

## *New Hampshire Veterans Home Plans Winter Arts Residencies*

TILTON, NH - The New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) in Tilton, NH has received an "Arts in Healthcare" Grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts to provide funding for two arts residencies at the Home in February and March 2010. The participating artists will be Martha "Bobbie" Herron (Japanese SAORI Weaving) and Michael Wingfield (African Drumming).

The SAORI weaving residency will begin on February 9 and will be offered once a week, on Tuesdays, for six weeks, between 1:00 and 5:00 PM in the Veterans Home Town Hall. The African Drumming residency will be an intensive one-week program, beginning on March 22 and concluding on March 26. Drumming workshops will be held five times each day with the exception of March 26<sup>th</sup> when two morning workshops will be followed by a culminating performance at 2:00 PM, which will also include an exhibit of woven art created during the SAORI Weaving Residency. The residencies will be open to NHVH residents, staff, family members, and students in the Home's Intergenerational Program.

According to weaver Bobbie Herron, "SAORI is a philosophy and technique of improvisational weaving created in Japan in 1968. Unlike traditional weaving, SAORI method has no pre-planning, restrictions, or complicated rules. Instead it is a richly beautiful art form, accessible to all people including those who perhaps do not yet see themselves as especially creative. Students of all ages find a new sense of creative freedom, and experience a willingness to experiment that may have eluded them when they tried other forms of art. The equipment is intentionally simplified so all of your energy can go into exploration of color and texture. Most newcomers are weaving within 60 seconds. The looms are also adaptable for people who may have concerns about dexterity or mobility." Herron currently serves on the Governor's Commission on Disability.



*Arts in Healthcare Residencies will begin at the NH Veterans Home in February with Bobbie Herron, Weaver (left), and Michael Wingfield, Percussionist (right).*



Photo by Ken Williams, Concord Monitor

Michael Wingfield, percussionist, is a performer and teacher with over 25 years of experience in the rhythm and song of the African New World. He says, "Through instruments such as conga drums, bata, shekere, flute, and voice, we interactively impart the spirit and history of the African Diaspora in ways that speaks to today's issues of diversity." Michael's love of traditional rhythm and folklore transports his audiences from cultural appreciation to cultural engagement.

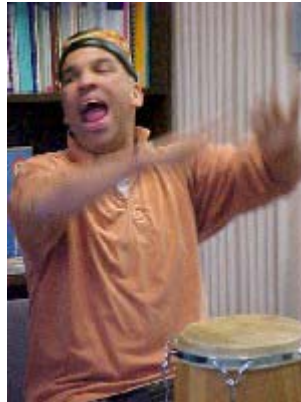
Angelique Mosher, CTRS/L, NHVH Recreation Services Supervisor, is the site coordinator for the residencies and explains their goals: "We want to provide opportunities for veterans and staff to actively participate in the creative process as part of our ongoing Therapeutic Recreation programs; we will involve Therapeutic Recreation staff and enhance their presentation skills so they will be able to continue this and other arts programs in the future; we will educate participants and broaden their appreciation of the arts; we hope that the residencies will have a broad therapeutic impact on participants, all of whom have served our country during a time of war; and we will provide a positive experience for all—especially those whose lives have been limited by disability."

Maureen Campbell, CTRS/L, Recreation Supervisor for the NHVH Life Enhancement Dementia Unit, says: "Research has shown that nurturing creativity creates a sense of optimism, confidence, and well being. It gives people with disabilities a sense of freedom and independence. The talk therapy, physical/artistic expression, and rhythm will increase self esteem, personal empowerment, and will liberate expression."

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She adds, “People who live in long term care facilities (especially nursing homes) generally believe they go there to die. *We believe they come here to live*—and although they may have significant physical limitations, their creativity can be almost limitless. Our Therapeutic Recreation program is based on this philosophy and our goal is to bring in artists who can share their unique skills and inspire our residents and staff. We believe this will help our residents discover and expand their own creative possibilities, improve their quality of life, and enhance the artistic knowledge of our own staff. We hope that the outcome will be to encourage more residents to become interested in participating in any type of art we can provide.”

James Mazzuchelli, MSW, Social Worker and Coordinator of Intergenerational Programs at NHVH, is adding a community component to the residencies. He says, “The residencies will enhance well-being, empower choices, and encourage residents to participate at whatever level they feel comfortable.”



He adds, “Through our Intergenerational Programs, we will invite students who are studying world cultures to visit the Home while we are doing workshops and for the culminating performance. We will communicate with teachers and see if they would like their students to be part of the culminating performance—perhaps by making masks, dancing, or sharing information they’ve learned in school.”

Family members will also be invited to the workshops and the culminating event. Mazzuchelli concludes, “Participating in weaving or drumming workshops is a positive way for family members to connect with their loved ones in a nursing home setting.”

The New Hampshire Veterans Home is supported in part by a grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Established in Tilton in 1890 as the Soldier’s Home for Civil War Veterans, the New Hampshire Veterans Home is one of just four New Hampshire nursing homes to win the first Quality of Life Award from the New Hampshire

Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). NHVH was recognized again this year by DHHS for its continuing commitment to nursing home culture change and quality of life. The NHVH campus is home to 200 men and women who have served their country and fellow New Hampshire citizens. The mission of NHVH is to provide high quality, professional long-term care services to the Granite State’s elderly and disabled veterans. NHVH is the only long-term care facility in the Granite State that is dedicated exclusively to veterans.



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