

## DID YOU KNOW?

The number of homeless male and female Vietnam era veterans is greater than the number of service persons who died during that war

Homeless veterans tend to be older and more educated than homeless non-veterans

Similar to the general population of adult males, about 45% of homeless veterans live with mental illness

67% of homeless veterans served 3 or more years in the military

The VA funds 72 beds for the nearly 450 homeless veterans in NH

Because government money for homeless veterans is limited, only 10% of those in need are served

# Happenings at Harbor Homes, Inc.

SPRING 2006



Groundbreaking  
Event:  
April 21st  
11:00 am  
46 Spring Street

## New Veterans Housing Opening Early 2007

The groundbreaking for Buckingham Place, the new **Harbor Homes, Inc.** housing facility for honorably discharged homeless veterans, will take place 11:00 a.m. April 21 at the building site, 46 Spring Street in downtown Nashua. The event, open to the public, promises to be filled with inspiration and reflection on the importance of providing a second chance to our nations' homeless heroes.

The 20-unit apartment building will be one of the first in the country to accommodate homeless male veterans, female veterans and veterans with families under one roof. Buckingham Place serves as an outgrowth of the successful Veterans F.I.R.S.T. transitional housing program established by **Harbor Homes** in 2004. Residents will have up to two years to regain the skills and jobs necessary to integrate

back into the community. Along with housing, Veterans F.I.R.S.T. provides meals; job training and vocational services; help finding and maintaining employment, and accessing medical, mental health, and/or substance abuse services if applicable. The goal is to allow the veterans to become self-sufficient and productive members of the community. During their time at Buckingham Place residents will be required to find a job, attend school, or volunteer in the community.

The building is being named in honor of Byron "Bucky" Buckingham, who passed away on Valentine's Day. Buckingham was involved in many veterans programs, in many leadership roles, including serving as state commander of the Military Order of The Purple Heart and as chairman of the Mayor's Veterans Council for the City of Nashua.

He was instrumental in moving this project forward.

Many local and national dignitaries will share their thoughts and Dr. Griffin Dalianis will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Following the groundbreaking, attendees are invited to share a light lunch and visit **Harbor Homes'** new office at 45 High Street, Nashua.

The event will take place rain or shine. If you plan to attend the luncheon, please RSVP to 882-3616 ext. 1102 by April 17.

See brochure  
inside for  
ways to  
honor your  
own special  
veteran





**Peter Kelleher,**  
LICSW  
Executive Director

## Letter from Peter Kelleher

Shortly after 9/11, across our community and agency, we began reflecting on the extraordinary bravery of our military and the painful sacrifices being made to protect our nation. During the course of our work serving homeless persons, it was piercingly disturbing to note how many had proudly served our country. The tipping point arrived when a homeless Korean War veteran was found deceased on the Nashua River banks. From this point on we were determined to not let this be. HHI is now prepared as more veterans return to our community with needs that are not yet fully known.

Returning veterans, with or without physical injuries, face chal-

lenges in reconnecting, with what is often a different world, finding themselves isolated and struggling to reconnect. Thus, they set themselves apart from other homeless persons by the fact that it generally takes five to seven years following a discharge accompanied by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to become homeless. Communities can lend meaningful support to mitigate in this readjustment process.

We're thrilled that our community has delivered a breathtaking and unprecedented level of support: the hairdresser who offered haircuts; the major corporations that have stepped forward; the many church, school, and civic groups; Veteran's organizations; the Mayor

and the City of Nashua, NH Housing, citizens, and supportive media coverage.

Sadly, "Bucky", who the facility is named after, passed away on Valentine's Day. Mr. Buckingham was well known for his dedication to veteran's causes and specifically this project. We miss him, but are proud that this facility will honor his memory.

We truly appreciate and sense the full embrace of the larger community around this project and our mission. Join us at the groundbreaking ceremony on April 21<sup>st</sup> or log on to our website: [www.harborhomes.org](http://www.harborhomes.org) to view the story of one homeless veteran and find out how you can help.

*According to figures provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, up to 600,000 men, women, and children go homeless each night in the U.S.*

## Our Proud History of Serving the Homeless

Established in 1980, **Harbor Homes, Inc.** (HHI) is a private, non-profit agency providing quality residential and supportive services for persons challenged by mental illness and/or homelessness. Built upon a core belief that individuality, dignity, self-respect and a safe place to live are key to a person's ability to contribute to society.

**Harbor Homes** began with a 9-bed group home. Today, HHI has 23 programs, 17 of which are residential, providing a variety of residential housing programs with varying degrees of independence to meet the needs of clients. **Harbor Homes** currently serves over 1100 people annually.

Non-residential programs include a member-operated resource and activity center, recreational and educational activities, and a paid employment service program whose purpose is not only to employ, but also to teach skills which may lead clients to further employment in the community. By reducing the stigma of homelessness and mental illness, **Harbor Homes** works to provide long-term client success.

Recognizing that one agency cannot respond to every need, **Harbor Homes** is affiliated with the following non-profit agencies: Healthy at Home, Inc. (a licensed home health care agency); Greater Nashua Council on Alcoholism, Inc.; Milford Regional Counseling Services, Inc.; Welcoming Light, Inc. (independent affordable housing for the elderly); the Southern NH HIV/AIDS Task Force; and The Institute at Welcoming Light. Clients benefit from this relationship through coordinated access to resources and services. Each agency benefits through the affiliation of a common Board of Directors and Executive Director.



