



Postings

Penacook Place Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

• A not-for-profit, community-based home •

Winter, 2007, No. 16
Haverhill, MA

Founded in 1969 as
Union Mission Nursing Home

**CAMPAIGN
FOR QUALITY
& COMFORT
See page 5**



TEE OF DREAMS Resident Lorraine Baxter lines up a shot at the Bradford Country Club.

Penacook's Tree of Dreams grants residents' wishes

Penacook continues to make dreams come true for its residents through its Tree of Dreams program. For example, Lorraine Baxter spent time golfing at the Bradford Country Club last fall, Evelyn Thornton enjoyed a serenade of bagpipes and drums, and Sylvia Eaton was treated to a private dinner with her husband to celebrate their anniversary.

Lorraine was an avid golfer when she was younger, and was one of the first women to be allowed to play at the Bradford Country Club. Baxter's sister and niece joined her to hit golf balls from the women's tee and tour the course in a golf cart.

Evelyn, who had traveled to Ireland and Scotland, wanted to experience her
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High ratings again for Penacook Place

As with all licensed skilled nursing facilities in the Commonwealth, the state's Department of Public Health (DPH) sends a team each year to inspect Penacook Place. For 2006, the inspectors again corroborated the facility's terrific reputation. Families also gave Penacook high marks in the facility's annual satisfaction survey.

Run in conjunction with Medicare and Medicaid, the DPH scrutinizes Penacook by conducting an exhaustive inspection based on federal and state

quality standards. Health care professionals, such as registered nurses and licensed social workers, conduct the unannounced surveys.

Of the dozens of regulations, inspectors cited only one minor deficiency, which had no relationship to the staff. The average number of health deficiencies for all nursing homes in Massachusetts is six, while the national average is eight.

Julian Rich, Penacook's president and CEO says that the credit for the good

Continued on p. 4

A different kind of a reunion

It's a tradition for alumni from high schools and colleges to gather with their graduating classes for reunions. Penacook Place has its own unique reunion tradition. In October, 14 "graduates" from the facility's short-term rehabilitation program gathered for the annual rehab reunion.

The event, which was held in Penacook's activities room, included the for-

mer patients, members of their families, the rehab staff, and other members of the facility's staff. The kitchen prepared hors d'oeuvres and desserts.

One graduate, George Reilly, spoke about the difference that rehab had made in his life and thanked the staff for all that they had done. He said he regretted that rehab resources like

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ALL TOGETHER NOW Graduates and staff members of Penacook's rehab department gathered together for a reunion.

From the Chairman of the Board



Howard Brown, Ed.D

To paraphrase a commercial often seen on TV: “An informed buyer is our best customer.”

The following appeared in the August 14, 2006 issue of MassAging’s *Public Policy Digest*.

“According to the most recent *Consumer Reports* guide to choosing a nursing home, not-for-profit nursing homes generally provide better care than for-profit homes and independent facilities provide better care than those owned by chains. These findings are based on CR’s analysis of the last three state survey results, staffing levels and select quality indicators for 16,000 nursing homes nationally. On average, not-for-profit facilities were found to provide almost an hour of additional nursing care

each day for each resident and to provide twice as much care from registered nurses when compared to for-profit facilities. The publication also includes a list of nursing homes in each state that *Consumer Reports* suggests consumers should “consider” and a list that consumers should “avoid.”

It was noted that “the report can be found by” going to this website:

www.consumerreports.org/cro/health-fitness/nursing-home-guide/0608_nursing-home-guide.htm

There are many (often confusing) alternatives to caring for elderly folks needing closer attention and medical assistance. Nursing homes are repeatedly downplayed, but the need for what they provide will not go away.

So if you are looking for information regarding care for a loved one, by all means check out what *Consumer Reports* has to say. Should you want further information or assistance, please feel free to call Penacook Place at 978-374-0707 and ask for Karen Tarzia or Julian Rich.



