

The Veterans Voice



The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Veterans Home, Spring/Summer 2008

NH Veterans Home Seeks Support to Complete "Main Street"

There's a little stretch of Main Street at the New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) in Tilton and the Home needs support from friends to complete it.

The Main Street complex includes the Great Room/Town Hall, which is used for dances, meetings, candidate forums, entertainment, and theatrical events. The Great Room will eventually be equipped with a stage, a large screen, and a sound system. The rest of the Main Street Project includes the NHVH Store, the Residents' Bank, the Library/Media Room, the Resident Lounge, the Chapel, the Wellness/Physical Therapy Center, and the Barber Shop/Beauty Salon.

NHVH payroll and business offices, the Business Administrator, Chief Accountant, and the Human Resources department have moved to the Main Street area as well, in order to provide greater accessibility for staff and residents.

Funding from the State of New Hampshire, the Veterans Administration, and the Federal Emergency Management Administration has helped repair structural damage that occurred in the floods of October, 2005, but as with most construction projects, there's never enough.

The Home needs funds to buy furnishings that will help make residents feel at home. A team of people who will be using the Main Street area has brainstormed and come up with a list of what is needed to do to finish it—and do it right. The cost will be \$100,000.00, and so far the Home has raised \$25,000.00—so the goal is \$75,000.00.

According to Barry Conway, NHVH Commandant, "We'd like to use some of our residents' color photographs and work by other New Hampshire artists to tie the whole area into the "Main Street New Hampshire" theme. In addition, we want to encourage creativity among **all** residents, and we hope to have a gallery, perhaps outside the Chapel, which will feature the art of other Veterans Home residents in a regular rotation."

Conway adds, "For residents, families, and visitors, we envision an indoor sidewalk café area adjacent to the Store, with plants and several small 'bistro' tables and chairs. We hope to recruit more volunteers so we can expand the

Store's hours; we want to offer more merchandise, including fresh brewed coffee, ice cream, gifts, plants or flowers, and more Veterans Home apparel. We'd like to include a wall-mounted flat screen TV outside the Store that can be used to scroll Veterans Home events and activities, menus, or be tuned to a regular TV station."

Above the Main Street "storefronts" the Home is planning to have decorative canvas awnings that will brighten up the area and make the storefronts look like little shops. Additional plans include a waterfall feature; vintage photos and a half barber pole for the barber shop/beauty salon—also equipment & supplies; window treatments throughout that will cut glare but allow in light; new chairs for the Chapel; a new treatment table for Physical Therapy; new computers and workstations for the Library/Media Center; a decorative fireplace, special rocking chairs, a game table for the Resident Lounge; and more.

...Main Street
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About This Issue: Therapeutic Recreation?

This issue of **The Veterans Voice** is focusing on Therapeutic Recreation because it's tremendously important to the Quality of Life of our residents. According to the American Therapeutic Recreation Association, the purpose of *therapeutic recreation* is: "to restore, remediate, or rehabilitate in order to improve functioning and independence as well as reduce or eliminate the effects of illness or disability."

The primary purpose of recreation services is to provide recreation resources and opportunities in order to improve health and well-being. Therapeutic recreation is provided by professionals who are trained, certified, and/or licensed to provide therapeutic recreation.

Therapeutic Recreation is much more than simple entertainment. Recreational therapy is carefully individualized to each person: their past, present, and future interests and lifestyle. It is an activity that uses treatment, education, and recreation services to help people with illnesses, disabilities, and other conditions to develop and use their leisure time in ways that enhance their health, independence, and well-being.

For more information about Therapeutic Recreation see the articles inside and visit our website: www.nh.gov/veterans



*From the Commandant,
Barry Conway:
Therapeutic Recreation:
Beyond Bingo*

The first time Governor John Lynch visited the New Hampshire Veterans Home, he asked the residents how they liked it here. One man said, "When I came here, I

thought I was coming here to die—but I found out that I really came here to live."

The New Hampshire Veterans Home is a long term care community. We don't pretend to be anything else. People come here toward the end of their lives—but that doesn't mean they have to sit around and wait to die. In fact, many residents make the last chapter of their lives very creative, meaningful, and pleasurable.

At the Veterans Home we honor elderhood as a valued phase of human development, rather than merely the decline of life. We believe, as does Dr. William Thomas of The Eden Alternative, that the plagues of loneliness, helplessness, and boredom can make life intolerable for the elderly. We believe that the places where elders live should be habitats for human beings, not sterile medical institutions.

