

The Conway Daily Sun TO YOUR HEALTH

Quality of life enhanced with garden improvements at Merriman House

CONWAY — Merriman House residents and their families will be able to enjoy the outdoors in the newly finished fenced-in garden behind the facility.

Paved walkways make it possible for residents to navigate the area safely, allowing folks to enjoy the natural surroundings.

Improvements to the 100-by-100-foot courtyard/garden has been a work in progress over several years, beginning with a vision, followed by a specialty designed wheelchair accessible garden workstation which was presented collaboratively by the Mountain Garden Club, Kennett High School students and Hancock Lumber.

So began the venture to increase the accessibility of gardening to Merriman House residents.

Ethel Stafford, activities assistant helped spearhead the project, kept the momentum going, and even involved some of the residents in making stepping stones.

Having access to an outside garden brings delight to the residents of Merriman House. The therapeutic benefits of garden visits and related activities for our aging population, especially those with dementia or Alzheimer's are immeasurable.

The refurbished garden area will provide exercise



and fresh air; interesting garden projects to encourage physical activity; and visual and sensory stimulation to lift the hearts and spirits of all.

“Our garden will bring priceless enjoyment to the residents, caretakers, visiting families and friends; encourage greater interaction between residents and their families; and improve the quality of life for all,” said Sue Ruka, Merriman House administrator, vice president, and quality and elderly services.

The improvements in the outdoor courtyard/garden were made possible with the support from many local organizations including: North Conway Rotary; the Kendal C. and Anna Ham Charitable Foundation; the Connie Watson Davis Fund; the Pequawket Foundation; New Hampshire Electric Coop; and the Gibson Woodbury Charitable Foundation; and Memorial Hospital Volunteer Services. Coordinating the project was Mike Lynch of Lynch's Land Maintenance. He and his crew worked closely with H.R. Hoyt Construction, Inc (concrete walkway), and Mike Nickerson of "Albany Handyman" (fence installation). Mike's crew built new planters, prepared the site for the concrete walkway, provided materials for finish grade and seeding.

Every year Merriman House residents are treated to an annual picnic. This year residents and their guests were able to enjoy the event in "their own backyard."

A dedication ceremony is planned for the end of September. For more information visit www.memorialhospitalnh.org.