevelt Care Center at Old Bridge, but were delivered by a two-axle, full-sized, yellow bus Wednesday.

Around 50 long-term care residents greeted Old Bridge High School students, who filed into the facility's multi-purpose room for an afternoon of entertainment.

Much to the delight of their audience, the Women's Recital Ensemble, an advanced compilation of junior and senior high school girls, performed a variety of holiday classics, from "Deck the Halls" to "The Dreidel Song."

"If you could only see our residents' faces light up when they hear the music," said Roosevelt Recreation Therapist Keri Schafer. "Music often brings us back to a different time and place and it's such a joy to see residents share in those memories with the youth. To see them singing along, clapping and interacting with students is just heart warming."

Old Bridge High School Choral Director Steven Updegraff said his choir has recently dialed-up practice efforts to prepare for this week's repertoire, a collection of songs the group is scheduled to perform during an upcoming Dec. 13 concert.

"This encourages the students to make a better commitment to their community and lets the community see all of their hard work," Updegraff said.

A small troop of actors from the high school's drama program also performed a scene from "Fools," a comic fable by the famed American playwright Neil Simon.

The play takes place at the start of a love story in a late 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Ukrainian hamlet, where a curse of stupidity has plagued the local inhabitants for generations. There was no shortage of laughs, as actors repeatedly injected witty wordplay and gut-busting quips into every other line.

As students mingled during a post-performance lunch, a number also made inquiries into volunteer opportunities with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority's operation, which launched in late 2011 when the Old Bridge campus first opened.

Administrators and school staff also discussed the possibility of a return visit by students.

"It's what one might hope would result from a function such as this," said Roosevelt Care Center at Old Bridge Administrator Alan Fialka. "While our residents obviously benefit from the entertainment and enthusiasm of these students, students discover the value of spending time with seniors and an alternative way that they can better their community."

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