As a valued phase of human development, elderhood provides many opportunities. Think about it: residents in a long term care community don't have to go grocery shopping, drive to doctors appointments, shovel snow, mow the lawn, or pay bills. They can use their leisure time to take photographs, paint, write poetry, volunteer in local schools, play music, and learn new skills. And they still have time to play Bingo.

Therapeutic Recreation at the Veterans Home seeks to enhance our residents' leisure time. Photography, Creative Writing, and Art offer outlets for creativity and expression while increasing independence and self-direction. Cooking groups stimulate active participation, help with organization, decision-making, and attention to detail, with the supplementary bonus of aromatherapy! Animal Assisted Therapy can decrease isolation and withdrawal. Discussing current events with high school students can foster social interaction, a connectedness with self and time, and strengthen concentration and attention span. Competitive sports improve impulse control and frustration tolerance while encouraging the role of a team player. Exercise elevates mood and builds muscle strength and energy levels.

At the Veterans Home, our Therapeutic Recreation staff seeks to offer compassionate and competent care to encourage an active, healthy and independent lifestyle; we

provide opportunities for our veterans to develop new interests to enhance pleasure, enlightenment, self-worth, individuality, and a sense of accomplishment; we maintain an environment which allows stimulation of the senses, positive emotions, and rejuvenation of strength and spirit; we create contentment through connectedness to the environment and the people within; and we foster a sense of well-being within a safe environment that enhances open communication and social interaction.

We invite you to learn more about Therapeutic Recreation through this newsletter; our website, www.nh.gov/veterans (go to the Recreation page where you can see our monthly activity calendars); or by contacting Angelique Mosher, CTRS/L, Resident Services Supervisor: Tarr and LEDU Units at (603) 527-4400, ext. 4889.

Resources for Therapeutic Recreation and Long Term Care

Therapeutic Recreation Directory

Excellent activity and treatment ideas for Recreation Therapy. <http://www.recreationtherapy.com/tractv.htm>

American Therapeutic Recreation Association

(**ATRA**) is the largest, national membership organization representing the interests and need of recreational therapists. <http://atra-online.com/cms/>

Alzheimer's Association, New Hampshire Office

One Bedford Farms Drive, Suite 105, Bedford, NH 03110
603.606.6590 / 800.272.3900 24/7 Helpline
www.alz.org/NH

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

Their mission is to provide optimal care and services to individuals confronting dementia, and to their caregivers and families.
<http://www.alzfdn.org/>

Dementia.com

Dementia.com provides information for caregivers and healthcare professionals.
<http://www.dementia.com/>

Palliative Dementia Care Resources

Committed to promoting public and professional awareness around palliative care needs facing individuals with advanced dementia and their caregivers.
http://pdcronline.org/resource_pages/

The Eden Alternative: places where Elders live should be habitats for human beings rather than facilities for the frail and elderly; Elders can experience vibrant, vigorous living in the last chapter of life.
<http://www.edenalt.org/>

Therapeutic Recreation Staff Profiles



**Angelique Mosher, CTRS/L
Resident Services
Supervisor:
Tarr and LEDU Units**

With more than ten years experience in the Therapeutic Recreation profession, Angelique has served as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist in the position of Therapeutic

Recreation Assistant, Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor, and Site Manager in Long Term Care/ Rehabilitation and a Senior Community Center setting.

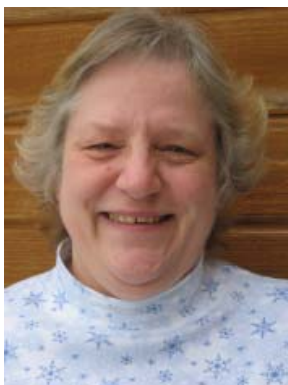
She is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire with a BS in therapeutic recreation. Her interest has always been in geriatrics with a focus on dementia in the elderly.

With her experience as a caregiver in her personal life and as the daughter of a veteran, she feels a special bond with the residents at the Veterans Home.

She says, "It is our vision to provide an inclusive environment that fulfills human needs, while maintaining awareness of the integrity and dignity of our veterans."

Angelique's role as Resident Services Supervisor allows her to guide the NHVH Therapeutic Recreation Department in strengthening its effectiveness in maintaining and improving the quality of life for all residents.

**Beth Benz, BA
Recreation Services Supervisor**



With more than eighteen years experience working in the Recreation Department of the TARR Unit of the New Hampshire Veterans Home, Beth has learned to recognize the needs and abilities of the residents.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Services from New Hampshire College.

