

Homelake Crier



Colorado Department of Human Services
people who help people
www.colorado.gov/cdhs/veteranshomes



FALL 2011

Homelake rehabilitation services help veteran's wife get back on her feet after knee surgery

The decision to undergo knee replacement surgery can be a difficult one for anyone, but in particular for an older person.

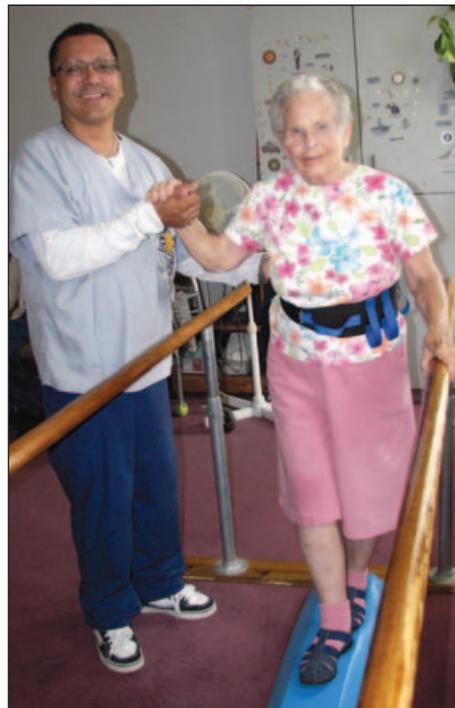
But Eunice Harris is not your average "older person." The 81-year-old San Luis Valley resident has been active throughout her life, enjoying tennis, miniature golf, biking and roller-skating. And 13 years ago, she was the first customer to join the "Curves" fitness center in Alamosa.

But it was when she was in college at Florida State University in Tallahassee that she did what few people would ever imagine doing—she joined the circus! While completing a bachelor's degree with a double major in social work and elementary education, she also served in the university's circus, performing aerial acrobatics twirling on a rope some 30 feet in the air.

Her comments about this feat are modest and understated.

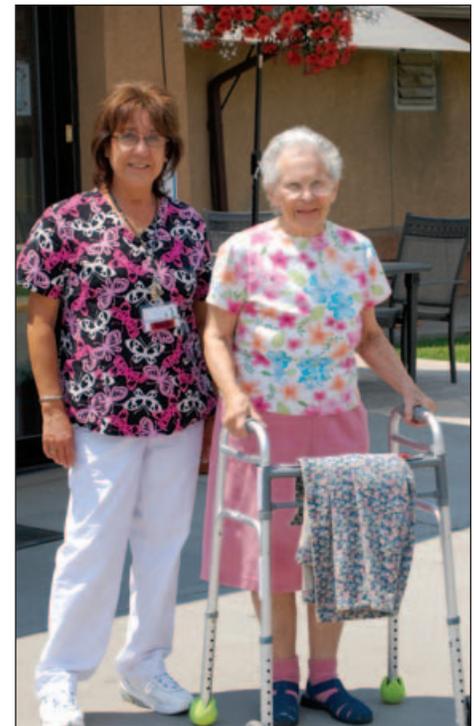
"It was fun," she said. "And I got physical education credits."

In addition to performing with the university's circus, Eunice then taught kindergarten through third grades in



Gerry Olivas, a Homelake rehabilitation team member, helps Eunice Harris improve her strength and balance in preparation for returning home after knee surgery.

Florida; at an American School Covange, France; and in Monte Vista. Eunice and her husband, Harold Harris, moved from Florida to Alamosa in 1970 so that Harold could teach geography and earth science at Adams State College. Eunice



Certified Nursing Assistant Theresa Rincon accompanies Eunice Harris as she leaves Homelake to return home after receiving rehabilitation services.

also completed a master's degree in elementary education at the college.

So when the well-educated, fitness-oriented former circus performer began experiencing too much knee pain and stiffness, she wanted to do

(Rehab continues on page 3)

Homelake celebrates 10th Annual Summerfest

On a beautiful September morning, Homelake residents enjoyed friendship and camaraderie with many supporters, including members of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the DAV Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and VFW Auxiliary, American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart and other community organizations.



Administrator Mindy Montague and Suki, a Homelake resident, enjoy a miniature pony during Summerfest 2011.

After two domiciliary residents performed a flag raising ceremony, residents visited the booths and caught up with old friends, many of whom have been coming to Homelake for years. Residents received clothing, books, candy, writing supplies and other gifts. Monetary donations were also made to the Occupant Benefit Fund. In the past, these funds have been used to purchase gardening supplies, outdoor patio furniture and other items.



Local Amish boys give pony cart rides to Summerfest participants including Devon Montague (left), daughter of Administrator Mindy Montague; and Bella Anderson (toddler), daughter of Activities Director Melanie Squire.

Please help us limit residents' exposure to flu

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. Experts advise healthcare workers and anyone 50 or older to get a flu vaccination as early as possible.

Crystal Gallegos, Homelake's Director of Nursing states, "Our residents are very vulnerable to influenza, so it is very important for staff, community members and family members to get flu shots before coming to visit."

Frequent hand washing helps limit exposure, and anyone with flu-like symptoms is advised to remain at home. So please consider getting your flu shot before visiting Homelake. It may protect both you and others from getting sick.



Director of Nursing Crystal Gallegos, gives a flu shot to Sandra Herndon, registered nurse.

