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Our Father's House director receives National Grange Public Service Award

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LUNENBURG -- Barbara Garneau, executive director of **Our Father's House** in Fitchburg, was the recipient of the National Grange Public Service Award at a ceremony held Monday at Lunenburg United Parish House. The Middlesex Worcester Pomona Grange No. 3 presented the award to Garneau in recognition for "outstanding community service."

Each Pomona, or area, Grange is permitted to present the public service award once a year to someone in the area who has contributed to the betterment of life in the area.

Middlesex Worcester Pomona Grange covers the granges in the towns of Lunenburg, Ashby, Pepperell, Groton, Shirley, Sterling, and has members living in Fitchburg, Leominster, Townsend, Anyer and Clinton. Garneau, who has been active in human service since 1983, was lauded for her dedication and fund-raising abilities for the shelter, which houses 20 men and 8 women, all of whom have fallen on hard times.

Ellen Hitchings, program director for the Grange, spoke of Garneau's "ability to make a difference, keeping the dignity of individuals that stay at the shelter."

"With the tragedy of Sept. 11 diverting much-needed funds from local charities, Barbara continued to strive for **Our Father's House**," Hitching said.

On receiving the plaque, Garneau gave credit to the people on the board of directors and the people who work at **Our Father's House**.

"One of the beauties of **Our Father's House** is that it touches people," Garneau said. "It gives the community a chance to be 'His' (God's) hands and feet, and do the work."

A graduate of St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School in Fitchburg, Garneau went on to graduate from Anna Maria College, summa cum laude, with a business administration degree, and in 1999, completed the accelerated master's degree program, also in business.

She has been recognized by the state for her dedication to community service.

The Grange also presented Garneau with a collection of household items for the benefit of the residents of the shelter.