



AQUARION
Water Company

Stewards of the Environment

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Contact:

Lorraine Bukowski
Public Relations Manager
(203) 336-7662

Aquarion honors employee for volunteerism

MYSTIC — Michael Charnetski of North Stonington, a senior technician at Aquarion Water Company's Dean's Mill Water Treatment Plant, has received the company's 2010 Laurel Award for outstanding volunteerism.

The Laurel Award is bestowed each year on an employee who personifies the company's commitment to the communities it serves through volunteerism in educational, civic and community service organizations. Employees nominate each other, and a panel of former Laurel Award winners choose the new recipient.

In addition to publicly recognizing the employee's volunteerism with the award and a celebration during Aquarion's annual meeting, the company donates \$500 in that person's name to the non-profit organization of his/her choice.

Charnetski has directed this year's donation to the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center in Mystic, where he volunteers as a general handyman and also serves on the board of directors.

"I volunteer because it is the right thing to do, to give back to the community, and helping just feels good inside, knowing you can make a difference," Charnetski said.

"The Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center was a clear choice to volunteer," he said, "because of its commitment to the environment through preservation, wild animal care, and most importantly, education for all ages. I encourage everyone to volunteer at something and see the difference it makes in their lives."

Maggie Jones, executive director of the nature center, said Charnetski's volunteer involvement extends from twice-weekly animal care with his wife, Dori, to landscaping, carpentry and plumbing tasks.

"Mike is our on-call handy man, cleaning gutters, fixing our washing machine or dishwasher, and helping with plumbing issues (including yucky jobs, like resealing a toilet),"

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Jones said. “Of course, he is always the guy we call for water and well issues. He has painted walls, installed new flooring and trim, you name it.

“Mike has removed large trees, cleared brush, raked, mowed and performed other outdoor jobs and landscaping work,” she said. “Last year, he and Dori created a new half-mile trail at the Peace Sanctuary in Mystic, doing everything from initial clearing of green briar and trees to moving rocks and create a walkable path.”

“You name the task, and Mike he does it willingly. No job is beneath or above him. If you add up all his hours, he probably does the work of another full-time staff person (maybe two!). He’s the best.”

The Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center is a non-profit organization, established in 1946, that is dedicated to inspiring and nurturing appreciation of the natural world and fostering a personal, environmental ethic.

Aquarion Water Company serves approximately 580,000 people in 39 communities throughout Connecticut. It is among the seven largest investor-owned water utility companies in the U.S., and the largest in New England.

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