

Three Organizations Collaborate to Furnish New Veterans Facility in Claremont, NH

On May 24, 2012, Harbor Homes received a welcome delivery. Thanks to the collaboration of three local organizations, the agency's new Veterans FIRST facility in Claremont, NH has 6 newly furnished bedrooms complete with beds, mattresses, box springs, dressers and night stands, all from the Bridgman's Furniture Company of Lebanon, NH. Hearing about the new Harbor Homes facility opening in Claremont, the Lebanon Elks Lodge #2009 decided to apply to the Elks National Foundation for a Gratitude Grant in the amount of \$2,000 in order to buy much needed furniture for the bedrooms in the facility, which they received. Bridgman's Furniture Company graciously worked with the Elks to provide the furniture at cost, and also donated some additional pieces. When the New Hampshire National Veterans Service Commission, of the New Hampshire State Elks, got wind of this project, the organization provided additional funding toward purchasing more pieces of the needed bedroom furnishings. In the end, the donations were used to furnish 6 bedrooms for the veterans who will be residing at the Claremont Veterans First facility. The total value of furniture received is \$4590.

The Claremont facility is the latest addition to Harbor Homes' Veterans FIRST programming. The building will provide a permanent home to eight low-income elderly or disabled veterans. Harbor Homes provides veterans with access to affordable housing, employment services, transportation, case management, and health care. Currently, Harbor Homes provides housing for more than 85 low-income and homeless veteran households at any given time, and there is still a waiting list for these services. While only 8% of the general population can claim veteran status, up to one-quarter of the homeless population consists of veterans. In New Hampshire, with affordable housing being scarce, our service men and women are at an even higher risk of homelessness. Thanks to the generosity of community members like the Lebanon Elks, the NH National Veterans Service Commission, and Bridgman's Furniture, 6 more veterans, who sacrificed so much for our freedoms, will be sleeping with a roof over their heads in a safe and comfortable room tonight.

Cullen Downing of the Lebanon Elks Lodge # 2099 stated: "This has been a great project for all of us at the Lebanon Elks Lodge, the New Hampshire State Elks Association, the New Hampshire Veterans Service Commission and Bridgman's Furniture. We are really excited to be able to support Harbor Homes' efforts and our veterans."

Since its inception, the Elks have been assisting veterans. In 1918, in order to accommodate the maimed and wounded, the Elks built a 700-bed Reconstruction Hospital in Boston and gave it to the War Department. By 1946, the Elks pledged: "So long as there are veterans in our hospitals, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

Downing added: "Our commitment continues to this day around the nation."

For more information about the Elks, visit www.elks.org.

For more than 30 years, Harbor Homes, Inc. has been a leader in working toward ending homelessness within New Hampshire. Since 1980, the agency has provided affordable housing combined with supportive services to New Hampshire's most vulnerable populations including the homeless, chronically homeless, veterans, elderly, developmentally disabled, and individuals, as well as their families, struggling with mental illness, substance use disorders, and HIV/AIDS. For more information about Harbor Homes, please visit www.harborhomes.org.

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