



RPC Quarterly

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

Winter 2008/2009

Ballston Spa, New York

GETTING BACK TO CIVILIAN LIFE AFTER WAR ISN'T EASY. PARTICULARLY FOR WOMEN



Joanne Yepsen, Saratoga Springs Supervisor, and Budd Mazurek, Executive Director of Saratoga County RPC, field questions from reporters at a Veterans Day press conference announcing the kick off campaign to establish a shelter for homeless women veterans.

This Issue:

RPC's Focus on the Guardian House for Homeless Women Veterans

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Message from the Executive Director



Dear Supporters and Friends,

Welcome to our second edition of the RPC Quarterly. The response we received from our first newsletter indicates that folks are interested in what we are doing as we serve the housing needs of the rural poor and the special needs of our homeless and underemployed veterans.

On a sad note, RPC Board member Herbert Tuffault passed away on November 13th. Herbie, as he was known to his friends, was a member of the RPC board for nearly four years. He was an Air Force Veteran and was very active member of American Legion Post 234, serving as its Commander, and was a member of BPOE 2619. He is survived by his wife, Lorraine, six children and 12 grandchildren. He will be missed.

In this issue, we are focusing on RPC's efforts to establish a homeless shelter for female veterans- more information can be found on page four. In addition, we will spend a few moments recognizing one of the founding Board members and current President-elect of the board, Julia Towne.

I have been on board since April of this year and have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support demonstrated by the Saratoga County Community towards helping us help our homeless veterans and rural poor. I commit to you that Saratoga County RPC will do its very best to continue to meet the needs of our clients.

Sincerely,

A.C. (Budd) Mazurek
Executive Director

SCRPC PROGRAMS

Veterans Employment

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration and Placement Program is designed to assist rural homeless veterans in locating long term employment; assistance includes, interview skills training, job coaching, job placement and follow up to monitor job progress. 885-0091, ext 208 or 209.

Veterans Advocacy

This program is designed to assist the homeless veteran in securing benefits, in developing a successful recovery program that covers a wide range of issues and secure transitional and permanent housing. This program is staffed by two case workers and a part time social worker. 885-0091, Ext 211.

Transitional Housing For Homeless Veterans

RPC maintains a ten bed facility for Homeless veterans at 36 Church Avenue, Ballston Spa, New York. Employment and advocacy assistance is available to the residents. 885-0091, ext 211

Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless Veterans

RPC owns a 12 unit apartment complex in Wilton, New York for homeless, formerly homeless veterans or those veterans living in substandard housing. In addition, RPC has a two family home in Ballston Spa for disabled homeless veterans and their families. 885-0091 ext 202.

Section 8 Rental Units

RPC manages the federally funded Section 8 program for all of Saratoga County, with over 250 families receiving subsidies each month. Program includes the highly successful Family Self-Sufficiency Program which helps families in achieving economic independence. 885-0091, ext 204 or 212.

Affordable Home Ownership Program

RPC provides affordable home ownership financial support, up to \$20,000.00, to families whose income falls below moderate income levels and who are unable to secure conventional mortgage financing. 695-3344.

Home Rehabilitation Program

RPC provides moderate home rehab, up to \$25,000.00, to qualified homeowners in Saratoga County. 695-3344.

Handicap Accessibility Program

RPC provides funding to qualified homeowners to make their homes more handicap accessible. This program is available to residents of Saratoga and Washington Counties. 695-3344.

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The Guardian House For Homeless Women Veterans

In June of this year, Saratoga County RPC, in collaboration with several concerned citizens in Saratoga County, formed a committee to generate support for the establishment of homeless shelter for women veterans, similar to the existing male veterans transitory home operated by Saratoga County RPC. With the United States involved in two wars and with women, more than ever before, involved in front line combat activities, the unfortunate truth is that these women will return home with many of the same problems facing our male vets – Drug or alcohol dependency, post traumatic stress disorder, mental illnesses, inability to reintegrate back into civilian life – as well as domestic violence and pregnancy issues.

Consider the following:

- Female veterans are four times more likely to become homeless than their civilian counterpart
- 14% of all military personnel are women;
- 11% of the fighting force in Iraq and Afghanistan are women;
- There is an estimated 3990 homeless female veterans in New York State;
- There are over 66,000 female veterans in New York.
Logic dictates that the ranks of homeless female veterans will only continue to grow as these wars wind down.

