

Regional News *Atlantic Region*

A Chair-itable Event

*By Debbie Eason, Chief Administration, Training and Informatics,
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What began as a casual conversation ended in an opportunity to participate in a worthwhile community event. Lorne Breen, Acting Assistant Warden, Correctional Programs, Springhill Institution was approached by Bette Douglas, the Artistic Director of the Tantramar Theatre to discuss the possibility of constructing 25 chairs that would be painted by local county artists. The Amherst-based theatre company is a registered, non-profit organization offering live performances ranging from musicals, comedies, and dinner theatres to children's plays. For the last three years they have held a fundraising auction to support their annual summer festivals, raising up to \$10,000 per season.

Bill Ettinger, Springhill's Precision Wood Shop instructor quickly assembled a group of inmates to cut, sand and assemble 25 birch Adirondack chairs. Each piece took about three days to

complete. Bill asked one of the shop inmates if he would like to paint one of the chairs. The inmate used a two-inch paintbrush to create two fantastic scenes on the wood. Incredibly, this talented inmate had never painted scenes on anything before. The painted chairs left the institution unsigned as the artist wished to remain anonymous. He did, however, meet with Bette Douglas who came to the site to thank him personally and to compliment him on a job well done.

Projects such as this build useful skills and increase confidence levels. Hats off to the inmates who so willingly participated and took great pride in their work!

In case you are wondering....the two painted chairs raised over \$800 toward the cause! ■