Beth belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Post 1698 in Franklin and the American Legion Auxiliary Post 49 in Tilton. She says, "I am very honored to work at the Veterans Home. Both of my parents were veterans and they had the opportunity to live here—It was a wonderful choice for them. Our staff enriches the lives of our residents—We make it a Home, not a facility."

**Maureen Campbell CTRS/L
Recreation Therapist II,
LEDU Therapeutic
Recreation**



Maureen has over seventeen years experience implementing therapeutic recreation with clients rehabilitating from various conditions.

Her rehabilitation foundation was established at Jackson Memorial Rehabilitation Center in Miami, Florida, where she had dynamic experiences providing aquatic therapy, community re-entry, and adaptive recreation techniques.

Maureen developed the therapeutic recreation program at the skilled nursing facility at Hillsborough County Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Facility.

Her experience with chemically dependent, psychiatric, spinal cord injured, traumatic brain injured, orthopedic, and long-term care populations combined with the love of recreation enables her to facilitate a variety of therapeutic recreation interventions to assist individuals in restoring, remediating, and rehabilitating physical, psychological, social and mental disorders to assist people in establishing and expressing as independent a lifestyle as possible.

She says, "The LEDU unit is a state of the art facility that promotes dignity and quality of life. Our interdisciplinary team shows love, humor, and respect while caring for our veterans as if they were family."

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New Hampshire Veterans Home

Therapeutic Recreation Programs

If the primary purpose of Therapeutic Recreation is “to provide recreation resources and opportunities that improve health and well-being,” then one of the measures of our success is the smile.

A smile indicates positive emotions: joy, interest, and contentment. Our Therapeutic Recreation programs are highly individualized to each person and are designed to stimulate positive emotions. Smiles are a highly visible reward.

Angelique Mosher, CTRS/L, Resident Services Supervisor for the Tarr and LEDU Units, says, “We work diligently to create positive, meaningful programs for all of our residents—at every stage of life—whether they are ambulatory and cognitively aware or in the end stages of dementia. We know we can reach people where they are, and we make a difference in their quality of life. We don’t always see a smile—maybe it’s a connection that lasts just a split second, but it’s there.”

Humor Therapy

Laughter can enhance a person’s quality of life; it can stimulate the circulatory system, the immune system, and result in a sense of well-being. Because it releases endorphins, it can provide some pain relief, encourage relaxation, and reduce stress. The physical effects of laughter on the body include increased breathing, more oxygen use, and higher heart rate.

Our Humor Therapy Program has a positive impact on behaviors such as coping, fears, adjustment, anger, frustration, apathy, and depression. Even if we get just a little smile from a resident we have achieved our goal. Recently we got a room full of smiles by showing videos of Red Skelton’s popular variety show, which featured his mime of an elderly gentleman watching a military parade. Residents are encouraged to share their jokes with others, which always gets a laugh. Future plans include featuring



← NHVH Resident and one of our “Fashion Forward Gals” participants, Dorothy Schaller

Abbott and Costello with staff acting out their famous “Who’s On First, What’s On Second” skit. Norman Cousins was right: laughter may indeed be the best medicine.

Music

Research has shown that there are many musical centers in the human brain, so even if

part of the brain is damaged by disease or injury, other parts can still respond to music. Music from a resident’s teenage years or wedding day can evoke strong positive emotions; these emotions help people grow, become energized for positive action, solve problems, improve the quality of relationships, and increase one’s sense of emotional well-being.

At the New Hampshire Veterans Home we provide ample opportunities for residents to enjoy music. Professional entertainers are featured monthly, and seasonal dances always bring out the best in both residents and staff. Dancing is encouraged, and is always accompanied by enthusiastic toe-tapping or handclapping. Informal “neighborhood” musical performances are also popular at NHVH, and residents look forward to programs such as “Music with Rose” or the NHVH Jug Band.

Intergenerational Programs

The National Council on Aging defines intergenerational programs as “activities or programs that increase cooperation,



“Music with Rose” is performed by Rose Gray, CTRS/L, Recreation Therapist I

interaction, or exchange between any two generations. They involve the sharing of skills, knowledge, or experience between the old and the young.”

From second grade students at the Paul Smith School in Franklin to high school students from Winnisquam or Tilton School, our Intergenerational Program enhances the quality of life for both residents and children. It is a remarkably positive—and slightly magical—experience.

Younger children practice reading aloud to our residents; high school students transform spring seeds into summer vegetables, incorporate fall leaves into art projects, and participate in discussions about values each person holds dear. The intergenerational programs facilitate healthy relationships and give each participant an appreciation for the other’s perspective.