The Homeless Women Veterans committee seeks to raise funds, through donations and grants, to buy/renovate or build a facility exclusively for homeless Women veterans, to be named “The Guardian House”. The services provided to the women will mirror what is being offered at the male shelter; food, clothing, shelter, advocacy, case management, employment and permanent housing opportunities.

Our target is \$300,000.00 and our goal is to have the house operating within 18 months or sooner. Donations to this project can be made to SCRPC, 36 Church Avenue, Ballston Spa, New York 12020.

Members of this committee include: Joanne Yepsen, Saratoga Springs Supervisor, Patty Southworth, Ballston Supervisor, Margo Beck, This Old House, Patty Friesen, Congresswomen Kirsten Gillibrand’s office and Budd Mazurek, Executive Director SCRPC.

Spotlight on.....

SCRPC Board Member

Julia Towne



If longevity of volunteerism is any indication of dedication to and passion for the mission of an organization, then Julia Towne is a stellar example! Ms. Towne has been an active member of the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company (SCRPC) Board of Directors since its inception in 1983 and has served in virtually every capacity, and will serve as President of the Board beginning January 1, 2009.

A Ballston Spa native for the past 34 years, Julia raised two sons who have blessed her with three grandchildren. She is a daughter, sister, wife and mother of veterans, which speaks to why she has been a part of this board for the past 25 years – “What better way for me to honor the brave men in my life than to serve on the Board of Directors for an agency that provide shelter for the veterans.” Julia is equally passionate about the establishment of shelter for homeless female veterans in our community.

Julia’s interest in helping those in need of clean, safe and affordable housing for the residents of Saratoga County is also a passion of hers. She is a firm believer that everyone should volunteer their time for a cause they feel passionate about.

“Find something that you believe in and there is an organization out there that can use your help; if not, start one!”

Prior to joining the SCRPC Board, Julia served on the Saratoga County Economic Council from 1980 to 1992. Julia has been employed Castle & McLennan Insurance Agency in Ballston Spa for the past 18 years.

Our Reason for Being – A Formerly Homeless Veteran’s Success Story

I was Born in Auburn, NY

I joined the US Navy in 1980 enlisting in the advanced electronics program in which I became an Electronics Technician. In June 1982 I deployed to the Mediterranean during which we were deployed to Lebanon in response to the Israeli invasion. In October 1983 we were scheduled to return to Lebanon on our way we were diverted to Grenada for the invasion; after a successful mission we returned to Lebanon to assist after the barracks bombing.

Upon being honorably discharged I worked various jobs in the electronics field. I had a fairly successful life until a point during my last job, working for GE, I suffered a non-work related injury to my back that took me out of work. During a dispute between my medical provider and insurance provider I lost my job. I lived on my savings for about a year until I ran out of money. Unable to work I sought help from the County whose rules would not allow me access to help until I was evicted. At that point I was homeless and feeling every bit of what that implied.

A friend heard of a place called the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company. Having no idea what this place was, but being desperate, I called. They agreed to take me in. That was the start of my climb out of the hole that I found myself in. During my stay I received medical care through the VA that helped me recover from my injury and other long term issues that were affecting me. At RPC they helped me deal with these issues guiding me towards the correct treatment. After a lengthy stay they found a place for me in the Rental Assistance Program. This program allowed me to have an apartment of my own and to live outside of RPC, gaining back some of my independence. There was a need for some of my skills at RPC, so I was hired to do Computer work and some grant research. This job is perfect as it allows me to continue my treatment at the VA and allows me to receive a paycheck. This is another positive step; I have come a long way mainly through the help of RPC.

The Quilt Lady

June Schmit grew up in Massachusetts and moved to New York when she married. In the 1970's, she accompanied a friend that had signed up for a quilting class. Since June has always had a creative streak and enjoyed sewing as a hobby, she became fascinated by quilting and found it lots of fun. Soon she joined a quilting group called Quilts North and began making quilts for a family services organization. When contacted about making quilts for homeless veterans, June did not hesitate and readily agreed; she has been making quilts for our veterans ever since. Each stitch of every beautiful quilt is a labor of love and creativity – the veterans here at SCRPC truly appreciate the generosity of her efforts.



Special Thanks to These Supporters

Adirondack Trust Company
 American Legion Post 234
 American Legion Post 490
 Cornell Cooperative extension
 50 South Restaurant
 Help America Foundation
 ITAM Vets Post 35

NYS Elks Association

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 VFW Post 358
 VFW Post 4660
 VFW Post 8690

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