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Kentucky lawn business assists military families

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LAWRENCEBURG, Ky. — As spring arrives and thoughts turn to lawn care, one local company has taken a different approach to business, while remembering U.S. military men and women serving in far-off lands.

A Plus Lawn and Landscape, Inc. got its start in 2002 under owner John Rennels, with the idea of educating his customers on the rights and wrongs of lawn care, as he intended to evolve the business from the service of mowing lawns to that of a complete outdoor service provider.

“There was always a consentient vision and an attitude of taking the next step. It started obviously with mowing, and then customers wanted more services and we looked at those and what we could make happen at the time, and take the next logical step,” said Rennels.

Part of the company’s evolution came mostly by fate, when Rennels’ self-professed right-hand man came into the picture by way of their local church and an introduction by a friend. Chris Harvey, a native of Indian River, Fla., and Rennels attended the same church without knowing each other.

As luck would have it, Harvey’s family was – and still is – in the citrus growing business. While in Florida, he learned various segments of the lawn care business, including chemical treatments, which he brought to Kentucky working for a parks and recreation departments, as well as for himself.

A Plus began other divisions with the hiring of Harvey after he and Rennels met and learned of each other’s love for the same type of business. They also became involved with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, calling on its staff expertise from time to time.

The community service aspect of the business was something in which Rennels was always interested, and became a part of the plan with the help of one of the many lawn care associations in which A Plus participates, known as PLANET (Professional Land care Network). Rennels said he became aware of a program during a PLANET conference that would make a huge impact on his and Harvey’s personal and professional lives.

The program – Green Care for Troops – is a nationwide outreach initiative coordinated by Project EverGreen, that connects local lawn and landscape firms with men and women serving our country in the armed forces away from home. Green Care has helped more than 1,000 volunteers provide free lawn and landscape services for more than 4,500 military families nationwide.

“I loved the idea because my dad and uncle served in Vietnam and two grandfathers served in World War II, and although I didn’t have the privilege of serving, it was something always near and dear to my heart,” said Rennels.

Those interested in receiving services do so through the Project EverGreen and Green Care for Troops website. The organization actually sets up the service with member companies. While there are limits on the number of lawns any company can do, the project has provided area families a service sorely needed during a trying time.

“It has been a joy. We’ve got to know the families and even participated in birthday parties and bought presents. It’s a blessing,” said Harvey of Green Care for Troops. “A lady once asked us why we do this, and I told her that her husband could be over there taking a bullet for us. ‘Cutting your grass is the least I can do.’”

A Plus has openings for the coming season in its Green Care for Troops program. Through their participation in PLANET, Rennels and Harvey will soon be traveling to Arlington National Cemetery to participate with other affiliates from around the world to work on the cemetery grounds.

A Plus offers most types of lawn services, from lawn establishments to snow removal, to services for baseball and sports fields, but it is the desire to educate customers on the right kinds of care for them and its commitment to helping its community that sets the business apart from others. Rennels said he and Harvey are now searching for a landscape designer/installer to take them to their next level of service.

For more information about the company, what it offers and the areas it serves, visit the website at www.apluslawnlandscape.com

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