## Harbor Homes Celebrates 25 Years!

On Saturday, September 9, 2006 an Anniversary Celebration Dinner and Silent Auction Fundraiser will be held at the Sheraton Tara in Nashua. Tick-

ets are available for \$75 per person and proceeds will benefit **Harbor Homes** programs and services. Individuals and corporate sponsors can pur-

chase a table, donate goods or services for auctioning, or purchase one of our sponsorship packages. For more information or to purchase tickets, 882-3616 ext 1102.

# “No excuse for leaving our veterans homeless”

**This excerpt taken from the Concord Monitor**

About 3,300 New Hampshire residents, including nearly 1,000 children, are homeless on any given night, according to a state survey. No good count of Concord's homeless veterans exists, but homeless numbers overall are up. Last year, the First Congregational Church sheltered an average of 19 people per night. The average this year is 28. The situation need not be hopeless

After the 2001 terrorist attacks, Harbor Homes, a private Nashua nonprofit that has worked with substance abusers and the mentally ill for 25 years, turned

its attention to veterans. The nonprofit will soon open its second housing project for them, a \$3 million subsidized complex with 15 one-bedroom and five two-bedroom apartments.

Using a \$27-per-day subsidy from the Veterans Administration and a host of other funding sources, Harbor Homes functions as a one-stop social service agency. It provides shelter and a connection to the treatment, education and employment assistance programs homeless vets need to restart their lives.

The integration of services is critical to success. Many of the program's early participants have already rejoined society. When the Nashua complex opens, the needs of nearly all of that city's

homeless veterans will have been met. Concord and other cities should consider a similar solution.

History suggests that many Iraq War veterans will struggle to heal the psychic wounds of war and fail. The war is also producing a large number of amputees and veterans who've suffered spinal cord or brain injuries. With the future in mind, the Nashua complex has been designed to accommodate them.

**Author(s): Monitor editorial**  
**Date: March 1, 2006**  
**Page: B04/Section: Opinion**

**By June 2005, the number of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom veterans seeking assistance from community-based homeless services providers had exceeded 400 in the U.S.**

## The Need For Housing Homeless Veterans

On any given night nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs over half a million veterans experience homelessness in a given year. While our active military members continue to defend our freedom, too many of those that came before them now struggle to survive.

While the Department of Veterans Affairs works hard to serve more than 100,000 homeless veterans, hundreds of thousands remain

unserved. Complex reasons for these large numbers include lingering effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; substance abuse; lack of family support; the high cost of housing; and difficulty finding work with livable wages. The VA depends on a collaboration of community service providers such as **Harbor Homes** to supply unmet services.

Since 2004 our Veterans F.I.R.S.T. program has helped honorably discharged homeless veterans put

their lives back together. In order to make long-term changes veterans must be provided safe housing coupled with mental health and substance abuse counseling; medical care; job assessment, training and placement; and assistance with personal development. Our first facility has enabled 16 veterans to transition to independent living. A waiting list of 70, including female veterans and veterans with families has prompted construction of a second veterans transitional housing facility. (see cover story)

## Testimonials from Veterans F.I.R.S.T. Residents

*"I found myself unemployable and my landlord was throwing me out. I am eternally grateful for the Veterans F.I.R.S.T. program because I avoided living in the woods. I had my struggles, being unemployed while here for a while. Being here has helped me with my drinking. I didn't believe in AA, but I went with the encouragement of an individual. After five meetings, I found out AA does help you. I've been able to clear my habitual offender status and I am waiting to get my license. I have*

*over nineteen months of sobriety. When I arrived, I had my head down and I didn't speak with anyone except my roommate. Here, we understand each other and I have met some of my goals I set with Heather. I try to be a positive influence on the new clients. Presently, I am the cook. The staff has been great." -Resident*

*"I will never forget this chance. It will stay with me for the rest of my life. Veterans F.I.R.S.T. is for people who need a second chance, a home away from home." -Resident*

*"...I am setting goals now such as education after my GED and permanent employment. The facility is clean; the staff are nice and help with budgeting and appointments. It's a great atmosphere." -Resident*



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www.harborhomes.org



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
PERMIT NO. 155

*Our Mission: To create and provide quality residential and supportive services for persons (and their families) challenged by mental illness and/or homelessness.*

## Volunteer- It's Good For Your Health

Volunteers are the backbone of any great non-profit organization. They free up staff to handle more day-to-day operations and add spirit to the workplace. But did you know volunteering was actually good for your health? Studies have proven that volunteering improves self-esteem, helps fight loneliness, reduces stress on the body improving the immune system and lowering blood pressure. The benefits seem to be particularly strong among the elderly even lowering mortality rates.

Have a few hours to spare each month, or better yet each week? Consider volunteering with Harbor Homes. It just might change your life. For information on volunteer opportunities contact Mary at 882-3616 ext. 1145.

**Groundbreaking set for  
an additional Veterans  
F.I.R.S.T. home in  
Nashua see inside for  
more ....**

If you do not wish to receive future mailings, please contact 882-3616 ext. 1102

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