



## **A Home for a Hero!**

PORT ST. LUCIE - Owning a home is often viewed as the epitome of the "American Dream," yet for too many of the men and women who have sacrificed and fought to defend these values, that dream seems unobtainable.

The City of Port St. Lucie wants to give one of our veterans a chance to live out this dream. And what better day to help that come true for one family than on Veteran's Day?

At the direction of the City Council, the City's staff and its consultant have been working to identify veterans who meet specific income guidelines and other requirements to enter into a lottery. The prize: A fully renovated, mortgage-free, single-family home right here in Port St. Lucie. The new homeowner will be picked from the lottery at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Veteran's Day, at Veterans Memorial Park.

The City is using grant money from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to develop this housing program for veterans. These homes will directly benefit those veterans who have sacrificed to serve our nation.

"Recognizing the contributions of veterans through programs like the Port St. Lucie Veterans Housing Program is not only the right thing for us to do as Americans, but it is also very fitting for our community because it helps to reinforce our identity as the safest large city in Florida," said Port St. Lucie Mayor Greg Oravec. "It should not be lost on us that one of the many reasons Port St. Lucie is safe is because so many veterans and first-responders call PSL 'home.' It's exciting to think that we can accomplish so many good things with just one Port St. Lucie Veterans Housing Program."

### **Home purchased with federal grant**

Port St. Lucie was awarded \$17 million in NSP grants to acquire and rehabilitate or redevelop foreclosed properties "that might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight." With increasing home values, rising construction costs, and strong competition for foreclosed properties from private investors, the City can no longer purchase, repair, and resell properties to low income home buyers.

With the NSP program coming to a close, the City still owns one fully renovated home at 680 SE Walters

Terrace and four other vacant lots -- all purchased with the NSP grants. These remaining properties are now slated to be given to veterans.

The Walters Terrace home, which will be the first to be awarded to a veteran as part of this program, is approximately 1,600 square feet under air. It has three bedrooms and two full baths. In addition to upgrading the plumbing and electrical systems in this house, a new roof was installed and the home was painted and furnished with new kitchen cabinets, appliances and bathrooms.

The City purchased the foreclosure home for \$87,617.81 in May of 2015. An additional \$85,404.68 was invested to repair and rehabilitate the home bringing the City's total investment of NSP funds to \$173,022.49. The appraised value of the home as of October 20, 2016 is \$167,000. This was all accomplished with the federal grants, and no City money was used.



The home will be deed restricted for 15 years, meaning if the new owner sells the property before then, they will owe the City a prorated portion of the sale that will go back into the City's NSP fund. The new owner also will be responsible for insurance and taxes.

The details are still being finalized to develop the four remaining vacant lots. The City intends to bid the project out to non-profit developers to construct affordable housing opportunities for more veterans.

### **City Council's direction**

The Port St. Lucie City Council decided it wants these remaining NSP properties to benefit the men and women who have served our country. By taking these abandoned houses and properties from the real estate bust and depression, rehabbing them and making them available for families again, the City hopes to help the veterans, but also the city as a whole.

"In Port St. Lucie, we are proud to support our veterans and honored to recognize their sacrifices to protect us and our way of life," Mayor Oravec said. "Our commitment to our veterans, of being a "hometown for heroes," is reflected in many of our monuments and actions, including our beautiful and moving Veterans Memorial Park located on Veterans Memorial Parkway, our work with St. Lucie County and others partners to recruit the soon to be constructed Ardie R. Copas State Veterans Nursing Home in Tradition, our work with our many local veterans organizations to produce numerous ceremonies and civic events, and, now, the launch of the City's Veterans Housing Program."

Gold Star mother Linda Schumann, mother of deceased U.S. Army Solider Jordan C. Schumann, will pull the name of the new homeowner during Friday's lottery. While the name will be picked Friday, the City also plans to have a "Welcome Home" event in the coming weeks to turn the keys over the new homeowner.

"The ceremony is expected to include City staff and elected officials along with our partners, sponsors and hopefully new neighbors," said Carmen Capezzuto, director of the City's Neighborhood Services Department.

The public is invited to attend Friday's lottery, which will take place after the annual Veterans Day Ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park.

For more information about the program, please contact the City's Neighborhood Services Department at [nsd@cityofpsl.com](mailto:nsd@cityofpsl.com).

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