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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Trish Murtagh  
Development Coordinator  
(603) 766-3236  
trish@housingpartnership.org

**Housing Non-profit Hosts Annual Awards Celebration**

**PORTSMOUTH, NH** - The Housing Partnership held its Annual Celebration and Honors Reception on Monday, October 15 in the ballroom at the Sheraton Harborside Hotel in Portsmouth.

Among the honors presented was a Partnership Award to the United Way of the Greater Seacoast (UWGS). The United Way's Affordable Housing Task Force formed The Housing Partnership in 1988. UWGS is focused on finding the causes of our community's most pressing needs in order to create lasting solutions.

Sue Suter, UWGS Executive Director, said, "Finding long-term solutions to ensure vital community members, including our teachers and police officers, can afford to live in the communities they serve is a critical issue for the Greater Seacoast. United Way is proud of our work with The Housing Partnership from its inception to find ways to tackle this pressing need."

The second Partnership Award was presented to Citizens Bank. Citizens Bank has been a key supporter of the agency's homebuyer education program since its inception. The agency's Pro Bono Publico award was presented to Daystar Computer Services. The Make a Difference Award went to Professional Planning Services of NH. Virginia and David Carpenter, residents of the agency's New Hope Apartments in Rollinsford, were honored as Residents of the Year.

Stephanye Schuyler of Unitil Corporation was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award. Schuyler is on The Housing Partnership board of directors as well as volunteer leader of its education and advocacy program, the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast.

The final award of the evening was presented to Anne Rugg; The Housing Partnership's founding executive director. Rugg led the agency for nearly 15 years after its founding. Rugg was unable to attend the gathering to accept the award personally.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Peter Francese, demographic trends analyst. Francese spoke about the increasing average age of NH's population and the consequences to business and economic growth.

Francese reported that since 2000, NH working ages 25-44 are down 19,000 and ages 55+ are up 59,000. The high cost of housing in the region has made moving to other parts of the country, where the cost of living is lower, attractive to our college graduates and young families.

Francese said, “The pace of future workforce growth in our state depends on what each one of us does back in our communities. If we can persuade our towns to incentivize young people to stay here the way we do older residents there is hope.”

The Portsmouth-based agency helps hard-working families and individuals find quality affordable homes in this high-cost housing market. Founded in 1988, the agency has created 227 affordable housing units in 11 communities around the Seacoast.

The Housing Partnership provides the following services: development of rental housing, including rehabilitation and new construction, for low and moderate-income households including neighborhood revitalization projects; transitional housing for homeless families; inter-agency collaboration to provide affordable housing to people with special needs; first-time homebuyer training; housing information and referral, as well as policy advocacy and public education. For more information, log on to [www.housingpartnership.org](http://www.housingpartnership.org).

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