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Fourth of July Float Honors American Heroes

A tribute to everyday patriots, orientation student staff and facilities staff collaborate on float for Bristol Fourth of July Parade

July 2, 2014  |  Public Affairs Staff

BRISTOL, R.I. – They may not have famous names or recognizable faces, but they’re our neighbors, friends and family – and who we turn to when help is needed.

This year’s Roger Williams University float marching in the Bristol Fourth of July Parade is dedicated to “Great American Heroes” – first-responders and members of the military. A collaborative tradition among orientation student staff and facilities staff, planning begins in March, with construction of the 38-foot-long float kicking into high gear by the end of May.

Featured along the sides are silhouettes of police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, soldiers, sailors and more, adjacent to beautifully rendered seals identifying their branch. Atop the float, costumed students will wave to the crowd from among hand-built attractions like a Coast Guard helicopter (which facilities staff built from plywood and cardboard framing, filled in with spray foam, sanded and plastered – repairing dry cracks with automotive putty and more plaster – and shaped down again before giving it a paint job), a medic tent adorned with the iconic Red Cross, and a ladder propped against a tree to depict the classic firefighter rescue scene.
At an unveiling on campus Wednesday, students and staff got a sneak peek at the float, which makes its official debut at Friday’s parade, and discussed the potential for the RWU float to capture the Best in Parade Award for a fourth year in a row.