Community Outings

Community outings are a key component of Therapeutic Recreation at the New Hampshire Veterans Home. The residents enjoy trips to local attractions and picnic areas, spend the day in a waterfront cottage at Weirs Beach, or munch on peanuts and Cracker Jacks while cheering on the Fisher Cats baseball team in Manchester.

We also provide special “in house” events to replicate the friendly atmosphere of a small town. During the holiday season there are many themed parties, intergenerational sing-a-longs, and much more. As with all Therapeutic Recreation Programs, we encourage family involvement to enhance our residents’ experience. The First Annual New Hampshire Veterans Home classic car show, *The Good Ole Days Cruise-In*, is an example of such a special event.

Memory Lane

Recounting “days gone by” is another form of Therapeutic Recreation. It is a valuable tool for stimulating group discussion and creating a sense of community. With the use of visual, auditory, and tactile props, group discussions take on a life of their own. Suddenly, a room of people who were quietly watching television, interact with each other: laughing, talking, and waving outstretched hands—eager to top a memory just shared.



NHVH Resident Merton Church with a student from the Paul Smith School.

Culinary Creations

Residents look forward to the “Culinary Creations” program as they generate home cooking for all to share. The aroma of fresh baked muffins or homemade bread serves as an excellent appetite enhancer and provides the opportunity for residents to develop new leisure skills. A veteran commented, “I can’t believe I waited until I was 86 to learn how to cook. This is delicious!”



NHVH Resident Richard Webster (right) with Will Powers, of the NH Fish and Game “Let’s Go Fishing” Program

Fishing at the NHVH Pond

The NHVH pond is stocked with trout, and besides being a tranquil place to enjoy a lazy summer afternoon, it can often generate a lot of excitement for our residents. Being outdoors in the fresh air and retelling stories of “the one that got away” can be as much fun as actually catching a fish! Best of all, when a resident catches a fish, our food service staff will cook it and clean it, so the resident can enjoy a special treat for dinner that evening.

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NHVH Resident David Pryor happily plays the piano in the Great Room/Town Hall

Table and Floor Games

Table and floor games increase and maintain physical wellness; they boost morale and enhance community spirit. The programs include volleyball, mini-golf and bowling, (all available in an adapted structure to better suit individuals in wheelchairs), “Arizona Horseshoes,” Tally Loop, traditional horseshoes, and penny pitch.

Exercise and Physical Activity

Regular exercise and physical activity can improve mood, combat stress, help manage weight, strengthen the heart and lungs, promote better sleep, improve circulation, and more. Therapeutic Recreation is designed to help the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. At NHVH, residents are invited to participate in low impact, simple exercise programs that also give them a chance to socialize with volunteers and their fellow residents.

Horticulture

Watching a seed grow into a plant, complete with fruit or flowers, or digging a carrot from the warm summer earth are rewarding experiences. At the Veterans Home our residents have ample opportunities for gardening: planting seeds in spring, making fresh flower arrangements, weeding the wheelchair-accessible outdoor gardens, and harvesting the vegetables they lovingly care for.

Because of a unique partnership with Winnisquam Regional High School’s Agriculture Program, many of our residents enjoy horticulture activities from early spring through fall. As with other intergenerational programs, the students and residents learn much from each other—and find that they have more in common than anyone might have guessed.

Sensory Stimulation

When patients with severe or advanced dementia are not involved in an activity, they may sit around the periphery of a room staring into space. It’s very difficult for them to initiate interaction. Their lack of connectedness is obvious. The goal of a sensory stimulation program is to promote interaction.

Using props, sensory stimulation improves functioning and “connectedness” with the world. That connectedness may be as simple as reaching for a cookie, leaning toward a person who is speaking, smiling, or making eye contact with another person. Occasionally we might see a more dramatic result, such as someone who has been mute beginning to speak in the group. Sensory programming is especially important in the Life Enhancement Dementia Units (LEDU).

Our LEDU Therapeutic Recreation staff create multi-sensory theme presentations. One example might be train travel, which is very familiar to the veterans of World War II. A big photo of a steam locomotive or a caboose can be combined with a scale model of a train that people can touch, and then sound effects from a real train are added. Another type of a “memory box” can elicit recollections of a day at the beach. Hawaiian music, pictures of fish, real sand, shells, suntan lotion, and pieces of coral create positive emotions, which help people feel more satisfied, more engaged in life, have higher hopes, and even laugh and smile more.

Through sensory stimulation, a resident can feel more comfortable, confident, and safe. They can reminisce and return to a time of security. For a short time, they can become who they were—and it’s very rewarding to be able to help them achieve that state of mind.

