A group of high school students is trying to end elderly isolation by visiting residents in nursing homes.
Gretta Kissell, the group’s president, and Jena Huffman, its vice president, are part of an organization called Glamour Gals that goes into nursing homes and provide makeovers for the female residents.

“It is heartbreaking knowing how many nursing home residents do not receive visitors,” Huffman, a senior at Hopewell-Loudon High School, said.

Glamour Gals is a national volunteer organization that works to end elderly isolation by providing companionship to nursing home residents through manicures, parties and crafts. There are more than 100 chapters in 16 states.

Huffman and Kissell, senior at Old Fort High School, founded Glamour Gals of Tiffin/Fostoria in the summer of 2016 after attending a HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar at Ohio Northern University. They hosted their first makeover in July 2016 at Independence House in Fostoria. The chapter is comprised of students from Old Fort, Hopewell-Loudon, Columbian and North Baltimore, with nearly 30 volunteers.
“Glamour Gals isn’t just about manicures; it’s about reminding elderly residents that they are valued, they are beautiful and they are loved,” Kissell said. “By forming friendships with these residents, we’re able to make them smile, laugh and remember their importance. I’ve watched an elderly woman cry with gratitude when a friend and I visited her on her birthday. I’ve grinned ear to ear with another resident as she admired her freshly painted, pink nails. These encounters truly show me the love and support Glamour Gals shares with nursing home residents.”

The Tiffin/Fostoria chapter of Glamour Gals has a president, Kissell; vice president, Huffman; co-treasurers Nicole Fry and Meghan Sayre; and public relations officer Heidi Kissell.

During the makeovers, the group paints nails and forms friendships with the residents. Each makeover features a theme; in December, the theme was Christmas, and for January, they plan to host a New Year’s party. The January makeover is to take place Sunday at St. Francis.

“The main purpose for this organization is to end elderly isolation,” Huffman said. “We want to form friendships with residents who may not get visitors and bring extra joy to those who do.”

Also, Huffman said she also founded the organization Guys and Games for male students to visit nursing homes and play board games with the male residents.

“I noticed we were doing so much for the female residents and the male residents felt left out,” she said.

Huffman said she has learned by being involved with Glamour Gals that small acts of kindness go a long way.

“Seeing the smiles on resident’s faces is so rewarding,” she said. “Some residents even refer to us as their grandchildren. I hope people learn that friendship has no age limit. Age is truly just a number. Many of these men and women have extraordinary stories to tell, they just need some to listen.”
Huffman is planning to attend Tiffin University. She has committed to play on the women’s golf team and is planning to major in exercise science and to attend dental school to become an orthodontist or dentist.

Kissell said she has learned the importance of listening.

“Our elderly friends have so much wisdom to share and I learned that the less I talk, the more I can learn from them,” Kissell said.

Kissell plans on attending college to pursue a double major in chemistry and Spanish.

Anyone wishing to volunteer for Glamour Girls or Guys and games can email Huffman at

jena.huffman@yahoo.com.