

# NHTI

Alumni News  
Fall 2010

## The Katie Bentley Lilac Project

**A**s a 1989 graduate of the Business Management program, John Bentley has long ties to NHTI. This past spring, John's connection to the College became even stronger: NHTI participated in the Katie Bentley Lilac Project.

Three years ago, John and his wife, Cheryl, suffered a terrible loss. Their four-year old daughter, Catherine Ann, died from complications of pneumonia after a brave three-week struggle at Children's Hospital in Boston. How do parents face a tragedy of this magnitude?

For John and Cheryl, the answer came on Memorial Day in 2009.

John explains, "We were planting some flowers on her grave, and we noticed the conspicuous absence of any flowers blooming in the cemetery. I wondered what kind of flowers could be planted that would look good year after year, that would require little maintenance, and would be in bloom around Memorial Day. Since purple was Katie's favorite color, the obvious choice to me was lilacs. On that day, I was inspired to plant hundreds of lilacs at that cemetery, as a living memorial to my daughter. The Katie Bentley Lilac Project was born."



John Bentley stands with his wife, Cheryl, and daughter, Kelly, after receiving a special commendation for his work on The Katie Bentley Lilac Project from Governor John Lynch.

Today, lilacs have been planted from California to New Hampshire to honor Katie's life. As chairman of the Katie Bentley Lilac Project, John is now in the process of applying for status as a non-profit organization. Last month, Governor John Lynch issued a commendation to John Bentley and his family for all of their work on the Katie Bentley Lilac Project.

**To plant lilacs in honor or memory of your own loved ones (and thereby become part of the Katie Bentley Lilac Project),** please send an email to [katiebentleylilacproject@gmail.com](mailto:katiebentleylilacproject@gmail.com) or call John Bentley at (603) 783-6779. The mailing address for the Katie Bentley Lilac Project is PO Box 269, Salisbury, NH, 03268.

### Participants in the Katie Bentley Lilac Project

- Bobcat of NH, Chichester
- Boscawen Elementary School
- Carol McKeag, Beaverton, OR \*
- Christina Broyer, San Francisco \*
- J and B Landscaping, Andover
- Maplewood Cemetery, Salisbury
- Mills Cemetery, Salisbury
- Peter Mason Alarms, Salisbury
- Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, VT
- Sheriff Scott Hilliard
- Wilfred Durgin, Andover\*

... among many others

\* private residence

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