

From the Foundation

A veteran finds peace of mind through home repairs



Wayne gives a thumbs up on his new deck as he poses on his new deck at his West Springfield home.

Wayne, a 72-year-old Navy veteran, enjoys life's simple pleasures: tending to his garden, mowing the lawn, spending time with his service dog, Maxine, and savoring a mug of coffee on his deck. But in recent years, those moments have been overshadowed by concerns about safety.

The deck outside Wayne's West Springfield mobile home had become increasingly unstable, with rotting planks and a leaking

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Welcome to Habitat

We're thrilled to announce Chantal and her family have been selected during our recent homeownership application cycle to purchase our next soon-to-be-constructed Habitat home.

This is the beginning of an exciting journey, and we can't wait to partner with Chantal and her family as they work toward achieving the dream of affordable homeownership. Congratulations — we're so happy to have you as part of the Habitat family!



FIRST-TIME BUYER?

**Tuesday, July 14
5:30 PM**

**Sixteen Acres Library
1187 Parker St,
Springfield**

**Join Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity
for a **FREE First-Time Homebuyers Information Session.**
Learn about the homebuying process, Habitat's affordable
homeownership program, eligibility requirements,
and the steps you can take to prepare for homeownership.**

Register here: bit.ly/4vPcFbN (in-person or online options available)

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sliding door that let rainwater seep inside. The deterioration had become so severe that Wayne worried about falling through the deck. In fact, his cane had already poked through some of the weakened boards and Wayne feared he might lose his home altogether.

Earlier this year, Wayne reached out to Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) and spoke with Executive Director Aimee Giroux, after learning about the nonprofit's Veterans Build Home Preservation program from his peers at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). With support from The Home Depot Foundation, GSHFH is repairing Wayne's deck and damaged sliding door, helping him remain safely in the home he loves.

"I'm very thankful to get these things fixed. I was worried about the house being condemned and being forced to move out," said Wayne. "Working with Habitat has been a very good experience. It's been a pleasure to work with Aimee."

GSHFH's Veteran Home Preservation Program is a part of a national initiative to provide housing solutions to US veterans, military service members, and their families. Services include accessibility modifications for bathrooms and kitchens, ramps, roof repair/replacement, weatherization, heating system upgrades, porch/stair repairs, and hard surface flooring to help with mobility.

Wayne and his wife, Linda, purchased the mobile home in April 2017. They had moved to Western Massachusetts two years earlier from Charleston, South Carolina, to be closer to Linda's family.

In recent years, Linda moved in with her mother to provide around-the-clock care, but the couple who are parents to six adult children remain close. These days, Wayne spends much of his time with Maxine, his trained American Pit Bull Terrier service dog, who he rescued nearly four years ago from Thomas J O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center in Springfield.

"She's very protective of me and is blind in the right eye, like I am," Wayne said speaking of Maxine's missing right eye, which she lost after she was hit by a car. "That's what caught my eye."

Wayne is legally blind and lives with



Edgar Herrera of Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's construction crew works on the new deck.



Wayne's new deck while its under construction.

Parkinson's disease, which he says hasn't advanced significantly thanks, in part, to the active lifestyle he developed during his years in the U.S. Navy. Wayne served more than a decade in the Navy, where he worked in technology and later became a journeyman electrician after he was medically discharged.

"Every veteran deserves a safe place to call home," said Aimee. "Thanks to Team Depot's support, Wayne can remain in the home he loves with the safety, independence, and peace of mind he deserves."



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