



LIBERTY EXPRESS



February 2025

What is the Ceramic Process? The Inside Story from the Crafts Department



By Ralph Healey,
Crafts/Woodshop
Supervisor

The Pick

When you first arrive at the Crafts department, our staff Jana, Maggie, and myself will work with you. We will help you go through our ceramic items and select the thing you want to make. Then you will work on sanding, scraping,

and shaping the product to set it up just the way it needs to look.

The Wipe Down and Fire

Once that is done you will wipe down all the dust and put your name into the clay. We take that and fire it in one of our five kilns up to 2000 degrees Fahrenheit which takes about six hours. Once it is up to full temperature it is allowed to lower down to normal temperature over the next eighteen hours.

The Paint

The next time you come in we will help you select the paint type you want on your item. We will then help you get it painted up the way you want it. This may take several visits to get the different colors added and most of them require a few coats. During this time, you will have plenty of time to socialize with the other members in the craft room who also enjoy the company of others.

The Detail

Once you are done painting Jana, Maggie, or Ralph will help get the ultra-fine details put in for you and maybe put in the eyes which tend to be the hard-

est part of the project. Once it is done it will either be fired in the kiln a second time, or it may be sealed using a triple gloss sealant.



Ceramics placed in the kiln and ready to be fired.

The Grand Finale

Once your product is completed you have the choice to take it back to your room and display it. Or you can take the item and give it away to family or friends as a gift. A home-made item makes a great gift for kids, grandchildren, spouses, siblings, or family friends. These make good birthday gifts, Christmas Gifts, or just an, "I am thinking about you," gifts.

Another option you have is to sell the item. The big display case in front of Crafts displays the items for sale. When you sell something, we charge twice what you paid for it, so you earn a little something extra for all the effort you put into it. When someone buys the item, it goes right into your onsite member account.

Please stop on by and give ceramics a try. We look forward to working with you!

Message From the Administrator



By Dorin C. Vaipan,
CNVH Administrator

Here we are, starting a new year, and hoping that 2025 will be a good year, filled with professional accomplishments for us all as well as personal achievements and milestones!

One such “milestone” for Central Nebraska Veterans’ Home (CNVH) was to continually increase our workforce, up to the point that in January 2025, we did not use agency staffing in the Nursing Department. Of course, the hiring process will continue with the intention to support an increased number of member admissions.

Another “milestone” was something new for CNVH! The first Blood Drive took place on January 14, 2025, when 20 teammates signed up for blood donation and 14 were selected. During this activity, 13 units of blood were collected, which could potentially save 39 lives! Thank you to all participants and organizers, especially to Jo Ewoldt for her tireless efforts.

“7 Brew”, a new coffee shop in Kearney, started community outreach efforts which included CNVH. A couple of their employees, on January 30, set up a coffee bar providing free coffee beverages to our teammates (a few shown below). Thank you, 7 Brew and welcome to Kearney!



More good news! Two of our teammates were selected for prestigious recognition.



Melissa Calderon, RN, Infection Control Nurse, was selected the **Teammate of the Quarter**, for:

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone at CNVH by strictly enforcing COVID protocols, leading the facility to remain COVID-free while other local facilities experienced outbreaks.
- Providing Mock Survey coverage for all four veterans’ homes, ensuring full compliance with standards.
- Stepping up to help run another department when the manager was absent, ensuring smooth operations and accountability.



Del Miller, RN, Echo/Foxtrot Unit Director, was selected the **Teammate of the Year**, for:

- Actively engaging with members by helping care for them, delivering meal trays, providing meals, and visiting with members to encourage them to participate in activities or simply spend time talking about their lives.
- Accompanying a member to a doctor’s appointment to ensure that the provider was fully aware of their health concerns.
- Earning the respect of members through his honesty, dependability, and caring nature.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you!

Dorin C. Vaipan, CNVH Administrator

Member Council: Member of the Month - Terry Markus

Terry was selected as the “Member of the Month” by the CNVH Member Council. Terry has been a member at CNVH since September of 2019.

Terry grew up on a farm northeast of Kearney, Nebraska. Terry is the oldest of the siblings and has two sisters, Susan and Robyn. Terry attended elementary at Mac, in District 29 and then attended high school at Kearney High School. Following high school, he attended Kearney State College for Business Administration.

