



## NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

### VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND WELCOMES VETERANS TO THEIR NEW HOMES AT THE “CABIN IN THE WOODS” HOUSING PROJECT AT TOGUS

*Cabin in the Woods is providing permanent housing for homeless  
Maine Veterans and their families*

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2018 | AUGUSTA, ME** - Nineteen veterans and their families have brand new, energy-efficient, ADA-accessible cabins to call home as construction finishes up on the [“Cabin in the Woods”](#) development created by the [Volunteers of America Northern New England](#).

The Brunswick-based non-profit hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony today on the \$4.2 million project located on the grounds of the Togus VA Medical Center in Chelsea.

“Some of our military veterans need a quiet place to help them transition into a daily routine. Cabin in the Woods, along with other support services will help them achieve that,” said Richard Wayman, President and CEO of Volunteers of America Northern New England. “Permanent housing with easy proximity to the services available at Togus is invaluable to someone struggling to re-establish their place in society. This has just been an amazing partnership that I think will really benefit the veterans and their families that are moving in.”

There are 16 one-bedroom and five two-bedroom 550-square-foot cabins, as well as office and community space. Nineteen of the cabins are occupied and two still have vacancies. The project, on 11 acres obtained through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Enhanced-Use Lease Program (EUL) is an important component of both VA’s mission to end Veteran homelessness and the departments overall asset management program. Through the EUL program, VA out-leases underutilized real estate under its jurisdiction or control to the private sector for up to 75 years for the purpose of developing supportive housing for homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. Cabin in the Woods is the first of its kind in Maine that provides permanent housing for both male and female veterans.

Special attention was given to maintaining a rustic, wooded private setting for each for the cabins, according to Volunteers of America. Though they are in a wooded setting, they are also within walking distance of health services at the 500-acre Togus campus outside of Augusta.

“I tell you what, this is incredible,” said Tim Buckmore, a former homeless vet and now new community member at Cabin in the Woods. “They need to spend more money on programs like this. I’m so grateful for the privacy and the quietness and how easy it is to get to my appointments. Plus the people who made this happen for me have been so helpful and nice. This is a great investment if veterans and I think it’s long overdue.”

The project is funded primarily through Maine Housing with additional donations from The Home Depot and TD Bank Charitable Foundations, as well as funding from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The land for the Cabin in the Woods development was acquired through the Department of Veterans Affairs [Enhanced Use Lease Program](#), where the VA leases underutilized real estate to the private sector for the purpose of developing housing for homeless veterans.

Today's event also was attended by:

**WHO:**

- Richard Hooks Wayman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Volunteers of America Northern New England
- June Koegel, Executive Vice President and COO, Volunteers of America
- Congressman Bruce Poliquin
- Congresswoman Chellie Pingree
- Aaron Pierce, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Mark Winter, Office of Senator Susan Collins
- Teague Morris, Office of Senator Angus King
- Dan Brennan, Director, Maine State Housing Authority
- William Burney, Field Office Director, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Ryan Lilly, Director, VA New England Healthcare Systems

Volunteers of America Northern New England already operates two successful veterans programs in the Saco-Biddeford area; [The Arthur B. Huot House](#), which provides co-ed transitional housing for homeless veterans, and [The Veterans Career House](#), which serves homeless male veterans.

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