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Dignitaries break ground at homesite for wounded veteran

July 11, 2013 - Rhode Island

Over 100 people turned out on May 18th for the official groundbreaking at the future home of wounded Marine veteran Kevin Dubois and his wife, Kayla, in Burrillville. Representatives from the Rhode Island Builders Association and Homes for Our Troops (HFOT) were joined by state and local political leaders, police, firefighters, volunteers, students, local well-wishers and an honor guard from the Marine Corps League.

Also attending was Marine Lt. Col. Richard Paddock, the commanding officer of Cpl. Dubois' battalion while he served in Afghanistan.

"I happen to be studying at the Naval War College in Newport, and I heard about this event. I couldn't not be here!" Lt. Col. Paddock said.

Another Marine Corps veteran, Capt. David Caldwell Jr., RIBA's secretary and the project supervisor for the Dubois home-building effort, helped welcome the crowd to the jobsite. Now vice president of North Kingstown-based Caldwell and Johnson Inc., Capt. Caldwell is an active participant in RIBA's charity, Builders Helping Heroes (BHH), which is doing the actual construction work.

"I spent my first wedding anniversary (in 2002) deployed with my Marine unit in Afghanistan. I made it back in time for the birth of my first daughter, and I've since rejoined my business here in Rhode Island," Capt. Caldwell said.

"I was lucky. Not all the people in my command made it back, and not all made it back in one piece. So when the chance arose to get involved with Homes For Our Troops and Builders Helping Heroes, and to build a home from the ground up for this great Marine, I jumped at the chance."

He singled out the donors and volunteers who are making the project possible.

"Homes For Our Troops has been great lining up national sponsors, but the men and women who will actually get this house built are members of the community."

As of the first week of June, local companies that had worked on the project included:

Mousseau Land Clearing. Gary Mousseau donated the land-clearing services.

Smithfield Peat Co. Jackson Despres donated site services, including removing and trucking away stumps and rocks, stripping the loam, excavating the foundation, and donating and placing the crushed stone under the foundation.

Cullion Concrete Corp. Mark Cullion and Nicholas Squeo donated materials and the use of a payloader. The company also donated the use of trucks and services to haul materials to the site.

R.P. Iannuccillo and Sons Construction. Brian Iannuccillo donated the crusher for use on roughly 2,500 yards of material at the site.

DiGregorio Inc. Enrico DiGregorio donated all the concrete for the foundation and the slab.

A.B.C. Concrete Form Co. Domenico Picozzi and Robert Zarella contributed the footing and foundation forms, and the setup in a difficult site situation.

Tartaglia Trucking Inc. Jesse Tartaglia donated the use of trucks and services to haul materials to

the site.

Macera & Martini Transportation. Wayne Martini donated the use of trucks and services to haul materials to the site.

Trinity Excavating Inc. Robert J. Baldwin donated the use of trucks and services to haul materials to the site. Individual employees donated time to operate the machines and backfill the foundation. These included Gary Carberry, Justin Baldwin and Chris Baiocchi.

Material Sand and Stone Corp. Robert Pezza donated the use of trucks and services to haul materials to the site.

Volvo Rents donated the use of an excavator and a bulldozer to backfill the site.

Pro Equipment Rental donated the use of a compactor.

Wood & Wire Fence Co., Inc. Tim Martins donated use of a container for the duration of the job.

Scituate Companies of R.I. has contributed the Port-A-John units for use at the site.

Preferred Plumbing & Heating Inc. Richard Salloy donated all the under-slab plumbing and saw to all plumbing permits and inspections.

Contractors Supply Inc. As we went to press, it was learned that David Murphy had donated 4,200 feet of wire mesh for the slab work.

All the site work was coordinated by Robert Baldwin of R.B. Homes Inc. and Trinity Excavating Inc., president of BHH.

"This was a very rocky and difficult site, tucked around a sizable ledge outcropping. It was a real bear!" Baldwin said. "These companies went way above and beyond in preparing this site for free. Smithfield Peat did a great job!"

Capt. Caldwell echoed this in his address to those assembled on May 18th.

"There has been a huge outpouring of support for this project, and these are the local businesses and volunteers that didn't ask for a plug, didn't ask to be recognized. Without them, we would have nothing here. I look forward to seeing you back here later this year to celebrate again once, when the house is ready for Kevin and Kayla to move in," he said.

Baldwin, Capt. Caldwell and Vincent Marcantonio of Marcantonio Design Builders all are donating their services to supervise work at the site, located on Sherman Farm Road.

Also present at the May 18th ceremonies were Sen. Paul Fogarty, Rep. Raymond Gallison Jr., and Rep. Cale Keable. Rep. Gallison is chairman of the house veterans affairs committee.

"We thank every veteran here for their service to our country. For Cpl. Dubois, building him a new home here in Burrillville is the very least we can do. Kayla has been just as courageous," Rep. Gallison said.

All three state lawmakers presented citations to HFOT executive director Dawn Teixeira and, to honor BHH, to RIBA president Felix Carlone and Baldwin.

Cpl. Dubois, a native of Lincoln, lost both legs at the hip in 2011 while on his second deployment in Afghanistan. Until recently, he has been in San Diego, Calif., undergoing rehabilitation.

As of May 18th, the site had been cleared and the foundation poured. The slab was poured on June 6th.

With project costs expected to exceed \$400,000, Capt. Caldwell said that donations of time, materials and money are still needed.

"Our fundraising goal is \$100,000, and we have received commitments from RIBA members and vendors for roughly \$300,000 worth of labor and materials," he said. "Along with the tax deduction, anyone donating to the project will be entitled to use the 'Proud sponsor, Builders Helping Heroes'

logo," he said.

Paul Eno is the owner and editor-in-chief of New River Press, Woonsocket and is the editor of the monthly RIBA newsletter, The Rhode Island Builder Report. Paul Eno, New River Press

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