



One Sky Community Services, Inc.

755 Banfield Road | Suite 3 | Portsmouth | New Hampshire | 03801

Phone: (603) 436-6111 | Voice/TDD: (800) 660-4103

Fax: (603) 436-4622 | Visit us online: [www.oneskyservices.org](http://www.oneskyservices.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Bartlett, NH**

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### **SEABROOK WOMAN WINS STATEWIDE HOME PROVIDER AWARD**

Seabrook resident Gloria Peel has been chosen “Home Provider of the Year” by the N.H. Council on Developmental Disabilities. The first-of-its-kind award was given out by the Council on Saturday night at an awards ceremony at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Direct Support Professionals Conference at the Grand Summit Hotel and Conference Center in Bartlett. “An independent review panel selected Gloria from a pool of the top twenty home providers in the state of N.H.,” said Council director David Ouellette. “I have known Gloria for years and am thrilled to see her recognized for her exceptional work!” The award includes a citation from N.H. Governor John Lynch, a plaque and a check for five hundred dollars.

For more than fifteen years, Peel has shared her home with housemates with intellectual disabilities. She facilitates their inclusion in local activities by studying their likes and dislikes and following their lead in what activities to choose. On any given day, she and a housemate or two may be found at the public library or walking in a park or on the beach, watching birds. In springtime, she moves her household to a summer home in a wooded campground in Exeter, where all enjoy an outdoor pool and friends who return each year.

Peel raised eight children and has eighteen grandchildren. A hallmark of her home providership is longevity: her housemates move in and stay for good. “Providing a home for people with disabilities is never a job to me, we are a family unit,” said Peel. “To my kids, they’re like aunts and uncles. If something happened to me, my children would be here in a heartbeat for them.” Peel has provided a home for two people who were institutionalized as children at the Laconia State School, where they lived, neglected, for decades. “When my husband died a few years ago, they were my reason to get up every morning,” recalls Peel. “It’s so wonderful that they are truly part of our community now.” And when one man who lived in her home was diagnosed with terminal cancer, Peel asked the Red Cross to persuade the U.S. Army to permit her son to return home from Afghanistan to make a final farewell.

Earlier this month, Peel received the Bruce and Nancy Walker Award for home providership at the annual banquet of One Sky Community Services, the ‘Area Agency’ of Upper Rockingham County that provides services for people with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders. The award was named after Bruce and Nancy Walker of Fremont, who opened their home and family life to people with disabilities for more than twenty years, before their untimely deaths in 2007. Gloria Peel is on the staff of Living Innovations Support Services and Home Care.

**For more information, contact:** Eliza Hobson One Sky Community Services  
755 Banfield Rd. Suite 3, Portsmouth NH 03801  
**Phone:** (603) 436-6111 **Email:** [e.hobson@oneskyservices.org](mailto:e.hobson@oneskyservices.org)