HERE’S TO 45 YEARS Sylvia and Buddy Eaton celebrated their 45th anniversary during a private dinner at Penacook Place. The meal which included filet mignon and champagne, was organized by members of Penacook’s Dream Team. Sylvia proclaimed that she and her husband had never experienced such a lavish dinner.



ANNA DELOI, a ten-year-old harpist, serenaded Sylvia and Buddy Eaton during a memorable 45th anniversary dinner. Penacook’s Dream Team organized the dinner as part of the Tree of Dreams program. Anna also performed for the other residents at Penacook.

Dream Team busy granting wishes

Continued from p. 1

Irish heritage through music. She was treated to a bagpipe and drum performance by Clan McPherson. The Merrimack Valley-based band has many connections with Penacook. For example, Bob Johnson, the band’s leader, knew about Penacook Place because his grandmother had been a resident. One of the 16 members of Clan McPherson is the husband of Mary Barker, a speech therapist at Penacook. And the father-in-law of resident Florence Blith started Clan McPherson in 1923. Evelyn’s family members and about 40 fellow residents also enjoyed the special concert.

Penacook’s Dream Team put together a memorable 45th anniversary celebration for Sylvia and her husband, Buddy. The candlelit dinner featured filet mignon and champagne. Flowers adorned the table. And lovely ten-year-old harpist, Anna Deloi, serenaded the couple with tunes including the theme from Titanic. “Sylvia told me that they had never experienced such a lavish dinner,” says Beth Torla, a rehab

technician and a key member of the Dream Team.

The Tree of Dreams program gives Penacook residents the opportunity to have their wishes come true. They are encouraged to explore their dreams and create wish lists. Local businesses and individuals often help out with expenses associated with granting wishes. For example, Play It Again Sports in Plaistow, Haverhill Beef, Clan McPherson, Central Wheelchair Van in Haverhill, and the Bradford Country Club donated the services, time, and equipment to fulfill these dreams.

For more information on how you can support Penacook’s Tree of Dreams program with your donations and time, please contact Karen Tarzia, Director of Administrative Services at 978-374-0707.

Visit
Penacook Place
online
www.penacookplace.org

Intern gains experience at Penacook

Through the years, Penacook Place has served as a teaching facility for nursing home administrator candidates. Under the guidance of Julian Rich, the facility's president and CEO, students learn skills and gain practical experience to help them prepare for the Commonwealth's nursing home administrator board exam and for a leadership position at a skilled nursing facility. Rita Nevulis has been training at Penacook since June 2006.

She worked with different departments at the facility to learn about their policies and procedures and to see firsthand how they operate. She also worked on special projects such as developing an inventory system for medical records, enhancing the dining experience, helping to put together in-service training for mechanical lifts, and assisting departments with other projects.

Nevulis is the program director for the Marquardt Nursing Center, a skilled nursing facility for individuals with mental retardation that is on the grounds of the Fernald Center in Waltham. Her goal is to become certified as a nursing home administrator and serve in that capacity at Marquardt.

"Working and studying at Penacook has been a wonderful experience," says Nevulis. She notes that she is grateful

for the opportunity to observe Penacook's systems and processes, and says its programs, such as staff orientation and annual training, are exemplary. "The staff is really top-notch," Nevulis adds. "They obviously care about the residents—and each other. There's just a great atmosphere here."

As her preceptor, Rich says that he was delighted to work with Nevulis. "We were pleased to support her training. And she was a great member of our team during her internship. I know that she'll make a fine administrator."

Hospice award

Beacon Hospice gave Penacook Place an Excellence Award in End of Life Care at a ceremony in late November to help mark National Hospice Month.

The organization chose Penacook for the honor because its staff showed "leadership, advocacy, and commitment to quality communication...in the name of caring for residents at the end of life," according to Sareen Sarna of Beacon. Penacook and the hospice group work together to assist residents and their families. Sarna also noted that Penacook's staff holds "collegial discussion regarding the care of residents and demonstrates consistent interest and participation in continuing end-of-life-care education."

