

## WENDY FRENCH - A FATHFUL 4-H VOLUNTEER

(WINNER OF THE ANNETTE SCHMITT UNSUNG HERO AWARD AT JANUARY 2007  
BELKNAP COUNTY CONVOCATION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

### Comments from the presentation by Judge Willard Martin,, Juvenile Judge at the Laconia District Court:

This year's recipient is being honored as a teacher, mentor, role model, innovator, and hardworking friend of children and youth in Belknap County. This year's recipient is a longtime volunteer with 4-H, one of America's oldest youth development programs.

The accomplishments of this year's Schmitt winner are both wide and deep, both quiet and generous, and probably go unnoticed except by those many youth who have been affected, their parents, and the dozens of other adults who work side-by-side with this unassuming volunteer.



Judge Willard Martin presents the 2007 Schmitt UnSung Hero Award to Wendy French of Northfield.

I would first like to tell you a few things that you may not realize about the 4-H program. Begun as a formal program for youth 105 years ago in January of 1902, it is a genuine, 100 percent American idea developed initially to provide opportunities in leadership and skill development for children and youth in rural

areas. Today, 4-H is one of the largest youth programs in America with more than a half million volunteers working with 6.5 million young people, ages 5-19, on an array of positive activities that promote "learning by doing". Children and youth from *every* demographic, in *every* state in the Union, and in more than 80 countries around the

world meet together in families, in neighborhood and community clubs, in school-based, after-school, camp, and in military settings worldwide.

4-H is the only youth development program with direct access to technological advances from university research through its association with 106 land-grant universities such as the University of New Hampshire.

This year's Schmitt UnSung Hero has spent close to 20 years as a 4-H volunteer here in Belknap County.

When this year's Schmitt winner and her husband moved to the Lakes Region a

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Wendy French talks about her volunteer experiences after receiving the Schmitt UnSung Hero Award.

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independence

in their two young daughters saw 4-H with its emphasis on family and community, as a natural step in this direction. So this year's winner started the Tilton-Northfield Pines 4-H Club and quickly enrolled 23 children, including their own daughters.

Over the years, she has taught such activities as cooking, sewing, crafts, gardening, food preservation, and public speaking. When a youth wanted to learn how to pound nails and wield a saw, she took the time to learn woodworking so she could be a better mentor.

In addition to her numerous other responsibilities that have included home schooling her two young daughters who are now adults, and now a full-time job in Concord - all while meeting the challenges of her family's health - she has always had time for 4-H.

Listen to what others say of this year's honoree:

- ♦ She is a key volunteer leader in the Belknap County 4-H program
- ♦ She is always so very dependable; she never lets us down
- ♦ Over the past 20 years, she has volunteered in just about every possible capacity that 4-H provides
- ♦ Everything she does is always "with a smile". When asked to help out, she always says, "I'll be glad to!"
- ♦ She has a keen interest in communication skills and works with youth to develop their presentation skills through exhibits and public speaking
- ♦ She has used her wonderful talents in communication and mediation in leading a team of volunteers to build the capacity of the 4-H Fair Association, the group responsible for the comprehensive 4-H Fair during two days in August on the 4-H Fairgrounds in Belmont

This year's winner of the Unsung Hero Award tells others that as 4-H has "given so much to her family," she "just wants to give back to someone else!"

Says Becky Levesque, Belknap County 4-H Extension Educator - of this year's UnSung Hero, "Her 4-H work is a true labor of love!"

And finally, from the winner's own daughter: "My mom is more action than words. She's not the type to run around and brag about her accomplishments. That is not what it is about to her. It's a rare find these days, but my mom is just plain selfless and she will give all she has to something she believes in. And...she believes in 4-H."

Please join me now in recognizing and congratulating our 2007 Annette P Schmitt UnSung Hero ..... **WENDY FRENCH** from the Tilton-Northfield area.