Homelake passes Veterans Affairs' survey with flying colors

The hard work of the administration and staff has paid off at the Colorado State Veterans Center at Homelake. The facility has met all requirements for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) on-site survey and financial audit, which were conducted in 2010 and 2011.

The annual surveys for the nursing home and domiciliary center showed that all 231 standards were met, with no deficiencies found.

Tell us how we are doing

It is the time of year when the independent research firm My InnerView sends surveys to Homelake staff, residents and family members to get your opinions on the care and services we provide. You should have received your survey by now.

Last year, staff said they wanted more training on dealing with residents with dementia. We have since brought in a team from the Colorado State Veterans Home at Fitzsimons to lead dementia training for 17 employees, and we now have two Homelake staff who can give the dementia training themselves.

We use the information you provide to improve our services, so please tell us how we are doing!

(Rehab continued from page 1)

whatever she could to remain as active as possible. For her, that meant surgery and rehabilitation.

She chose the Colorado State Veterans Center at Homelake for her rehabilitation. Over several years, Eunice had developed a positive impression of the facility based on events she had attended with Harold, a veteran who served in the infantry in the 1950s and 1960s. On a more personal basis, Eunice also became more familiar with Homelake after Mr. Harris was admitted to the nursing home last April.

“I think it’s a beautiful facility,” she said. “Everyone seems happy and helpful, and the staff knows everyone by name.”

So when she had her surgery at the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center in Alamosa on June 6, she entered Homelake for rehabilitation services three days later.

Eunice worked with Homelake physical therapists for about two hours per day, three days a week. She built the upper body strength necessary to use a walker and developed the mobility and strength required to improve use of her knee.

She said she liked the food served at Homelake and the fact that family members could come and enjoy a meal with her and her husband. In addition, she enjoyed singing old songs in the music group, playing bingo and making new friends.

“Many other nursing homes are smaller and don’t have all the activities that Homelake offers,” she added.

One short month after she began rehab at Homelake, she was strong enough to go home. Homelake staff and their contracted therapists helped develop an aftercare plan, which included about three weeks of home-based rehabilitation.

Now on her own, Eunice remains dedicated to reaching her full capacity, exercising twice a day and continuing to improve.

She also has reached one of her goals—to become strong enough to again start exercising at Curves.

She credits the help she received at Homelake for helping her start down the road to recovery.

“It’s a great place for rehab,” she said.

COLORADO STATE VETERANS CENTER AT HOMELAKE

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veteranshomes/homelake](http://www.colorado.gov/cdhs/veteranshomes/homelake)

Our Mission

Under the direction of the Colorado Department of Human Services, the mission of the Division of State Veterans Nursing Homes is to honor and serve our nation’s veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Parents by creating opportunities for meaningful activity, continued growth and feelings of self-worth in resident-centered long-term care and supportive living environments.

Our Vision

Our vision is that residents experience compassion, dignity and companionship in communities filled with life, love and laughter.

Key Staff

Mindy Montague:

Nursing Home Administrator

Crystal Gallegos: Director of
Nursing, Nursing Home

Dorothy Chambers:

Dietary Manager

Christa Davis: Business Manager

John Anderson:

Social Services Manager

Rhonda Magnuson:

Health Information Manager

Chris Paradisa:

Physical Plant Manager

Melanie Squire:

Activities Director

Pam Self: Admissions and

Community Relations

Marketing Director

Tracy Vargas: Assistant Director of
Nursing, Domiciliary

Rehabilitation Team: Janice

Richardson, RN; Francis Gallegos,

CNA; and Geronimo Olivas, CNA

Homelake gardens benefit from Veterans Trust Fund Grant and residents' hard work

"I sit in my garden, gazing upon a beauty that cannot gaze upon itself. And I find sufficient purpose for my day."

—Robert Brault

We have expanded our gardening program in large part due to a Veteran's Trust Fund grant we received in 2010. The grant allowed us to construct raised concrete garden beds accessible by wheelchair, so daily chores are made much easier simply by "pulling up a chair."

Third- to fifth-grade children from the Monte Vista Kid's Connection, an after-school summer program, came to the Veterans Center every week this past spring and helped in our gardens. They worked together with residents to clean out all of our beds and plant flowers in our planters and vegetables in the garden. The benefit was much greater than just preparing the gardens, as the friendships made and stories shared benefited both young and old alike.



Residents Don Weed and John Pinkney, along with children from the Monte Vista Kid's Connection, help prepare the garden beds for planting.

Residents Travis Seyfried and Ellen Simpson have taken on daily chores of watering, pulling weeds and harvesting produce. Residents enjoyed fresh herbs, zucchini, yellow squash, lettuce, radishes, peppers, turnips, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes and cabbage.

We have also received generous donations of many gardening



Residents Travis Seyfried and Ellen Simpson harvest some of the garden's bounty.

supplies such as rakes, shovels, topsoil, seeds and plants from community and veterans organizations. Plans are already being made for organizing next year's gardens and for recruiting more help.

COLORADO STATE VETERANS HOME AT HOMELAKE

Caring communities that honor America's heroes!



Assisted living-like cottages (Domiciliary)

- 24-hour emergency coverage and 11-hour/day nursing care provided
- Private pay and VA accepted
- Serving veterans, spouses/widows/widowers and Gold-Star Parents
- All-inclusive individual rate covers medications, oxygen, meals, activities, medical transportation and physical therapy

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