



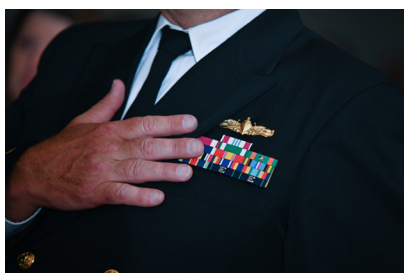
THE BEACON

The Newsletter of United Veterans Beacon House

Fall 2023

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A Match Made in Heaven

Bolla Family Foundation "Adopts" Beacon House Residence

In 2021, Beacon House's director of development, Tina Sferrazza, began to explore a new concept that would bridge the established mission of potential new donors with the need for updating and rehabbing existing agency residences.

At the same time, one of Beacon House's supporters became aware, through her professional work, of the Bolla Charity Foundation – established by the family patriarch and president/CEO of Bolla Oil Corp., Mr. Harry Singh, his wife Kamljit, and two adult children TJ and Jay – which focused its efforts on supporting veterans.

Connecting the two seemed like a potential match made in heaven: the Bolla Family Foundation was looking to expand its support of veteran causes by assisting as many individuals as possible with a specific rehab or construction project, and Beacon House determined its veterans residence in Levittown was in need of updating/rehabilitation.

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Notes From Frank



FRANK AMALFITANO

President & CEO
United Veterans Beacon House
Vietnam War Veteran, Air Force

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Dear Friends & Supporters,

Welcome to our second installment of *The Beacon* – the United Veterans Beacon House newsletter. I hope this past summer brought you and your loved ones peace and enjoyment.

Your support has enabled us to expand our services and reach.

Earlier this year we opened a 5-bedroom house in Smithtown through a state program that supports formerly homeless individuals suffering with illness. Another three apartments are slated to open in the Town of Brookhaven, with preference given to veterans. This first-of-its-kind project for Beacon House will feature living quarters above community or program space, which will be used for veteran training and education.

Also launched earlier this year is the Beacon House Linen Closet. Supported by our Community Partner of the Year, National Grid, this program provides brand new household items to any veteran – including those unaffiliated with Beacon House's shelter or services. You can read more about our partnership and the Linen Closet in this issue of *The Beacon*.

Another great happening this year occurred in the village of Freeport. Thanks to the continuing generosity of the Bolla Charity Foundation, our group home was completely rehabilitated. The value of this project, covered in its entirety by the foundation, exceeds a quarter of a million dollars. This is the second rehab project undertaken by the Bolla Charity Foundation through our *Restoring Homes Restoring Hope* program.

As for our amazing staff, we brought on 30 new employees, including a human relations manager, support staff, drivers and assistant program directors. These dedicated and talented professionals further enhance our ability to provide outstanding services and programs to the 325 veterans we serve each day.

The days and months ahead will see expanded programs and services, and new shelter options for our veterans. We welcome you to continue this journey with us and the veterans we serve.

On behalf of all of us at United Veterans Beacon House – thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,

Frank Amalfitano

President & CEO

BEACON HOUSE BY THE NUMBERS



52

Homes



1,100

Veteran Clients



88

Veterans Employed



149

Professional
Staff



29,500

Homeless Veterans Served
Since 1994

2022 statistics, except where noted.



Webster Bank EVP & Beacon House board member Edward Blaskey and his guests come together after a successful round of golf in support of veterans.

Second Annual Golf Tournament

A beautiful Spring Day greeted over 100 golfers to Beacon House's second annual golf outing at the Mill River Club.

Twice the turnout from last year's inaugural outing, this year's event confirmed that our supporters love golf: over \$120,000 was raised in support of Long Island's veterans! Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, golfers, and board of directors, the outing exceeded our every expectation.

The day started with a tasty brunch, followed by an opening ceremony that included remarks from committee chair & board member Frank Bono. Before heading out onto the course, Rocco Caminiti, Hauppauge High School Chamber Choir member, performed a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem.

