



RPC Quarterly

A Publication of the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company, Inc.

Summer 2010

Ballston Spa, New York

DELIVERING THE SAME SERVICES TO OUR VETERANS UNDER A NEW NAME...



VETerans **H**ousing, **E**mployment and **L**ife skills **P**rograms

This Issue:

Focus on our
Volunteers!

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Message from the Executive Director



Dear Supporters and Friends,

This edition of the RPC Quarterly focuses on some very special people who have volunteered their time, expertise, useful items and fund raising skills for the benefit of our male vet house as well as the Guardian House project. These folks do what they do without fanfare or recognition for their generosity; however, it is important to us that they receive the accolades they deserve.

For the past 22 years, Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company has assisted homeless veterans in their journey back to self sufficiency; most people know of our work with veterans but many do not understand the connection to the name of our corporation; often, homeless veterans and others seeking services or information about our homeless veterans programs, are unsure as to how to locate us; and finally, there is nothing in our corporate name that speaks to services we provide for our homeless veterans and veterans, in general. The solution was to create an identity - a brand name - that is easily recognized and underscores the services we provide. Thus, **VET HELP – VETerans Housing, Employment and Life skills Programs**, a division of Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company (see next page for the services that are provided). We are confident that the new name will help us expand our reach to allow us to provide the needed services to many more veterans.

As I begin my third year at SCRPC, we are ever closer to establishing the veteran women transitory home (Guardian House); in addition, we are working towards expanding our reach in assisting homeless veterans secure meaningful employment from two counties to five. We are planning, assuming the funding is there, to increase our male vet house population from ten to fifteen by the end of the year and move our administrative and housing programs to another location. We are also investigating ways to create more permanent housing for the formerly homeless veterans.

As you can see, we are going to be quite busy over the next few years as we change our direction to meet the ever changing needs of our veteran population.

A.C. (Budd) Mazurek
Executive Director

SCRPC Staff

Administration

A.C. (Budd) Mazurek
Executive Director
rpcdirector@nycap.rr.com

Dawn Perry
Finance Director
Dawn36@nycap.rr.com

Marge Brahm
Bookkeeper
Brahm@nycap.rr.com

Susan Hillman
Administrative Assistant

James Colville
Maintenance

Programs

Section 8

Robin Deierlein,
Director
Rpc36@nycap.rr.com
Colleen Smith
Don Erlenbusch

Vet Help

Don Little,
Director
vetadvocate@nycap.rr.com

Terry Clare
cmanager@nycap.rr.com

Leslie Carroll
lesvet@nycap.rr.com

Fran Nichols
Fran1@nycap.rr.com

Michael Brown
HVRP1@nycap.rr.com

Housing

Marvin & Company
marvinandcompany@gmail.com

Administrative Offices

36 Church Avenue
Ballston Spa, New York 12020
(518) 885-0091
www.vethome.org

VET HELP

Veterans Housing, Employment and Life skills Program

In an effort to better market our services to homeless veterans and to all veterans, to improve collaboration with other agencies and to bring a recognizable identity to what we do at Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company (SCRPC), we are now **VET HELP**, an operating division of SCRPC.

The following are the services we provide to homeless veterans:

VETerans – there are 121,849 veterans living in the 11 Counties of the Capital Region/Glens Falls region – 20,582 in Saratoga County alone. Approximately 2.7% (3,290) are homeless on any given night in the 11 County region. Our programs are designed to assist homeless veterans on their journey towards independence and self sufficiency.

Housing – We have a 10 bed transitory house for homeless veterans in Ballston Spa; Veterans can stay for as long as two years. We also have a 12 unit apartment complex in the Town of Wilton for formerly homeless veterans and their families; several of the current residents came from our transitory facility. We also have a two family residence in Ballston Spa which we rent to formerly homeless, disabled veterans and their families. In addition, our housing division runs the County wide Section 8 voucher program and the Rental Assistance Program for Saratoga Springs, both are avenues to help the homeless vet secure permanent housing.

Employment – We have a staff of three employment specialist who work with homeless veterans in Saratoga and Warren counties in an effort to help them secure meaningful, long term employment. We are working toward expanding these services to include Schenectady, Montgomery and Washington Counties in the near term.

Life skills Programs – We provide case management, legal and benefits advocacy, programs through the VA to treat PTSD, TBI, drug/alcohol addiction as well as medical/dental care. We counsel the veterans on budget issues, relationship building/repairing and living an independent life after they successfully graduate from our program.

VOLUNTEERS

The backbone of any successful organization, volunteers play an important role in assisting the staff and Board of Directors in helping the organization meet its mission. We are pleased to recognize these individuals who have given of their time to help our veterans.

Judy Boyce, Community Activist

Judy is a member of the Guardian House Committee and, over the past year, has single handedly brought in several thousand dollars for the project through fund raisers, sale of Guardian House pins and t-shirts. Virtually every business in the region knows Judy through her efforts to promote the establishment of a secure transitory facility for homeless women veterans.

Col. Mary Brandt, 109th Medical Group Commander and Manager of Medical Programs, KAPL
Mary is arguably the most ardent supporter of our resident veterans. She has, on many occasions, cooked meals for the vets, lent a friendly ear, been responsible for numerous donations of clothes, TVs and other appliances and has lent her support to the Guardian House project – Mary is simply an all around special person.

