



UNH Student Volunteers Reunite, Throw Halloween Party For Seniors

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DURHAM, N.H. – Students in the Pre-Orientation Volunteer Experience in Service (PrOVES) program at the University of New Hampshire will bring a bit of spooky fun to some of this area’s senior residents at the organization’s reunion later this month.

On Oct. 28, PrOVES will throw a Halloween Party in the Memorial Union Building, Room 332/334 from 1 to 4 p.m. for residents of Riverside Rest Home and participants in the Adult Day Out Program run by the Homemakers of Strafford County, two organizations with whom PrOVES has existing relationships. Activities will include doughnut on a stick, bobbing for apples and a Halloween costume contest/fashion show.

Riverside Rest Home in Dover is home to about 215 residents. Jerry Reese, director of volunteers at Riverside, welcomed the PrOVES volunteers in August and is pleased to be working with UNH students again. “It’s an opportunity to get the students out of their own space and gain new experiences,” Reese said. “Surprisingly, many students had been in rest homes before but it takes a lot of time for students to get really comfortable interacting with the elderly.”

PrOVES introduces community service and leadership to first-year students through team-building and on-site work at different locations during the week before upper class students move on to campus. Participants live on campus during the pre-orientation session and become familiar with the campus and local community before upper-class students arrive.

PrOVES program coordinator Ryan Walls said the idea for the reunion was generated by students in this year’s program, and he plans to expand the program beyond the pre-orientation session to include three or four events through the course of a year.

Walls is expecting about 20 residents along with staff from Riverside Rest Home and 30 seniors from Adult Day Out, a day program for seniors who need care during the day, at the Halloween Party. Walls said it is “a great opportunity for the residents to see the student side of life.”

The seniors love to work with the PrOVES students, Reese said. “They just enjoy young people,” he said. As a result of the August volunteer session, Reese said Riverside Rest Home has invited four PrOVES students, including two team leaders, who worked on Riverside Rest Home mural to come to their annual Volunteer Banquet Oct. 18.

Allison Lane, a sophomore in PrOVES, is excited to participate in the event. Lane said PrOVES is “a fantastic program; it is always a fun week and I love having the chance to get together with everyone again.”

“Community service is a great way to get to know people here on campus,” Lane said. “It really helps in making me feel like I am part of the Durham community. It's also nice to know that you've made someone's day a little brighter.”

Lane is also looking forward to dressing up for the occasion. “I am getting my costume together. It will be amazing,” she said. “I am looking forward to sharing a lot of smiles and laughs with the community and UNH students.”

For more information on PrOVES, contact program coordinator Ryan Walls at Ryan.Walls@unh.edu or (603) 862-2064.