

A place for vets in need of care

Facility provides host of services to Niagara County residents, including health care



Mahmoud Elabed of Buffalo, right, and Sandra Charles of Niagara Falls stand by their recently painted pumpkins, an art project and part of the program at GuildCare, which is now seeking veterans to apply for the adult day health care program.

BY MICHELE DELUCA
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Fessor Lee Thomas Jr. wants area veterans to know there's a great place for them to come if they are in ill health and need care during the day.

Thomas has been attending the GuildCare Adult Day Health Care Program in Niagara Falls since he had a stroke several years ago. He's better now but enjoys every day he spends at the center where there are activities, friendships and breakfast and lunch offered — along with the monitoring of his health.

The GuildCare program is provided by the nonprofit Lighthouse Guild and focuses on clients with vision impairment, providing those like Thomas with somewhere to go during the day. Located in both Buffalo and Niagara Falls, GuildCare is the only adult day care program in Niagara County using a medical model, as compared to a social model of day care.

The difference between social and medical models of day care is that the medical model provides medical staff, including registered nurses, occupational therapists, speech therapists and nutritional



PHOTOS BY MICHELE DELUCA/STAFF

Fessor Lee Thomas Jr. wants area vets to know that there's a great place for them to come if they are in bad health and need care during the day. The GuildCare Adult Day Health Care Program is located at 4520 Military Road, Niagara Falls and serves veterans throughout Niagara County.

therapists.

The attendee must be vision-impaired but the guidelines are wide, according to Terresa Olenick, RN, director of GuildCare in Niagara Falls, which is located at 4520 Military Road.

During a recent weekday, about 40 people enjoyed the music of an entertainer in the cafeteria while several program attendees took time out to speak on how much

they enjoyed attending one to six times a week.

"The people who are here all have a medical need, cardiac patients who are not able to take care of themselves," Olenick said.

GuildCare, which was originally on Pine Avenue for about 10 years, moved to a new building at 4520 Military Road about 10 years ago.

People who are diabetics or cardiac patients, especially those

who need care during the day, may qualify to attend.

Beyond entertainment, the activities offered include arts and crafts, various group meetings on a variety of topics, and fitness activities like games like Wii bowling, modified basketball and even modified bean bag toss. Other services include vision rehabilitation therapy; medication management, counseling and assistance with

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managing Medicaid. There is also a van service available to transport participants to and from their homes.

GuildCare has long served the community and now is seeking veterans to apply for the program.

"We were recently awarded a contract in September for the VA (Veterans' Administration). They closed their adult daycare program," Ole-nick said. The closed program, located in Amherst served veterans throughout the region including Niagara County.

Thomas, 57, attends Monday through Friday and every other Saturday, after signing up to attend the program because of double vision due to his stroke.

He's a sort of ambassador for GuildCare because after his stroke, he battled depression and the program changed that. "It lifted me up and made me smile again," he said.

Mahmoud Elabed of Buf-

falo happily attends the program, especially because it gets him out of the house and fills his day with activities. "I enjoy it all," he said.

Elabed qualifies for the program because he has a condition called binocular vision. He's been attending since 2015. He especially likes that attending keeps him from smoking. "I can breathe better," he said, noting that he also get physical therapy once a week.

Sandra Charles of Niagara Falls, 62, comes to the program three times a week for therapy for her hands and legs following a stroke in 2003. "It's very nice to have a place to go to," she said.

Other services include vision rehabilitation therapy; medication management, counseling and assistance with managing Medicaid.

For more information about GuildCare visit online at www.lighthouseguild.org or call 285-3499.

Healing hands, family ties define time in Vietnam

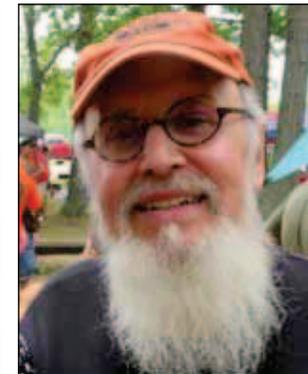
Lewiston resident Timothy Henderson, sister Cathie served together during war

STAFF REPORTS

While serving as a combat medic with the U.S. Navy during two deployments to Vietnam, Lewiston resident Timothy Henderson had the somewhat unique experience of serving with his sister.

While Henderson, an E5 combat medic, was stationed in Reb Beach, north of Danang and Thu Due, north of Saigon. His sister, 2nd Lt. Cathie Henderson, was an Army nurse at the 24th Evac Hospital at Long Binh.

During his four years of service, from 1965-69, Henderson served with Navy CB Bat-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Timothy Henderson, a Navy E5 combat medic, poses with his sister, 2nd Lt. Cathie Henderson, who was an Army nurse at the 24th Evac Hospital at Long Binh in Vietnam. Right, current photo of Timothy Henderson.

talion MCB 74 and S.T.A.T. Team 7401.

"We would often go out into the villages with MEDCAP (Medical Civil Action Program) and help the local population with doctors and dentists," Henderson recalls. "I got to deliver a baby and treat Vietnamese who were innocent war

casualties. It that respect, I suppose I was on the good side of the conflict, if there was one."

Eva Nicklas, a colleague of Henderson's on the Lewiston Council on the Arts, said serving in Vietnam while a young man was a life-changing event for Henderson.

"I have heard some of his

heart wrenching stories and seen his eyes fill with tears as he interacts with other veterans," she said. "Although our country is divided and in turmoil, Tim remains optimistic that America will endure whatever conflicts come our way, and that the forces of good will prevail."

As our Armed Forces fight to protect our freedom, we're reminded of the sacrifice made by so many brave soldiers before them. On Veterans Day, we pause to recognize and thank all of the veterans who have served our country. We are eternally grateful for their dedication and service.

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