Special Thanks

We are grateful for those donors who have supported our campaign and made donations to our Employee Fund.



INTERN Rita Nevulis

From the President / CEO



Julian Rich

Hail to the Staff

There are many reasons why our staff should be recognized and celebrated for the remarkable work they do in caring for our residents. Recently, we successfully completed our annual Department of Public Health Survey, and the one citation we received did not apply to our staff. In fact, the surveyors were complimentary of their cooperative spirit and dedication, something you rarely hear from a surveyor.

In addition, several weeks ago our family survey results

were compiled, and the average score for all survey questions was 4.2 out of a possible score of 5. This survey, which was completed by over a third of our family members, is another validation of the excellent work by our employees.

This past spring when Mary Immaculate in Lawrence was evacuated due to flooding, our staff welcomed a number of residents with open arms and made them feel like they were home. Moreover, the evacuation of New England Home for the Deaf due to the chemical explosion in Danvers created another opportunity for our staff to extend themselves above and beyond the call of duty by welcoming several of their residents to our home.

Please join me in celebrating the superior efforts of a very special group of people dedicated to the quality of life of those we serve—the wonderful staff at Penacook Place.

Visiting tips for families and friends

Visitors at Penacook sometimes feel uncomfortable or believe that they "don't know how to visit" residents. In the last issue of Postings, we listed some ways to feel more at ease and make visits more successful experiences. Here are some additional tips:

- **Encourage the resident to choose** the focus of the conversation.
- **Bring a gift** or a memento: plants, flowers, a blanket, or comfortable clothing, for example.
- **Watch a movie** or a special television program together.



QUEEN OF THE BALL Artemis Zazopoulos was the queen of the 2006 Harvest Ball. The annual event, which was held in October at Diburro's in Bradford, was organized by the Greater Haverhill Activity Directors and invites guests from area nursing homes for an evening of dinner, music, and dancing. Penacook Place brought nine residents to the Ball, as well as staff and family members. Artemis, who is a Penacook resident and turned 104 in January, was honored as queen for being the oldest guest in attendance.

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Resident Activity Fund

In Memory of Mavis Tuccolo
Edna DiPietro
Bertrand and Clair Vachon
Marie Mikonis
Adele and Melvin Ash

For the period through 12/06. We apologize for any omissions.

**It's never too late to become a Friend of Penacook Place.
Send your gift in the enclosed envelope today.**

Families hail Penacook in survey

Continued from p. 1

news belongs squarely with Penacook's employees. "They are the ones providing the care. They are the ones who uphold our high standards and make a difference in our residents' lives." Rich also acknowledged the support of the community in helping Penacook maintain its quality care and resident-focused approach.

Penacook's own satisfaction survey included 25 categories for family members to indicate their appraisal of the home. Overall, the survey yielded a satisfaction score of 4.2 out of 5. Among the items receiving the highest marks were "Staff responds in sensitive manner," "Residents treated with dignity and respect," "Facility kept clean," and "Staff speaks warmly to residents."

The survey also included open-ended questions and welcomed comments and suggestions from residents and family members. Among the many positive remarks, respondents said:

"There is a very warm feeling at Penacook Place. I find the facility to be the cleanest nursing home I have ever experienced."

"Everyone is friendly. No matter where you go in the building, the resident is addressed by his/her name. They are treated like a person, not a number."

"We would not want my Mother in another facility."

While everyone at the facility appreciates the glowing comments and the positive grades, they pay careful attention to the suggestions. "Our goal is continuous quality improvement," says president and CEO, Julian Rich. "And this is our most important audience. We get some of our best ideas from the survey."

For example, the facility improved accessibility for wheelchairs and walkers to the patio. And the resident smoking area is now located around the corner on the patios to minimize the smoke entering the building.

We like to share our mail

Dear Julian:

As you now, my mother has been a resident at Penacook Place for a little over three weeks. The transformation that has taken place in this short time is nothing short of remarkable.

