



Moose Lodge assists Niagara Falls Habitat for Humanity project

On Saturday, June 18, members of Lower Niagara Moose Lodge 584 teamed up for a Niagara Area Habitat for Humanity home construction project on 61st Street in Niagara Falls. The 31st Habitat for Humanity home constructed in Niagara County, this one represents the 28th such residence to be built in the City of Niagara Falls since 1993. The four-bedroom home is expected to be complete for occupancy by the end of this year, with the future family chosen by Habitat for Humanity officials.

According to a Habitat for Humanity press release, eligible families would receive their home through an affordable low-interest mortgage, with no family paying more than 30% of their monthly income toward their mortgage payments. In addition, families in the Habitat for Humanity program are required to volunteer 500 hours of sweat equity, working alongside community volunteers to build their future home. The future occupant is also required to take a first-time homebuyer course, along with courses on financial literacy, budgeting and home maintenance.

Pictured, Lower Niagara Moose 584 volunteers join with Habitat for Humanity officials for a group photo. The Lewiston lodge also donated \$385 toward the Falls project. (Submitted photo)

Niagara County working on new tribute to veterans

Last week at our regular meeting of the Niagara County Legislature, my colleague, Dave Godfrey, gave an update on plans to build a Purple Heart Monument in Niagara County. Although I'm sure most of you know this, a Purple Heart is awarded to service members who have been wounded or killed as a result of any enemy action. Niagara County is a Purple Heart county, and we have a book that lists the name of every county resident that we know who has been awarded a Purple Heart. We want to ensure that their sacrifice is never forgotten.

The idea for a Purple Heart Monument was presented to the legislature last year, and a working group comprised of veterans was formed to look at the feasibility. Legislator Godfrey, a Vietnam veteran, chaired the committee. The working group needed to consider potential locations, review designs and put together a potential cost estimate for a Purple Heart monument. They did an extraordinary job.

The biggest decision to start was choosing the proper location. The working group considered many options and decided the Niagara County Courthouse

NIAGARA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Becky Wydysh
Chairwoman

in Lockport, which is home to both the Purple Heart Book and our Veterans Service Agency (VSA), made the most sense. That way, those who are coming to the VSA for assistance can conveniently visit the monument.

The design calls for the creation of a courtyard with the monument centrally located. There will be numerous access points tied into existing side-walks and benches for visitors. The entire green space courtyard design is actually heart-shaped, in honor of the Purple Heart. For those who would like to see the conceptual design, Legislator Godfrey's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/mryv8up6>.

Our goal now is to put the funding in place and begin the procurement process to get the monument built. We have already had some services donated, including the assistance of professional engineer Barbara Frankiewicz of Nussbaumer &

Clarke, who was instrumental with this initial plan. If all goes well, we could be breaking ground later this summer.

Again, I thank the entire working group for their efforts, especially in choosing the location that is very accommodating to our veteran community. Just last week, as I was walking through the Niagara County Courthouse, I came across County Clerk Joe Jastrzemski with a group of veterans, which included Purple Heart recipients. The group had toured the VSA, visited the Purple Heart Book display, and had been to the clerk's office to sign up for our "Thank A Vet" program. Clearly, this is the right place for the monument.

And speaking of the "Thank A Vet" program, I want to encourage veterans who have not yet joined the program to do so. The program entitles veterans to discounts on the purchase of goods and services at more than 500 participating businesses throughout Niagara County. Discount cards are issued Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Niagara County Clerk's Office, 175 Hawley St., Lockport.

The eligibility guidelines re-

quire participants to be Niagara County residents and present official government photo identification (i.e., driver's license or non-driver ID card); to have been honorably discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces; and to have official discharge papers (DD-214) on file in the Niagara County

Clerk's Office. If DD-214 is not on file, it must be presented for filing prior to issuance of discount card. This is one small way our community can thank you for your service.

If you have any questions about the program, call the VSA at 716-438-4090.

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