

Sunrise Senior College Donates Patriotic Quilt



Last fall Sunrise Senior College offered a quilting class with two primary goals. The first was to teach class participants the [quilting technique of paper piecing](#). The second was to work together to create a patriotic quilt to be donated to a veteran from our community. The class only met four times but the ten members created an incredibly beautiful quilt top. The class included both experienced and inexperienced quilters. The instructors were Pauline Wood and Nancy Skala, both of whom are quilters with an interest in honoring veterans who have served in our armed forces. Ramune Dailide from Orland donated her time and supplies to finish the quilt. Ramune is a long-arm quilter and her custom quilting included stitching the words "Heroism", "Freedom", "Honor", "Patriot", "Valor", and "Pride" across the quilt.

This class was loosely modeled on the national [Quilts of Valor](#) program, a non-profit, volunteer organization whose mission is "to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor." Originally, Nancy and Pauline intended to make the quilt as part of the Quilts of Valor program, but there were logistical and time constraints which made this unfeasible. Instead, the instructors decided to have the class members jointly select the recipient of the quilt. The first idea was to donate the quilt to a resident of the [Maine Veterans' Home](#) in Machias; however, when the group learned about the new activity room at the home, it was decided, in consultation with the veterans' home, that the quilt would be hung on a wall in the

activity room or in a similar spot, where it would be enjoyed by all the residents and their visitors.

The quilt was presented to the Maine Veterans' Home on Tuesday, February 24. The home hosted a tea for the residents, the quilting instructors, and the members of the class on the day of the presentation.

The Sunrise Senior College patriotic quilt's back-story.

But there is much more to this story. The back-story is about not only giving back to the community and honoring our veterans but also about redefining community and about the positive outcomes of being willing to learn new skills regardless of our ages. Let's start with being open to learning new skills. Certainly the members of the class, some of whom had no quilting experience, were open to learning a new and exacting skill. They were also willing to work together on one project and willing to donate the quilt to an organization serving veterans.

[Ramune Dailide](#), who is not a member of Sunrise Senior College or a member of our local community was willing to donate her time and skills to making the quilt even more beautiful. Ramune is registered with the Quilts of Valor Foundation as a [long-arm quilter](#). Ramune especially liked the idea that the quilt would be donated to the Maine Veterans' Home.

Ramune said that when she finally saw the quilt top that the class had made, it was so lovely that she "knew it would need to receive special attention to do justice to the class' work." She explained that when she begins the long-arm quilting process, she starts with a general plan that is consistent with the themes of the quilt top, but as she works with the quilt, its themes and its texture, her quilting plan evolves.

In talking about this project, Ramune shared a story that further clarified her willingness to help. Ramune's husband served in the US Navy and was stationed at the former Cutler base in the early 1980's. At that time, Ramune saw an advertisement for an adult education class in quilting being offered in Machias. She took the class, taught by Marion Bagley, a skilled instructor who set very high standards. Ramune credits Marion Bagley with providing a strong foundation for the quilting that Ramune has done for so many years afterwards. Helping with a project that would honor veterans in Machias seemed especially fitting since Machias was where her quilting began.

Many thanks to Nancy Skala, Pauline Wood, Ramune Dailide and all the members of the class for their fine work and generosity. X

Submitted by – Jackie Lowe, Sunrise Senior College