



November 22, 2011

NR11125

News Release

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County “well elders” honored guests at events at NMCC and Houlton Higher Education Center

Aroostook County - More than 50 Aroostook County senior citizens taking part in a program that connects them with first-year nursing students at Northern Maine Community College were the honored guests at celebrations recently on both the NMCC campus and at the Houlton Higher Education Center.

The Well Elder program, coordinated annually by the NMCC nursing and allied health department, pairs members of the first year nursing class with healthy senior citizens who volunteer to allow students into their homes throughout the semester to practice their assessment techniques. The unique program has been a part of the nursing curriculum at NMCC for more than a decade. For as many years, the culmination of the project has involved bringing all of the students and well elders together for a celebratory appreciation tea.

At the event, students each introduced their well elder and presented them with a gift in appreciation for assisting them in their studies. The attendees also heard from keynote speaker Steve Farnham, executive director of the Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, on current issues relating to healthy living and Medicare.

“I applaud your choice to take an active role in your own wellness by participating in this learning experience for soon-to-be nurses. NMCC is providing your student nurse with the skills and tools required to be a success in the professional field they have chosen,” Farnham told the elders before speaking about some of the recent changes in Medicare.

When visiting their “well elders” NMCC student nurses take vital signs, review medications, and assess home safety and general health lifestyles. Students also gain valuable experience practicing their interview and listening skills.

The program is a very important component of the first year of the nursing curriculum. It allows the students to not only understand the importance of assessment, communication or history gathering, it allows them to gain a new appreciation of all the accomplishments and contributions made by the older generation.

A total of 43 students enrolled in the first year nursing class on the Presque Isle campus and an additional eight students participating in the NMCC nursing program offered at a distance at the Houlton Higher Education Center were engaged in this year's well elder program.

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Northern Maine Community College nursing students from southern Aroostook and “well elders” they visited with this fall from the local area gathered for the annual Well Elder Tea at the Houlton Higher Education Center recently.

Well Elders participating in the program were (seated, left to right): Robert Rairdon, Esther Faulkner, Marilyn Prince, Margaret Ludwig, Anna Palmer and Donald Woods, all of Houlton; and Vallis Stewart of Linneus.

NMCC nursing students participating in the program were (standing, left to right): Elisabeth Clark, Smyrna Mills; Sharon Romanelli, Houlton; Erika Coyle, Sherman; Kelsey Martin, Houlton; Lesley McGuire, Newbridge, NB; NMCC nursing instructors Deborah Folsom and Donna McClung; Kristen Hogan, Houlton; Robert Lawless, Houlton; Morgan Flewelling, Lincoln; and Garbrielle Ossinger, Houlton.



Northern Maine Community College nursing students from central Aroostook and “well elders” they visited with this fall from Presque Isle gathered for the annual Well Elder Tea at NMCC in Presque Isle.

Well Elders participating in the program were (seated, left to right): Lois Higgins, Gary Fields, Mona Johnson, Natalie Kavin, Vera Cullins, Margaret Stephenson, and Roberta Griffiths, all of Presque Isle.

Standing behind the well elder they worked with are NMCC students (left to right): Tanya Rosten, David Shemkovitz, Kim Tompkins, Shari Hole, and Jennifer Crawford, all of Presque Isle; Christina Babcock-Bell of Mapleton; Lisa Scott of Mars Hill; and Brenda Maddocks of Limestone.



Northern Maine Community College nursing students from central Aroostook and “well elders” they visited with this fall from the greater Presque Isle area gathered for the annual Well Elder Tea at NMCC in Presque Isle.

Well Elders participating in the program were (seated, left to right): Sandra McHatten of Castle Hill, Warren Robbins of Easton, Madeline Wilcox of Mapleton, Patricia Glidden and Rena Kearney of Mars Hill, and Evelyn Flanagan of Washburn.

Standing behind the well elder they worked with are NMCC students (left to right): Clarissa Lane, Mapleton; Joan Mendoza, Washburn; Crystal Laster, Mapleton; Faye Kimball, Westfield; Sasha Grass, Mars Hill; and Jennica Marston, Washburn.



Northern Maine Community College nursing students from central Aroostook and “well elders” they visited with this fall from the Caribou area gathered for the annual Well Elder Tea at NMCC in Presque Isle.

Well Elders participating in the program were (seated, left to right): Doris Chamberlain and Barbara Conroy, Woodland; and Janice St. Peter, Caribou.

Standing behind the well elder they worked with are NMCC students (left to right): Brandi Rossignol, Connor; Kjersti Gustafson, New Sweden; and Dayna Michaud, Perham.



Northern Maine Community College nursing student David Fernald of Frenchville (right) welcomed his “well elder” Roger Lavertu of Madawaska to the NMCC campus for the Well Elder Tea recently to thank him for participating in the program.