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Rhode Island house presented to wounded Marine

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It's turning out to be an exceptionally Happy New Year for a young Marine Corps veteran and his wife as they settle into a new home built for them by Builders Helping Heroes (BHH), a not-for-profit subsidiary of the Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA), and Homes For Our Troops (HFOT). And it's just in time to help them welcome their first child.

Cpl. Kevin Dubois and his wife, Kayla, both originally from Lincoln, took possession of their 2,500 s/f, energy-efficient, specially adapted home on December 21st in ceremonies at the site on Sherman Farm Road in Harrisville. Nearly 200 people attended the event, organized by HFOT, on the home's two-acre lot.

Among those attending the ceremonies were Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.); Congressman James Langevin (D-R.I.); Providence mayor Angel Tavares; state treasurer Gina Raimondo; Maj. Gen. Timothy McHale (USA Retired), president of HFOT; and Rear Adm. Ted Carter, president of the U.S. Naval War College and a Burrillville native.

Wintry weather seemed to abate just for that day as the sun shone and temperatures soared into the 50s.

The almost year-long homebuilding project involved over 100 mostly small businesses, a large number of them RIBA builder/remodeler, supplier or professional members. It also engaged the steady attention of BHH president Robert Baldwin of R.B. Homes Inc. and project supervisor David Caldwell Jr. of Caldwell and Johnson Inc., who had to balance their involvement with their own business responsibilities.

Most of the labor was volunteer and most of the materials were donated. Even the Town of Burrillville pitched in by waiving all permit and inspection fees. School children made and sent cards welcoming the Dubois to town, and the Harrisville Fire Dept. put on a dinner for the couple.

"Helping Cpl. Dubois with this house is the least we can do for this Marine, who paid such a price for our country. We must all remember that our freedom is not free," said Baldwin.

RIBA staffer Elise Geddes, who acted as the "closer" in tying up the project's last-minute tasks, praised Burrillville town officials, especially inspectors, for their support and cooperation.

Meanwhile, the Dubois are expecting their first child, a boy, in February.

The story really began on July 31, 2011, during Cpl. Dubois' second deployment in Afghanistan. That's the day he suffered the injury that cost him both legs, after contacting an improvised explosive device (IED) while trying to save another Marine.

"Seeing this house completed is a fulfillment for all of us, especially for me," said Caldwell, himself a Marine Corps. veteran of the Afghan War. "Once a Marine, always a Marine."

BHH is a fully approved 501c3 subsidiary of RIBA, and all donations are tax deductible. BHH also is a registered Rhode Island residential contractor (#19). It relies on a 100% volunteer staff, and all funds donated for construction are used in construction.

To find out more about BHH, visit www.buildershelpingheroes.org.

BHH was founded in 2006 and has since helped roughly a dozen Rhode Island soldiers and their families.

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