Kris Clements, Community Volunteer

Kris spent many hours working with our Employment team in developing a plan of action to expand the services to even more homeless veterans.

Matt Coseo, McMahon & Coseo, P.C.

Matt has provided valuable legal help to our veterans in need and has never said no to any request for assistance made by our staff on behalf of the veterans. Because of his efforts, several of our residents gained meaningful employment once Matt assisted in clearing up the legal issues.

Cathy DeFosse, Cutworks

In addition to providing first rate haircuts to our residents for \$1.00, Cathy is quick to organize a raffle or fund raiser to help fill the needs of our residents, at a drop of the hat!

Don Frame, Don Frame Construction

Don has been in the business for 35 years specializing in windows and siding, but has done everything for the Vet House from putting in kitchen cabinets to installing toilets and showers. One thing we know for sure, when Don finishes a project, there is no doubt that the job was done right!

Mark Heithaus, Graduate Student at SUNY Albany

Mark has worked as an intern for our employment program and continues as a volunteer to the program after his intern obligations were completed.

Ron Hogan, Community Volunteer

Ron has given many hours of his time helping us upgrade the male vet house to meet the ever changing safety and health codes.

Debra Kearns, Albany Law School

For the past 18 months, Debra has provided much needed assistance to our veterans on tax issues and dealing with the IRS. Every veteran who has worked with Debra has been successful in getting this part of their life in order.

Michelle Larkin, Rebuilding Together Saratoga County

Michelle and her crew of volunteers have done so much for the Vet House that we could do an article on her group alone! Suffice to say, she is a great friend and supporter of RPC.

Stephanie Mabb, Community Volunteer

Stephanie has been involved in our fund raising effort for years; in addition, she has personally donated much needed items to our male vet house and is an ardent supporter of the Guardian house project.

Frank Merges, Community Volunteer, Retired

Frank has been a tremendous help to our employment program by providing expertise gained from his employment with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Joel Mendes, Community Activist

A well known "senior statesman" in the community, Joel has been instrumental in raising thousands of dollars for the Guardian House project, as well as making many donations to the male vet house.

Ellen Riley, Community Activist

A member of the Guardian house Committee, Ellen serves as the Recording Secretary and the "go to" person for any task needed to be done on behalf of the project.

June Schmit, Community Volunteer

For years, June has made quilts for our resident veterans and other homeless veterans. As one of our recent "graduates" remarked, "the quilt reminds me every day of the wonderful time spent at the Vet House".

Doug Schreiber, V.P., American Veterans Care Organization

A major supporter of RPC, Doug has been instrumental in raising funds for our veterans, as well as obtaining tickets to sporting events and other forms of entertainment for our residents.

Trish Singer, Lexis-Nexis

Trish and her crew have proven themselves to be painters extraordinaire! Our entire upstairs living quarters receive a complete makeover, courtesy of Trish and her volunteers.

Patti Southworth, Ballston Town Supervisor

Patti has been a member of the Guardian House Committee from the beginning and has been involved in all facets of the project.

Paul Stalter, Jim Coyne & Tim Herbert, Members of Various Service Organizations

These three gentlemen, representing their respective service organizations, were largely responsible for the successful fund raiser held on August 15, 2009, which featured Michelle Paterson, the Governor's wife, as the keynote speaker. The event raised over \$20,000.00 for the Guardian House project.

Van Swisohn, Saratoga County Public Defenders

In addition to providing legal assistance to our residents, not a Christmas goes by without Van's staff at the Public Defender's office presenting Price Chopper gift cards to our residents.

Joanne Yepsen, Saratoga Springs Supervisor

Joanne is an original member of the Guardian House committee and has been instrumental in raising awareness with the larger community about the need for a homeless shelter for women veterans.

And, of course, all the members of the Board of Directors of the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company, who volunteer their time and expertise in helping to make this organization one to be proud of!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- August 8 –** The Saratoga Springs VFW will host a benefit cookout, with entertainment and auction for the Guardian House Project. For more information, contact Judy Boyce at 584-4737.
- September 11 –** Town of Malta 5K Race to benefit the Guardian house Project. Please contact John Hartsell at 867-5257 for more information.
- November 11 –** The first annual 5K Run For Freedom will be held in Ballston Spa. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Guardian house Project. Contact Michelle Taylor at 885-4459.
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Guardian House Project Update

The grass roots fund raising campaign has exceeded \$130,000.00!! ***Additional good news*** – the Veterans Administration has conditionally accepted our proposal requesting 65% of the funding needed to purchase and renovate the house in question. While this is not an absolute guarantee of funding, it is as close as one can get before the VA makes it official. Award announcement will occur in September. In the meantime, the Guardian House Committee and the SCRPC Board of Directors are working with Staff to make the necessary preparations to bring this project to reality. We are still in need of furniture items such as nightstands, armoires and bed linens. Please contact Julia Towne at 885-5858 for more information; and, of course, your generous cash donations are always welcomed.

Saratoga County

Rural Preservation Company

36 Church Avenue

Ballston Spa, New York 12020



Daisy Troop #2138 Visit the Vet House