I was so touched by the love she received on her first day when one beautiful CNA held her and sang softly to her to soothe her anxiety. It brought me to tears. All of the caregivers have been absolutely wonderful and continue to treat her exceptionally well. The caring and love that they show is beyond belief. Mother is always commenting that everyone is so caring and helpful.

When my husband and I visited last Monday, we could not believe how well my mother looked. She came to Penacook quite ill, very weak, looking terrible, and vulnerable. In just a few weeks, she looks great and has regained a lot of strength as well as her sense of humor.

Please share my pleasure and my thanks with the entire staff at Penacook. Now we know, from first-hand experience, how Penacook Place has earned its excellent reputation.

Sincerely,
(name withheld)

To whom it may concern:

My husband was a resident of "Union Mission" for a long time. (Penacook Place was founded in 1969 as Union Mission Nursing Home.) He received marvelous care while he was a resident. It's the reason why I was a patient at Penacook Place the past six weeks.

I also received marvelous care. The nursing staff was great, as were the aides, therapists, and everyone else at Penacook. You also have a wonderful chef. The food was excellent—and I put on a few pounds. Thanks to all.

With love,
(name withheld)

Names withheld due to confidentiality.



SHOWING PENACOOK'S NEW ELECTRIC BEDS are resident Doris Weiner and her husband, Joe. Donations to the Penacook's Campaign for Quality and Comfort help offset the beds' costs.

Unique program helps staff members better understand residents

Although their work can be quite demanding, Penacook Place's nursing assistants and other staff members are caring, patient, and gentle caregivers. It can be difficult, however, to truly empathize with and appreciate the challenges that many of Penacook's residents face without walking a mile in their shoes. That's the motivation behind a unique new program called the Virtual Dementia Tour.

As its name implies, the goal of the educational experience is to simulate the effects of dementia and memory impairment so that staff members can better appreciate how some residents perceive their surroundings. Participants in the program modify their sensory input for ten minutes in a supervised setting. They wear distorted goggles that impair their vision, have their fingers bandaged together, get popcorn placed in their shoes, and have loud music piped in through headphones. Then they are placed in a room and given instructions to complete a task.

"Of course, they can't understand what we're saying to them, much less do what they've been asked," says Marcia Kent, Penacook's Director of Education. "It's somewhat comical, but at the same time it helps staff members become more sensitive about our residents." She says that the program has been successful and that she plans to offer it again.

Second Wind Dreams (secondwind.org), a national organization whose mission is to help seniors realize their dreams, developed the Virtual Dementia Tour. Second Wind also inspired Penacook's Tree of Dreams program.

Campaign helps make electric beds possible

Penacook Place replaced its manually operated beds with electric ones, an improvement for residents, whose beds are now much easier to adjust, and direct care staff members, who must maneuver the beds while performing their daily duties. With a capacity of 160, this was a major undertaking for everyone at Penacook.

The purchase of the new beds was made possible, in part, by the generosity of donors to Penacook's Campaign for Quality and Comfort. The ongoing campaign is directing funds to help improve the quality of life for Penacook Place's residents.

"The driving force behind replacing our manually operated beds with electric beds is the independence it affords our residents," says Director of Administrative Services Karen Tarzia. "The hand control allows residents to adjust the bed to their own comfort level, without having to call for assistance." New pressure-reducing mattresses were also purchased in conjunction with the new beds.

"The electric beds also reduce the possibility of injuries to direct care staff who

previously had to manually crank the beds to the desired position," Tarzia says.

Penacook's Chief Financial Officer Charlie Carrozza developed an understanding of how difficult the old beds were to maneuver after he adjusted a few himself. "The new beds make tasks like changing sheets a lot easier," says Carrozza.

The total cost of the project was \$205,000. Penacook's President & CEO Julian Rich says he is grateful for the support of the community. "We are a non-profit facility and this upgrade represents a major financial undertaking," said Rich. "I encourage our friends to consider helping our residents by making a contribution to the Campaign for Quality and Comfort."

