



GARRY OWEN HOUSE: EIN 46-3946393  
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## **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REQUEST**

### **I. OVERVIEW**

The Garry Owen House Transition Shelter is located in Mid-Coast Maine with the purpose of saving homeless veterans and transitioning them into a self sustaining life. We are currently located in a leased farm house in Searsmont Maine and have been providing homeless vets support since 2016. The lease is up in November 2020 with an option to buy. This capital campaign is necessary to purchase the building, and prepare for expansion as we are limited to six vets at a time. Unfortunately we have had to refer some to other facilities due to this limitation. Unlike other shelters, a vet can remain in the house until **all** his needs are met. The house can not accommodate female or handicapped vets at this time, but the addition will be suitable for our military sisters and those with limited mobility. Our goal is a 16-20 bed addition and renovation of the current dwelling. Maine has the largest per capita veteran population in the country and winters here are life threatening to a homeless vet. We do not accept any government funding.

### **II. HISTORY**

A. The mission of the Garry Owen House is to provide a transitional shelter where homeless veterans can find hope for the future through a fellowship with other veterans dedicated to help them link up with the opportunities they have earned in the service to our country in an atmosphere of safety, dignity and respect.

B. The idea for a local veteran shelter was proposed by the Garry Owen Motorcycle Club of Maine, a veteran only organization. A twenty acre parcel of land was purchased for the construction of a 20 person facility. A local architect and the University of Maine in Augusta developed a proposed design with an estimated cost of \$750,000. Research showed that without some background and history, that amount of funding could not be raised. In 2016 we were offered a lease on a semi-habitable dwelling if we paid the taxes and insurance. With a great deal of effort from the motorcycle club and local volunteers, the dwelling was made habitable, providing room for six veterans. The lease is up in 2020 with the option to buy. We have transitioned more than 30 veterans since the facility was opened.

### **III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:.**

A. The current lease to buy option provides an opportunity to enlarge the property because there was an attached small restaurant which has since been demolished. The requisite services are available on the property such as well capacity and septic systems. Much of the material and labor for the addition has

been promised to include solar energy.

B. There has been several times when we were at capacity and had to refer vets to other temporary shelters. The addition to the current building would permit support to female veterans and be handicapped accessible. The current building does not support wheelchair bound veterans.

C. The former proposed architectural plan needs to be changed to address the current property situation. Completion of the final facility would depend on future grants and volunteers services but estimated completion would be 12 to 18 months after the purchase of the leased property.

D. Although there is a significant effort by national and state agencies to address the veteran homelessness, there is a day to day need locally for immediate help. Our program is different in that the shelter focuses on long term support for the vet where we reduce the chance of him/her returning to the streets. More than thirty veterans have transitioned through our facility. All have been placed in permanent housing and some employed and self sufficient.

E. The Garry Owen House Board of Directors provides guidance and motivation in our effort to provide funding and volunteer activities in support of this organization. Several local motorcycle clubs conduct fund-raising rides, benefit dinners and provide labor to maintain the facility. The local Hannaford super market, Soup Kitchen, Restorative Justice farm project and state police wild animal program provide much of the food necessary to support the residents. The entire operation is run by volunteers with **no** paid employees. A professional case manager is provided for each individual in-transition assisting in medical help, locating housing, and veteran benefits. Transportation is provided by volunteers on as needed basis, but purchase of a van in the future may be necessary when the facility is enlarged.

F. The current facility provides dedicated support for our homeless veterans in the local area. With the maximum of six residents and no capability to support female or disabled veterans, some deserving our support maybe turned away or referred to another facility that does not provide the long term transition support we provide. Our philosophy of “VETS HELPING VETS ONE VET AT A TIME” is the humane and sensible approach to the veteran homeless problem.

#### IV. PROJECT BUDGET:

A. The purchase price of the property is \$50,000.

B. The real estate value is approximately \$110,000 according to the Town of Searsmont. Current structure upgrade will cost \$15,000 to \$20,000 for siding, windows, roof repair and bathroom upgrades. Design and architectural support for the addition will be donated. It is envisioned that material for the construction of the addition will be donated and the labor from volunteers and in-house residents. As stated above, the property is uniquely suited for additional structures, significantly reducing the basic costs of construction.

C. There is no other funding for the house other than donations for operational costs at this time. This capital campaign is now in progress to purchase the property so renovation and construction of addition facilities can take place in the near future.

## V. REQUEST RATIONALE:

A. Maine has the highest per capita veteran population in the United States. The Maine Homeless Veterans Action Committee delivered its annual update (2019) on the state of veteran homelessness. An estimated 278 veterans became homeless last year in Maine. 192 of them were housed by local organizations. Data was collected from emergency shelters and community volunteers to create a better understanding of who the homeless are as well as how best to get them back on their feet. Our shelter is different in that this is not a temporary fix for a long term problem. A resident can remain in the house until all his/her needs are met and become self sufficient. One resident stayed in the house for seven months at not cost to him. He was able to pay off long standing debts from a divorce and now has his own apartment and employment.

B. Grants received during this capital campaign will be immediately expended to purchase the dwelling. Once purchased, local fund raising will provide the necessary material and labor to complete the final facility.

## VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION:

A. Once completed, we believe we will be able to accommodate the estimated numbers of homeless veterans in this area. We partner with Preble Street Veterans Housing Services in Portland to accept veterans suitable for our program. Before a vet is referred to us, Preble Street confirms there is space available and the addition will permit accepting more veterans and the ability to help our veteran sisters and the handicapped.

B. For the past three years, we have successfully assisted more than 35 veterans transitioning to a self sufficient life and only one that we know is back on the street. For example: Nick was a transplant from San Diego, then moved to Eugene, Ore, where he felt veterans were not given a fair shake. "I came here, and it would not have worked out had I not found this place," he said, adding that he was able to network, get the necessary treatment, and has paid off his debt and found a place to live. "I'm debt-free today," he said. "This is the most stable I've been in my entire life,"

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