



Greater Springfield  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

# Salutes veterans

Military Appreciation Month  
May 2022 - Issue 1



## Greater Springfield Habitat and Purple Heart Homes give back, serve

Beth (left) and her husband Peter, retired Army National Guard staff sergeant, stand in front of their newly repaired home in Monson.

Some might say America's military is a national treasure and those who served should be celebrated. At Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) and Purple Heart Homes (PHH), taking care of veterans is a top priority. Sometimes, the two organizations even tackle projects together.

GSHFH's Home Preservation program provides affordable micro-loans to low-income and qualifying homeowners who need help with accessibility modifications, home weatherization, general home repairs, yard cleanup, and landscaping.

### Purple Heart Homes

PHH, a nonprofit charity, provides housing solutions for former military members who are disabled and/or have chosen to age in place. The organization has two programs – Veterans

Aging in Place and Veteran Home Opportunity Program (VHOP). VHOP is designed for service-connected disabled veterans who are either ready for the responsibility of homeownership, are looking for a rental home, or are interested in a tiny home.

"I think the most rewarding aspect of working with Greater Springfield Habitat is recognizing both of our organizations have the same focus in assisting veterans and our communities," said Paul Cockerham, PHH chief development officer. When working together, PHH provides some or all of the project funding while GSHFH performs the labor. "Both of our programs recognize and respect each other's strengths and weaknesses of what we provide to a potential project."

In their three-year partnership, the GSHFH

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Above: A picture of moss growing on Peter and Beth's roof in Monson.

Left: The outside of Peter and Beth's home following a power wash treatment by West Springfield's Clean Machine Power Wash.

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and PHH affiliation has benefitted two families, including a couple in Monson. Peter, a retired Army National Guard staff sergeant, and his wife Beth purchased a duplex three years ago. They live in one unit, Beth's daughter and young son live in the other residence. Both spaces needed repair.

"We are always happy to collaborate with Purple Heart Homes to improve the living conditions for a local family," said Deborah O'Mara, GSHFH Family Services manager. "By teaming up, we can do much more than either organization could ever do alone. When we are finished, the family will have a fully functional and weather-tight home in which to live."

Greater Springfield Habitat sent staff to assess the three areas of concern – a moss-spotted roof, broken water heater in the daughter's unit, and damaged exterior doors at both dwellings. The moss-spotted roof had several bowed shingles that began to lift. If left untreated, the roof would need to be replaced in three years. While replacement will be necessary down

the line, a pressure wash took care of the immediate concern. West Springfield's Clean Machine Power Wash performed the work and also power washed the siding and porches. A Proline 40-gallon water heater replaced the broken appliance.

Exterior doors for side entrances and the basement were replaced. Previous doors weren't correctly sealed and allowed drafts and a hollow interior door had been used as an exterior door.

"My house was looking like the 'Amityville Horror' house but now it sparkles like Disneyland," Peter said. "The moss on the roof, GONE! The mossy steps in the front, GONE! An excellent job worthy of praise and kudos."

PHH and GSHFH continue to look for projects they can work on together.

"The positive impact we are able to provide is permanent for those associated with us," Paul said. "The ability for us to provide these services is only enhanced through charities who have earned the respect and trust of the local

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Left: The front of Franklin's Springfield home.  
Below: Water damage ruined ceiling tiles in a room at Franklin's Springfield home.



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community. This is what makes the Greater Springfield Habitat for PHH partnership great.”

To learn more about PHH, visit [purplehearthomesusa.org](http://purplehearthomesusa.org)

### **Greater Springfield Habitat**

Greater Springfield Habitat recently began a new project and is fixing the Springfield home of Franklin, a former Army Reserve specialist fourth grade, who served eight years.

The now 90-year-old veteran's home, which was built in 1911 and has been owned by Franklin for at least 60 years, is in serious disrepair.

Franklin's daughter, Theresa, reached out to Greater Springfield Habitat in May and September 2021, requesting home preservation services, but the program had temporarily closed due to a lack of funds. Yet, after the second phone call, Habitat staff ventured to the house to survey the damage and necessary repairs. GSHFH then connected with Habitat for Humanity International for

assistance. Habitat International helped Greater Springfield Habitat access the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot program to qualify this project. The federal program serves veterans and/or low-income individuals and provides grants to repair their primary residences so they can retain their independence without being burdened by the repair costs.

GSHFH subcontracted Westfield's NexGen Roofing to replace the roof and sheathing.

“There's a crazy amount of water damage,” said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director. “It must have been leaking for a long time.”

Theresa said she is grateful and extremely thankful to GSHFH and all it is able to do to help her father.

“We're happy to support veterans for all they've given us, the sacrifices they made, and the dedication they've shown to our country,” Aimee said. “It's the least we can do.”

To learn more about GSHFH's Home Preservation program, visit [habitatspringfield.org/home-preservation](http://habitatspringfield.org/home-preservation)