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December 20, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Hospitality management students from the University of New Hampshire have raised more than $4,000 to fund a scholarship that honors the co-founder of the Pease Greeters and will be used to support a student who is affiliated with the military.

The students raised $4,263 at a silent auction during the recent UNH Holiday Skating Party as part of their events planning course. The money will be used to fund a scholarship established in memory of Charles “Charlie” Nichols, co-founder of the Pease Greeters. The scholarship will benefit a UNH student in need who is involved with community service activities and volunteer work, holds leadership roles in community service, is affiliated with the military, and has a solid academic record.

A Marine, Nichols was a World War II veteran and founding member of the Pease Greeters who was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds he received in the South Pacific. After his honorable discharge in 1947, he settled in Philadelphia with his wife, Margaret “Peggy” Maguire, and raised six children. He moved back to his native Maine in 1984, and was an active member of the Seacoast Marine Corps Detachment 394.

Established in 2005, the Pease Greeters is a nonprofit organization that welcomes troops passing through Pease International Airport on their way to or from Afghanistan, Iraq, or other areas of military conflict in the world. The greeters promote broad participation by the general public in this welcoming of heroes, paying special attention to the education of school children by instilling respect and admiration for the troops through formal ceremonies for each flight.

Chuck Cove, chair of the Pease Greeters, said he was impressed by the work of the UNH hospitality management students in raising money for the scholarship as well as by UNH students who, over the years, have volunteered to greet returning soldiers.

“The students are well mannered and pleasant to be around, and their enthusiasm and patriotism are appreciated by both the troops and the Pease Greeters organization. We feel very fortunate that UNH students have decided to join us as they are excellent role models for the younger students from local schools who come to the flights,” Cove said.

“Supporting young military veterans is a wonderful way to thank the patriotic American men and women who have served us. I feel we should always keep in mind that freedom is not free, and the road to freedom is a toll road and those who are serving and have served are the ones that have paid our way. A wonderful way to pay them back is with one of the most valuable gifts on earth - an education. Congratulations UNH for attracting such an outstanding class of students to your university,” he said.

According to UNH student Emily Hobson, a junior from Madbury who helped organize the silent auction, the hospitality management students chose the Pease Greeters because “they give our community a strong bond to our soldiers fighting for our freedom, and those who volunteer spend countless hours dedicated to supporting our soldiers. We wanted to show our appreciation to them.”

To make contributions to the Pease Greeter Scholarship in memory of Charles Nichols, contact Susan Entz, director of University Events and Programs, at susan.entz@unh.edu and 603-862-1553.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.