

NH Veterans Home Celebrates NASCAR Week with Irving Racing's Brad Leighton

TILTON, NH – In celebration of NASCAR Week 2009, the New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) residents and staff enjoyed a visit from Irving Racing's Brad Leighton of Center Harbor, NH. Leighton visited with residents at the Home, signed autographs, and distributed "Matchbox" style models of the No. 55 Irving Oil-sponsored car that he will be driving in Loudon. Leighton has a chance to add to an already stellar record at New Hampshire Motor Speedway this week when he heads to the track September 18-19 for a double-header weekend that includes competing in the NASCAR Camping World Series East and ACT Invitational races. Leighton has eight wins in 38 starts at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in the NASCAR Camping World Series East, and has been looking to add to that total since he last won there in 2003. He's led over 600 laps at New Hampshire Motor Speedway, and is always a fan-favorite for the win.

Later in the week the Veterans Home's Tarr South Dining Room as well as dining rooms in the Welch Unit and the Life Enhancement Dementia Unit will be decorated with scores of colorful balloons and NASCAR memorabilia. NHVH staff and residents will wear t-shirts and hats with names, numbers, and images of well-known race car drivers, cars, and teams. Thanks to the generosity of Irving Oil Racing and the Leightons, NHVH residents will each have their own "Irving Racing" T-shirt.

"A lot of our residents really enjoy following the NASCAR races," said Tracy Mertz, LMNA (Licensed Medical Nursing Assistant) II and Tarr South Ward Clerk, who, along with co-workers Lisa Nile, LNA III; Rebecca Ladd, LNA II and Welch Unit Ward Clerk; and Maegan LaDuke, LNA II and Tarr North Ward Clerk, helped organize the event. "The residents have their favorite drivers and enjoy everything about the races, so this week's events will bring the spirit of NASCAR racing to the Veterans Home."

NASCAR Day is just one of many special days at the New Hampshire Veterans Home. Lynn Hilbrunner, Food Service Director, works with Dietitian Linda Horace, the Alternative Dining Committee, the NHVH

Therapeutic Recreation staff, and many others to make the events more memorable. "It's a real team effort!" Hilbrunner says. "Creating a menu similar to the one you might have at the racetrack or other sporting event contributes to the experience. On NASCAR Day (September 17) this year we'll serve hamburgers, chicken tenders, and steak fries along with assorted drinks and novelty ice cream. Events like NASCAR Day, the World Series, the Superbowl, the Celtics games, the annual Lobster Bake, summer barbecues, and Oktoberfest give us lots of reasons to celebrate."

The New Hampshire Veterans Home was 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 first Quality of Life Award from the NH Department of Health & Human Services, the modern facility is home to 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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PHOTO: Irving Racing's Brad Leighton (left) enjoys talking cars with NHVH Resident Dave Albro, a US Army veteran and former resident of Laconia, who served in the Vietnam War from 1972 to 1975.