



RPC Quarterly

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

Spring 2011

Ballston Spa, New York



The Guardian House

Thanks to all contributors in the region for the hundreds of donations that made the purchase of the house pictured above, a reality. Our focus now is to ready the property for occupancy in the summer of this year; we are still in need of furniture, appliances and other items to make this house a home.

Your continued support is welcomed!

This Issue:

**Focus on
Homeless
Women Veterans**

Board of Directors

Julia Towne

President

David Allard

Vice-President

Thomas Ratsep

Treasurer

Debora Bouchard

Secretary

Members at Large

William Bergan

Judith Craven

Joyce Dominick-Schaefer

Rocco Ferraro

Edward Gradwell

Bruce Relyea

Michelle Taylor

Lorraine Tiffault

Message from the Executive Director



Dear Supporters and Friends,

I am pleased to report that progress towards opening the Guardian House for homeless women veterans is on schedule and we hope to begin bringing women in to the house during this summer; look for the announcement for our ribbon cutting/open house ceremony later this summer, as well.

The grass roots effort to establish a veteran's women home began three years ago and was quickly adopted by many service groups and individuals as a project to become a part of; as a result, over \$175,000.00 has been raised through fund raisers and donations; in addition, a grant from the Veterans Administration for \$212,432.00 put us over the top. In addition to cash donations, we have been blessed to receive furniture, beds and bedding, everything to outfit a kitchen and dining area, clothes and many other items too numerous to mention here. Legal and real estate services were provided pro bono and many organizations and individuals have volunteered to give of their time and expertise to help make the Guardian "House" a "home".

The Vet Help employment arm has been busy establishing a presence in both Schenectady and Montgomery Counties as we quickly became aware of the lack of services available to our homeless and near homeless vets in those Counties. More on this program on page 6.

We are pleased to announce that we have a new Finance Director, Mary Laskey, a Ballston Spa resident who brings 20 years experience in the non-profit arena to SCRPC. Mary assumed this role on March 21, 2011 and has taken over for Dawn Perry, Finance Director for the past four years, who has retired.

A.C. (Budd) Mazurek

Executive Director

SCRPC Staff

Administration

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

Mary Laskey
Finance Director
rpcfinance@nycap.rr.com

Marge Brahm
Bookkeeper
Brahm@nycap.rr.com

Susan Hillman
Administrative Assistant

James Colville
Maintenance

Saratoga Regional Housing Services

Robin Deierlein,
Director, Section 8
rpcsect8@nycap.rr.com

Colleen O. Smith, Assistant
Don Erlenbusch, Inspector

Community Development

Marvin & Company
Marvinandcompany@gmail.com

VET HELP

Don Little, Director
rpcvetdirector@nycap.rr.com

Terry Claire, Case Manager
cmanager@nycap.rr.com

Leslie Carroll,
Employment Team Coordinator
lesvet@nycap.rr.com

Fran Nichols, Empl. Specialist
Fran1@nycap.rr.com

Michael Brown, Empl. Specialist
hvrp1@nycap.rr.com

Tom Harris, Empl. Specialist
hvrp2@nycap.rr.com

Jonathan Parsons, Empl. Specialist
hvrp3@nycap.rr.com

Administrative Offices

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

SCRPC PROGRAMS

VET HELP

VETerans Housing, Employment and Life skills Programs

The following are the services we provide to homeless veterans:

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. An 11 bed transitory house for homeless women veterans will open during 2011.

Employment – We have a staff of five employment specialist who works with homeless veterans in Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Schenectady and Montgomery Counties in an effort to help them secure meaningful, long term employment.

Life Skills Programs –We provide case management, legal and benefits advocacy, treatment 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.

Saratoga Regional Housing Services (SRHS)

Section 8 – SRHS administers the Section 8 voucher rental assistance programs for the County of Saratoga and the Town of Wilton, with over 250 families receiving subsidies each month. Our office also oversees the **Rental Assistance Program** for Homeless Person with Disabilities for the City of Saratoga Springs, as well as the incoming **VASH** vouchers for homeless veterans. We currently have 18 families enrolled in our **Family Self-Sufficiency** program which helps families in achieving economic independence. In addition we further administer the **NHTD** (Nursing Home Transition & Diversion) program for the Counties of Saratoga and Washington.

Community Development Marvin & Company

Our Mobile Home Replacement program for Saratoga County and the **Schuylerville Main Street** grant are administered by Marvin & Company.

HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS

Fact: Women make up 14% of all military personnel

Fact: 11% of the military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are women

Fact: Women veterans are four times more likely to become homeless versus non-veteran women

Fact: There are 68,000 women veterans in New York State

Fact: It is estimated that 1 in 16 women veterans have been homeless at some point in their lives

Fact: Women in military service overseas are in harm's way at a greater rate than in any previous war

The factors that cause women veterans to become homeless – PTSD, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse, mental illness, inability to reintegrate back into society – are common to male veterans, as well. Women Veterans, however, often are faced with other factors that contribute to the downward spiral leading to homelessness – Sexual harassment and abuse (both in and out of the military), rape, unplanned pregnancies, single motherhood, domestic violence and the fear of their spouse or significant other.

In an abusive situation, women (vets and non-vets alike) often find themselves out on the street, with little or no means of support in order, to escape the batterer. The ability to live with relatives or friends, even on a temporary basis, is often not an option.

Guardian House Program

This Program, under the auspices of the VETHELP division of SCRPC, will offer the following services to these women veterans when they enroll in the program:

- Basic needs are addressed (food, clothing, shelter)
- Benefits Advocacy – insuring that the veteran takes advantage of any services or financial assistance with which they are entitled
- Legal Advocacy – work with our team of lawyers and the Veterans Administration to address legal problems and set a plan of action to correct
- Insure that the veteran receives needed medical, dental and mental health services through the VA Medical Centers
- Insure that the veteran maintain her sobriety program during their stay with us
- Assist the veteran in finding meaningful, sustainable employment that will insure their ability meet their financial needs
- Assist the veteran in finding affordable, permanent housing upon successful graduation from the program
- Assist the veteran in re-establishing family relationships

Over the past 22 years, we have applied these same services to our male vet house; our success rate in 2010 was 87% - that is to say that 87% of the veterans coming through our program graduated successfully, with a good job or secure means of financial support, permanent, affordable housing and continued sobriety. We hope to duplicate or exceed this success rate with the Guardian House program.



Vet HELP's Homeless Veterans Employment Program

Vet Help's Employment Office continues to grow and this growth has come in many different forms. The staff was increased from two to five employment specialists and more importantly the quantity and quality of employment assistance has seen some significant growth. In June of 2010 SCRPC was awarded two grants from the U.S. Department of labor. The two grants that were awarded were a Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Grant in the amount of \$187,350 per year for three years and a Female Veterans and Veterans with Families Grant in the amount of \$75,000 per year for three years. These grants have been the impetus for our growth. It has allowed us to expand our catchment from Saratoga, Washington and Warren Counties, to now include, Schenectady and Montgomery Counties. Successful Outreach has been established with many new agencies, organizations and employers in the existing and new areas. The agencies and organizations include : the Schenectady City Mission, the Schenectady Salvation Army, the Schenectady YWCA and YMCA, the Schenectady Community Action Program, Schenectady Community justice Program, Schenectady Community College, Schenectady County One Stop/DSS, Montgomery County Work Force Solutions, Montgomery County Catholic Family Charities, Montgomery County Salvation Army, Montgomery County Centre Civico, and the Montgomery County American Legion. A Job Club has been established for Saratoga and Schenectady Counties and it is anticipated that it will produce some excellent employment opportunities for our VET Help clients. The Vet Help Employment Office was highly effective in assisting their Veteran clients in connecting with finding employment and to support this statement the Vet Help staff completed 111 assessments, enrolled 97 clients and placed 65 clients in viable employment at an average wage of \$11.63 from January 1,2010 to December 31,2010; our goal for 2011 is to place 115 veterans.

WPYX Fund Raiser for the Guardian House Project April 15, 2011 - Vapor Night Club, Saratoga

The PYX 106 Morning Crew hosted a fund raising event to support the Guardian House Project; over 300 people danced to the music of Jay Yeager and the Audiostars and perused the items available at the silent auction. Several of the items were donated by the morning team and included an autographed guitar signed by John Mellencamp which was donated by the station. A happy hour buffet was catered by the Olde Daley Inn.

(L to R) Wolfe, Lovey, Steve,
Ellen and Eddie - WPYX
Morning Crew!



Standing room only
at the
Vapor Night Club!

Saratoga County

Rural Preservation Company

36 Church Avenue

Ballston Spa, New York 12020



The Vet House