

NH Veterans Home's Joan Griffin Receives "Above and Beyond" Award.

TILTON, NH – Joan Griffin, Recreation Therapy Assistant I at the New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) in Tilton, has received the Home's "Above and Beyond" Award for February 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, Griffin was nominated by co-workers because "She goes Above and Beyond by offering compassion, love, and support. She listens to the residents and provides them with the time and experience they need to express themselves in whatever way they can. She creates sensory stimulating programs that trigger positive memories for our residents." She has worked at the New Hampshire Veterans Home for nearly ten years.

As a Therapeutic Recreation Assistant I, she works closely with residents who have significant memory loss, helping them participate in programs that build positive emotions. "At this stage," she explains, "we use a mix of sensory experiences to help a resident really enjoy the moment—because that's what matters. Music, pleasant sounds, simple images, tactile experiences, and pleasant tastes or smells are our tools. We focus each activity on a theme like Country Café (with checkered tablecloths, fresh brewed coffee and homemade bread), Simple Pleasures (using a Beach theme, we take an empty box, add some sand and seashells for the resident to touch and hold, decorate the box with pictures things you'd see at the beach, listen to sound effects of the ocean or music with a "Beach" theme), Beach Ball Ping Pong (it's great exercise!), Table Talk (a chance to reminisce, using old photos or magazines, music, and sometimes we (the staff) dress up in clothes from the 1840s to the 1950s). We do outside trips too. We take residents fishing, out for ice cream, and to visit local farms."

Of her work at NHVH she says, "There's a wonderful 'give and take' between residents and staff. There is mutual respect and genuine affection. I have found 'family' at my job and a very supportive environment. Encouragement is what I feel makes the difference."



*Joan Griffin,
Recreation Therapy
Assistant I, recipient
of the NH Veterans
Home "Above and
Beyond" Award for
February 2009, with
Philip DeFosses,
World War II U.S.
Navy veteran,
formerly of Ashland,
NH, and now a
NHVH resident.*

Joan Griffin lives in Sanbornton with her husband, Ed. They have one horse, one donkey, two potbelly pigs, several chickens, three dogs, one cat, and three talking birds. She has two sons who live out West, a daughter who lives nearby, five grandchildren, and three stepchildren. When she's not working, Joan enjoys her family, teepee camping, working with her animals, snowshoeing, and walking.

Griffin is one of many dedicated 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, resident-centered care 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.

#####