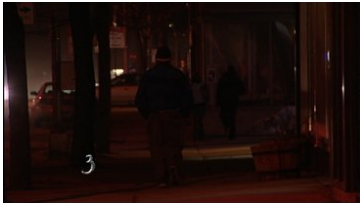




Helping Homeless Vets



Barre, Vermont - March 28, 2008

Under bridges, behind dumpsters, in dark alleys, in cars; they are common places Vermont's homeless veterans sleep when shelters are full.



Richard Schroeder knows. He's been there. The former Vietnam medic-- who earned the nickname "Doc"-- spent six years homeless.

"I've eaten out of dumpsters before. That's where I ate," says Doc. "When I talk to a vet who is struggling, I know where he's coming from. I been there and done that."



Richard "Doc" Schroeder

Doc suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after what he saw during combat. His marriage fell apart and he became an alcoholic.

Many other Veterans suffered the same fate.



One central Vermont group is working to get homeless vets off the streets and back into society.

"We can provide a transition back into stability so they don't have to wander around," explains Rev. Ralph Howe of the Hedding United Methodist Church.



Rev. Ralph Howe

Howe helped to establish Veterans Place, a non-profit organization that plans to build transitional housing for homeless Vets. The 20-plus bed facility will provide food, shelter, job seeking skills, and link them with services provided through the state and the Veterans Administration.

"Many will have had PTSD or alcohol and drug addictions related to their time in the service and they fall between the cracks in the VA system," says Howe.

Before Veterans Place becomes a reality in the Barre area, the group must first raise funds and fast. At least \$200,000 by the first week in April in order to get an additional \$400,000 from the VA.

Veterans Place was banking on the state to provide the \$200,000-- before a big budget shortfall.

"But it wasn't the year for that so we have been thrown into a more difficult scenario of trying to find this money," says Howe. "This could come in the way of loans, grants,

services, cash."

Howe says Veterans Place will give military men and women a second chance. "Whether you like these wars or not, these men and women have suffered. We need to treat them properly. We need to give them what it takes for them to get back into society."

Doc made the transition. He now has a modest apartment in Barre and hopes other Vets get the help they need to get back on their feet.

"We as a country owe these people something," he says.

[Click here for more information on the project or to donate.](#)

[Darren Perron](#) - WCAX News



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