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## **Dalianis House dedicated for veterans down on their luck**

*By PATRICK MEIGHAN Staff Writer*

NASHUA – More than 200 people – by participating or just attending – showed their gratitude for the city’s newest weapon against homelessness during a dedication on Friday.

No one was more grateful than one of the 40 honorably discharged U.S. veterans who will find not only a temporary home in the Dalianis House, but also a huge step in the journey back to self-sufficiency.

“I’m not an alcoholic or a drug addict. I never was. It’s just the economy,” said Kevin Driscoll, 43, who will move into the 59 Factory St. transitional housing apartment building within the next few weeks.

Participants at the dedication included veterans, the governor, the mayor and other state and federal officials, all of whom praised the effort to provide a hand up for homeless veterans. After a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony outside the building, the crowd moved across the street into Harbor Homes for the rest of the program.

Driscoll spent five years in the Army, serving part of the time in Panama. He was living in Derry and working for a waste management company when he lost his job last August.

Out of work, divorced and behind on child support, Driscoll lived in his car for a month before the city of Derry welfare office provided him a room at a boarding house.

Contacts in the Veterans Administration led him to the Veterans FIRST program in Nashua created by Harbor Homes, to Buckingham Place on Spring Street and eventually to making the list to be one of the first tenants at the Dalianis House.

He credits the people who have helped him along the way, particularly Andrea Reed, an employment specialist at Harbor Homes, an umbrella organization that operates Veterans FIRST and other programs. Driscoll now works for Harbor Homes.

“I owe my life to them,” Driscoll said of the people who have helped him.

“I’m 43. I’m divorced. I’ve never had to ask for help in my life,” he said.

“This is a gift from God,” Driscoll said, adding that there are many veterans like himself who will be helped by the Dalianis House.

Besides the veterans, the other person celebrated at the ceremony was Griffin Dalianis, a longtime veterans advocate and the namesake for the building.

The dedication included the unveiling of a photographic portrait of Dalianis, which will hang in the main lobby. Dalianis' many titles include N.H. civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, chairman of the State Veterans Advisory Committee and chairman of the U.S. Veterans Administration Committee on Rehabilitation.

Dalianis is a retired psychotherapist. He is a disabled veteran who served in the U.S. Air Force 1st Special Air Commando Group, Strategic Air Command, from 1961-65.

"•Griff' is one of those guys you don't forget," Mayor Donnalee Lozeau said. "His personality is actually smaller than his heart, if you can believe it."

Lozeau described Dalianis as the "go-to person" for issues concerning veterans in the city. She presented him a gift of a clock, which she said symbolizes the time he spent providing service to Nashua.

"People will always remember what you've done here for our city," Lozeau said.

The dedication also included addresses by Gov. John Lynch; U.S. Rep. Paul Hodes, D-N.H.; and L. Tammy Duckworth, assistant secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs with the Veterans Administration.

"I'm really proud for New Hampshire that this tremendous crowd has come out to honor our veterans" and to honor the life of Dalianis, Hodes said outside the Dalianis House just before the ribbon was cut.

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