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## Congressman Lance, legislators celebrate horticultural therapy on life of senior



Congressman Leonard Lance, in honor of Lorraine Galbraith, senior resident, 89, of Oldwick, flew The American Flag over The U.S. Capitol and presented her with the American Flag at event celebration arranged by Laura DePrado, Final Touch Plantscaping, LLC., at Melick's Farm The Senate and Assembly, awarded a Citation signed by District 23 legislators. Senator Michael Doherty, Assemblymen John DiMaio, and Erik Peterson, and Hunterdon County Freeholder Director, John King, presented Proclamation to Lorraine, on behalf of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Pictured (back row, from left) New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Assistant Secretary, Alfred Murray, Peter Melick, Hunterdon County Sheriff, Fred Brown, Oldwick Chief of Police, Thomas Holmes, Hunterdon County Director of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, John King, Assemblymen John DiMaio, District 23, George Melick, Frank Whittlesey, Legal Guardian; (second row, from left) Joan Biondi, District 23, John Melick, Norma Melick, Laura DePrado, Final Touch Plantscaping, LLC; Congressman Leonard Lance; (front row, from left) Doris "Dee" Zampeña, E.A. Boniakowski Insurance, Lorraine Galbraith, Dylis Adjeley, Caregiver. (photo courtesy of Jenny DePrado)

Congressman Leonard Lance, in honor of Oldwick Senior resident, Lorraine Galbraith, age 89, wheelchair bound, socially isolated, with history of strokes, and diagnosed with dementia, flew the American Flag over the U.S. Capitol, and presented her with the flag at Melick's Town Farm in Oldwick at a celebration of the benefits of 300 Horticultural Therapy sessions and the impact "HT" has on her life enhancement, and will to live.

The Senate and General Assembly, awarded a Citation signed by District 23 Legislators, Senator Michael Doherty, Assemblymen, John DiMaio and Erik Peterson which read, "For her extraordinary dedication, determination, commitment, success and support for

Horticultural Therapy and participation in 300 sessions, which she embraced, and has allowed her life enhancement, meaning and connections."

Hunterdon County Freeholder Director, John King, presented Proclamation on behalf of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. They were joined by NJ Department of Agriculture, Assistant Secretary, Alfred Murray, Hunterdon County Sheriff Fred Brown, and Tewksbury Police Chief, Thomas Holmes, George and Norma Melick, Sons, Peter and John, Frank Whittlesey, Legal Guardian, and Laura DePrado, President, Final Touch Plantscaping, LLC, Registered Horticultural Therapist.

DePrado specializes in connecting people and plants throughout the state, coordinated the event. She started working with Lorraine in May 2013, achieving 300 sessions, and more than 1,600 hours together with Lorraine. The activities took place in her indoor "garden" she grew with plants at every stage of development. She is getting nature inside. She has created countless flower arrangements, propagated plants by cuttings, and division, started plants of vegetables, herbs and annuals from seed, drying flowers, caring for indoor house plants, both flowering and non-flowering, enjoying and responding to blooms, colors, fragrances, anticipating things to come. She is nurturing dozens of plants.

Every session is customized with goals, a planned activity, or activities, activities completed, documented objectives and outcomes and recommended activities for the next session. Every session now begins with a sensory stimulating "warm up" to engage her mind, her muscles, her expression and communication, and her senses. She feels safe. She is empowered every step in the customized program process. She is successful. She is proud."

On May 11, Governor Chris Christie signed into law Senate and Assembly Joint Resolutions, SJR12 Bateman-Vitale, AJR13, Simon-Vanierie-Huttle, designating the third week of March beginning 2016 as "Horticultural Therapy Week," to raise awareness about the importance of Horticultural Therapy in improving the quality of life for all participants, children through seniors at many of stages of life. The New Jersey Board of Agriculture and the 120 delegates to the Agriculture Convention have formally supported by way of 2013, 2014 "HT Resolutions."

"The NJDA enjoys a wonderful partnership with Horticultural Therapists and their programs. Through these programs' efforts, the benefits of agriculture have been brought to the lives of people who otherwise would not have a means to connect with plants," said Murray.

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