Two other local non-profits also benefited from this project. Penacook donated some of the manual beds to Emmaus House and Somebody Cares New England. Tarzia added that Penacook's Director of Building Services Bob Rawding and his staff did a quick, careful, and efficient job of removing the old beds and unpacking, assembling, and installing the new ones.

Rehab patients and staff reconnect

Continued from p. 1

those he received at Penacook weren't readily available for his father when he needed them years ago. It was difficult, Reilly shared at the event, to see how an injury ended his father's career as a painter and laid him up.

Steve Buckley, Penacook's Director of Rehab Services, says that the idea for the rehab reunion, now in its third year, began as a way to reconnect with former patients in a relaxed setting and to see how they are doing. Team members often engage in intense rehab programs with patients and develop fond relationships with them.

All of the graduates said that they had a positive experience and were thankful for the help that Penacook provided. Buckley deferred the praise, however, and noted that the patients themselves did the difficult work. "We just helped them find their own abilities."

Buckley was pleased to catch up with the former patients and was thrilled by some of their stories. For example, the rehab director said that when Penacook discharged Reilly, he was using a walker; but, he returned for the reunion walking with-

out a cane, walker, or any assistive device. Another woman transferred to an assisted living facility after leaving Penacook's rehab program, but is now making plans to leave the facility and live independently. Two generations of graduates, a mother-in-law and her son-in-law, attended the reunion together, and both are living independently in the community.

"One former patient, inspired by the rehab he received at Penacook, started his own fitness group at his assisted living facility so that he could continue exercising and motivate others to do the same. And we were delighted to catch up with a gentleman who, at one time, wasn't expected to live," Buckley says. "He's now living independently and working in the community. It's very gratifying."

Visit us online
www.penacookplace.org

LEEP makes big and small changes

The LEEP committee and project teams have continued to introduce programs and initiatives to help transform Penacook's culture. In November, for example, nursing assistants (CNAs) began attending care plan meetings. Previously the meetings, which review every resident on a quarterly basis to determine the best ways to meet his or her individual needs, has typically included only management staff.

"CNAs provide most of the direct care and really know the residents best," says Charlie Carrozza, Chief Operating Officer and one of the LEEP program's key facilitators. "They're able to add new insight about caring for residents."

At the same time, he says, including CNAs in the meetings help empower them. It also raises team building and boosts morale among the staff.

One of the LEEP program's goals is to introduce neighborhood meetings. (Neighborhood is the less clinical, more home-like term that Penacook now calls each of its units.) The meetings will expand the input and participation of staff members in helping to promote resident-focused changes within each of the neighborhoods. Eventually, the neighborhood meetings could include residents as well. According to Marcia Kent, Director of Education and LEEP committee member, the meetings will begin early in 2007.

Upon recommendations from the LEEP committee, other changes recently launched include delivering extra carafes of fresh coffee throughout the facility in the morning so that residents can help themselves to a second cup if they wish. Also, instead of having group birthdays each month, the neighborhoods in which the residents live are celebrating each resident's special day individually on his or her actual birthday. These kinds of small touches help promote residents' quality of life.

Penacook Place LEEP Program



The Life Enhancement and Empowerment Principles, or LEEP, program is a dynamic, progressive initiative to change the culture of long term care from a medical model to a more social model and transform Penacook Place into a more home-like setting for residents, staff, and family members. We report about the latest LEEP updates in Postings.



THE FROST LOUNGE was recently refurbished thanks to a grant from the **Wadleigh Foundation**.

Employees of the Month

April, 2006

Griselda Padilla, Nursing Assistant

May, 2006

Patience Mujuru, Nursing Assistant

June, 2006

Ed Brown, Housekeeping

July, 2006

Estervina Vargas, Nursing Assistant

August, 2006

Karen Marsh, PT, Rehab

September, 2006

Amy Merrow, LSW, Social Services

October, 2006

Jennifer Donovan, LSW, Social Services

November, 2006

Andy Pimintel, Housekeeping

December, 2006

Linda Schettino, Nursing Assistant

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