In 1967 he joined the United States Air Force and was a Weather Security Police. After the service he returned to Kearney State College until 1974. When Terry was a civilian he worked at a shoe store, and also at a Turkey Processing plant in Gibbon.

Terry enjoys watching television and movies, with his favorite movie being “*The Ten Commandments*”.



Terry Markus
Member of the Month

He also loves to read and noted that his top selections are the Bible and books by novelist and writer Louis L’Amour.

Games are a favorite activity of his - anything from playing checkers to cards. He enjoys a variety of puzzles, including brain teasers, word puzzles and even some trivia.

Meal time favorites are meat-loaf, spaghetti and pizza while his favorite color is red (hmm...red in each of those favorite foods!). Chevy and GM

are his favorites when it comes to cars.

His favorite song is most often heard in the month of December, with “*Jingle Bells*” putting him in the holiday spirit while he spreads joy to others!

Congratulations, Terry on being selected “Member of the Month”!

Member Council: Employee of the Month

Tasha Hamm in Nursing



Tasha has been an employee of DHHS / NDVA for 26 years of her 30 years as a Registered Nurse. Currently an MDS Coordinator, Tasha is an outstanding care provider along with a loving mom of two.

Tasha participates actively in care plans, member assessments, risk team and coordinates the care plan schedule for the entire building. Tasha supports nursing staff by educating Staff Care Techs in the moment when necessary and assists with member care by picking up extra time as charge nurse for an off shift. She has a great “can do attitude” when asked to help facilitate anything member related.

Thank you Tasha for your dedication and service to our organization.

Words of Appreciation

This note, received from Bob Suntych, is being shared with his permission. We were honored to provide care for his late father, Mr. Dale Suntych.

Hello Dorin,

I hope this email finds you well. My dad, Dale Suntych, passed away on January 11, 2025 while a member of the Bravo Home One unit. I was present and at his side during his passing and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff at the Central Nebraska Vets Home, and particularly the staff of the Bravo Home, for exceptional treatment he received while in their care and especially the very kind and professional treatment he and I received in his last hours of life. Everyone in Bravo is to be commended for their professionalism, honor and respect that was afforded my dad and my family. I can't thank everyone enough and I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart. My dad had lived in various nursing homes in his latter years, but none gave him the level of care he received at the Vets Home. He lived there the longest at almost 6 years. Doesn't seem like it though. While my dad would always seemingly have something to complain about (especially the food ☺) I know the care he received was beyond reproach. Af-

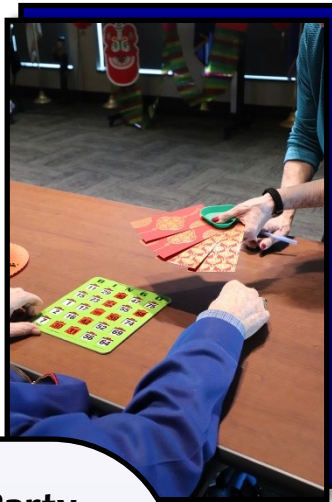


ter he passed I was afforded however much time I needed with him. I would personally like to commend a nurse with a first name of Rita (and I'm sorry I don't remember the coworker that was on duty with her the night of my dad's passing) for the very professional job they did in cleaning my dad up, getting him dressed and ready to leave the facility when the funeral home personnel arrived. He looked like a million bucks. I was very moved. I know he was very well loved there also as many staff members stopped by before and after his passing to express their sympathy, say goodbye and tell me many great stories of the time he lived there. It was very moving. Not just the staff at Bravo but the woodworking shop, Pastor Mike, the ceramics shop and every area he touched had many great stories to tell.

I'm sure you deal with this type of thing frequently but this was my dad and my experience and the staff of Bravo Home made it very special indeed. Medals of Commendation for everyone.

Thank you so much Dorin. God Bless you all.

Robert (Bob) Suntych and Family



Chinese New Year Bingo Party

On January 29th, members at Central Nebraska Veterans' Home enjoyed an afternoon celebrating Chinese New Year with a friendly, but competitive, game of bingo.

