

NH Veterans Home's Don Giguere Receives "Above and Beyond" Award



TILTON, NH – Don Giguere, Recreation Therapy Assistant/LNA II, at the New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) in Tilton, has received the Home's "Above and Beyond" Award for January 2009. The NHVH Above & Beyond Award was created to recognize employees who are committed to excellence and superior performance.

According to Melissa Milione, NHVH Human Resources Administrator, Giguere was

nominated by co-workers because besides everything else he does, "Don has put together wonderful floats for the Tilton Old Home Day parade for the past three years. He designs them and spends many hours of his own time creating them. He goes Above and Beyond for all the residents and the Home by doing this."

As a Therapeutic Recreation Assistant, Don starts his day helping residents in several exercise programs, such as: Tai Chi, Living Strong, or "Move It or Lose It." These activities increase physical activity, promote flexibility and eye-hand coordination, stimulate reflexes, provide socialization opportunities, improve circulation, and are fun for the residents.

In the afternoons he may work one-on-one with a resident, accompany residents on a trip, facilitate the Art Studio group, or teach leatherwork. His nursing experience combined with his artistic background allow him to offer creative enrichment to NHVH residents and provide medical support when needed. This year, with help from Giguere and Doris Nisbet, Recreation Therapy Assistant II, the NHVH Art Studio group designed and sold their own collections of holiday cards.

Giguere studied at Syracuse University to become a commercial artist, but eventually decided to pursue his interest in landscape painting. He also worked in Las Vegas, in hotel management, for seventeen years

before coming home to New Hampshire in 2002. He opened an art gallery in his home in Tilton and began working at the Veterans Home in November of 2005.

When he's not working, he enjoys oil painting and is active in the Artisans Gallery of Tilton, a not-for-profit arts and crafts cooperative. He also enjoys going out to eat in different restaurants, or "photographing our beautiful state!"

Of his work at NHVH he says, "Working in Therapeutic Recreation is very rewarding and artistically enabling. I am amazed that the older generation has so much gusto! They pursue every activity with as much energy and zest for living as they can muster. They overcome the many obstacles of aging by having flexible and open minds. They truly are a great generation."

Giguere is one of nearly 400 staff members who care for the residents of the New Hampshire Veterans Home, established in Tilton in 1890 as the Soldier's Home for Civil War Veterans. One of just four New Hampshire nursing homes to win the 2007 Quality of Life Award from the NH Department of Health & Human Services, the modern facility 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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Don Giguere (far right) with Linda LaFountain, Diane Harris, Doris Nisbet, and Dave Clark (seated) on Halloween at the Veterans Home.