Planning for Our Future



Rose Gray, CTRS/L
Dept: LEDU Therapeutic Recreation
Recreation Therapist I

Rose Gray has been working as a Recreation Therapist I at the New Hampshire Veterans Home for the past year. She is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire where she earned a B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation.

Prior to working at the Veterans Home, Rose worked as a residential substance abuse counselor for over two years, implementing experiential/therapeutic recreation programming as part of her work.

Rose enjoys performing music for the veterans in a weekly program she simply calls, "Music with Rose." She says, "My favorite part of working at the Veterans Home is seeing the positive emotions the veterans experience through programming and building a strong rapport with the residents."

This spring the New Hampshire Veterans Home began working on a **Master Plan**. We have shorter term Strategic Plans that have one, three, and five-year goals, but we need to look ahead to the next 20 to 25 years so we can prepare for the next generation of veterans.

These are some of the questions we are asking: What do we want the Veterans Home to look like in 2033? How can we make the best use of our land? How can we improve the quality of life for our residents and continue to make NHVH a place where people can make the most of the last chapter of their lives? How can we enhance our residents' living conditions? How can we phase in new construction along with critical repairs to our infrastructure? How can we incorporate the principles of The Eden Alternative and Green House Projects in old and new construction? What will the impact be of Traumatic Brain Injury, polytrauma, PTSD, and other conditions on the way we care for our veterans? How will the shortage of nurses affect us and what can we do to recruit and retain the best staff available? Can we collaborate with other organizations to stretch our resources?

We are committed to working under the umbrella of our Mission; at the same time we want to be responsible stewards of our present and future residents, our buildings, and our land.

The Master Plan Committee is meeting each month and has interviewed several architectural/master planning firms. We plan to select a firm, seek funding for the Plan, and complete the work within about a year from the time we receive funding. Throughout the process we want to hear from YOU. We are seeking input from everyone in the Veterans Home Community. **Our theme is "Possibilities, Not Limitations."**

If you'd like to share some of your ideas with us, please contact the co-chairs of our Master Planning Committee: Jackie Bonafide, Program Information Officer (jackie.bonafide@nhvh.nh.gov) or Garry Naughton, Director of Operations (garry.naughton@nhvh.nh.gov). You can also reach them by phone at (603) 527-4400.



NHVH Resident Vernon Vermont and his wife, Evelyn, at our Valentine's Day party.

Main Street, continued from Page 1...

NHVH has received a \$20,000.00 memorial gift and several other smaller donations for Main Street and is asking friends of the New Hampshire Veterans Home to invest in the project. Tax-deductible donations may be mailed to **NHVH Resident Benefit Fund: Main Street Project**, 139 Winter Street, Tilton, NH 03276. For more information, please contact Garry Naughton, Director of Operations, at (603) 527-4400.

A Note from Admissions

If you would like to receive information about the New Hampshire Veterans Home or make an appointment for a tour, please contact Ellen Douville or Shirley Ray, Admissions Coordinators, at (603) 527-4400.



New Hampshire Veterans Home

Barry Conway, Commandant
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Tilton, NH 03276

Phone: (603) 527-4400

Fax: (603) 527-4402

Website: www.nh.gov/veterans

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Suggestions for Caregivers

Therapeutic Recreation activities can have a very positive effect on a person's quality of life and relationships with others. People want to be active participants--not just attendees. Activities should be engaging and purposeful. Many of these activities can be done by family members, friends, or other caregivers at home or in a nursing home. A few ideas are:

- Look through family photo albums and reminisce
- Sort and/or fold towels, laundry, napkins, etc.
- Look at picture books (animals, travel) and talk about what's in the picture
- Go for a walk or a drive
- Play a trivia game with catch phrases or famous quotes
- Listen to favorite music
- Do word searches or crosswords
- Help prepare a meal; peel potatoes, prepare favorite beverages or snacks
- Wipe tables
- Dry dishes
- Shine shoes
- Watch home movies
- Watch favorite videos or classic TV shows (*I Love Lucy, The Honeymooners, The Red Skelton Show, westerns*)...
- Watch good TV channels like TV Land, The History Channel (be careful of PTSD or triggering bad memories), or Animal Planet
- Participate in community projects
- Create homemade greeting cards for men & women serving in the armed forces
- Cut photos from magazines to make collages
- Sing songs, dance, or play musical instruments
- Play cards or Dominoes
- Bake (Don't be afraid to start with frozen bread dough—add cinnamon, raisins, knead, and cook. The aroma will be heavenly!)

*Don't aim for perfection!
Remember: the results aren't nearly as important
as the joy of the process.*