When a member would win bingo, it was a surprise how much they won for their bingo. Bingo coupons were placed in the red envelopes and the members that had a bingo got to pick an envelope and open it to see how much they won! Inside the envelope they may have won anywhere from .25 cents to \$1.00.

This year it was the "year of the snake" which is a wood animal representing growth, flexibility and tolerance. The paper mâché elephant came out for this activity. For those that don't know, this elephant has been a part of the Activities department for many years! Every year for Chinese New Year he comes out and he gets his accessories placed on him for the activity. The members always enjoy seeing this elephant!

This activity was sponsored by the ALA.



Merrymakers Performances

Did you know that we have a Merrymakers Performer come to Central Nebraska Veterans' Home (CNVH) once a month? For the month of January the performer was **John Worsham** (shown in photo at right). John performed a wide variety of music from pop, rock, jazz, and country. John is a very talented performer, and the members enjoyed an afternoon of music.

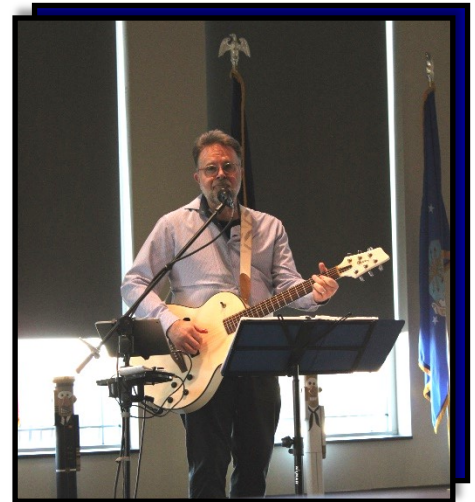


Many of us listen to music for different reasons. Some benefits of listening to music includes stress relief, relaxation, joy, improved mental health and mood. Music also sparks memories or helps recall life events. Many can recall a memory that connects them to a song performed. Music also motivates us, keeps our mind sharp, connects us with others and reduces pain.

At these performances, window blinds are lowered for some dramatic lighting and anticipation builds as everyone takes their places. When we have a Merrymakers Performer come to CNVH you can see smiles across the room, toes tapping, hands clapping and moving to the music.

We are very appreciative of the Merrymakers Performances which are made possible at CNVH by our sponsor, the American Legion Auxiliary.

John Worsham (above and right), was the featured Merrymaker Performer for the month of January.



Featured in February

Music educator, singer/songwriter, recording artist and freelance musician **Mark Irwin** will be the Merrymaker Performer.

Be sure to check your activity calendars for more details on upcoming performances.

Volleyball on Echo

Echo neighborhood members know when they see Carlie the Activity Specialist putting up the volleyball net in the living room (photo right) that they are going to have a fun morning of playing volleyball together. They enjoy this seated activity and have a lot of laughs while they are playing. During this activity, the members don't have to stand up at all to play. Members are able to use their hands, their feet or even their head to hit the balloon either over or under the net.



There aren't many rules, which usually results in a lot of extra laughs. This is an activity that the members look forward to doing and is also an opportunity for them to move their arms and get some exercise as well.

It is important for us to find fun activities that help the members to continue to move as much as they can so that they continue to have a good quality of life.

Fun Fit Fun in the Foxhole



Starting on Monday, February 3rd for Foxhole Fun, we will be offering some healthy choice options such as yogurt, nuts, fresh fruit, etc.- (free of cost to you) instead of a free candy bar.



Showing Love with Care Packages

The Central Nebraska Veterans' Home Member Council sends Military Care Packages monthly to active-duty veterans that are serving in the Middle East. The recipients may be family of a member or staff. If you have a family member that is serving, please let Jessica Modlin, Activity Manager know, and we can start sending a package to them monthly until they come home.

Some of the things included in the packages are personal hygiene items, word search books, snacks, craft kits, and cards. The Member Council does fundraisers (suggested donations) on campus throughout the year to raise funds to purchase items for the packages and to cover the cost of mailing. The next fundraising event will be **"Valentines Balloons"** on **February 13 and 14**. If you want to participate, please check your Activity Calendar for details.



Check us out on the web!

<https://veterans.nebraska.gov/cnvh>

Special Points of Interest Next Issue:

- *District 10 American Legion Auxiliary Valentine's Party*
- *Merrymakers Concert with Mark Irwin sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary*

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