On course, there were fun contests, a South Shore Bay Brewery hospitality station, and a Hole in One contest sponsored by Arnold Chevrolet and Buick.

Our golfers left the greens for late afternoon cocktails, and a delicious dinner on the patio overlooking the course. During the final program, this year's honoree, US Navy Veteran Dan Beldy, delivered an inspiring message about the importance of service to others. The day wouldn't be complete without a bit of competition:

1st place winners:

JM Peters, Dan Hagerman, Bryan Zissel & Dr. Nate Weller

2nd place winners:

Dennis O'Rourke, Adam Lipski, Joe Saladino & John Guttilla

Longest Drive: men – Dennis O'Rourke; women – Kerry Leo

Closest to the Pin: John Guttilla, Jim Contello

We look forward to next year's outing, with more golf challenges and new friends and supporters.

VETS TRIVIA CORNER

1. Gold Beach was at the center of five designated landing areas during a military operation in 1944, what was the name of the naval phase of this operation?
 - a. Operation Overlord
 - b. Operation Neptune
 - c. Operation Sandcrab
 - d. Operation Poseidon
2. What program started at the San Diego naval base in 1969 after the US suffered too many losses over Asia?
 - a. Pathfinder School
 - b. Fleet Air Gunnery Units
 - c. Navy Fighter Weapons School
 - d. Basic Underwater Demolition/ SEAL Training
3. What is the oldest US military decoration still awarded to members of the military today?
 - a. The Purple Heart
 - b. The Soldier's Medal
 - c. The Medal of Honor
 - d. The Bronze Star Medal
4. Which one of these is not a part of the eight federal uniformed services of the United States?
 - a. Merchant Marines
 - b. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Officer Corps
 - c. Space Force
 - d. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
5. What was the name of the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine?
 - a. USS Seawolf
 - b. USS George Washington
 - c. USS Turtle
 - d. USS Nautilus

(answers on page 8)

VA Awards Beacon House \$150k for Veterans' Legal Clinic



Craig Bruno, Esq. lends a helping hand to a deserving veteran and his wife.

There are about 19 million military veterans in the United States today. Yet, according to Islip-based attorney Craig Bruno, law schools do not typically teach about laws related to veterans and veterans' rights and benefits. Consequently, it is often difficult for veterans to find knowledgeable attorneys to assist in obtaining eligible benefits, and/or working through the painstaking appeals process, and it is even more difficult to find attorneys willing to do so pro bono.

But for Craig Bruno, providing pro bono legal assistance to veterans is both a self-taught vocation and a passion worth pursuing.

"Years ago, following my retirement from [private practice], I volunteered at the Veterans' and Servicemembers' Rights Clinic at Touro Law Center," says Craig. He eventually became director of the clinic. "Nearly two years ago, I had a conversation with Frank (UVBH president & CEO Frank

Amalfitano), which led me to provide legal services to veterans at Beacon House."

The past two years have seen Craig assist dozens of veterans through his collaboration with Beacon House, but there never seemed to be enough days in the week or hours in the day to address the myriad legal matters presented to him. Now, with the help of a \$150,000 grant from the US Veteran's Administration, Craig is able to expand the clinic and bring on additional attorneys.

Currently, Craig offers legal assistance to veterans by phone, and at an office located in one of the agency's group homes in Bay Shore. Veterans do not have to be in residence at Beacon House to use Craig's services, though most of his clients are affiliated with the agency. The legal clinic is open for phone calls and appointments Monday through Friday, 9am – 3pm; Craig is often available by phone at other times. The expanded

clinic, courtesy of the VA grant, will increase the number of veterans that can obtain legal counsel.

Many veterans face obstacles in obtaining earned benefits as the system can appear complex, and the effort daunting. But with Craig's experience, expertise and patience, many veterans now receive their entitlements. In fact, Craig recently helped a Vietnam veteran obtain benefits — which he had been long-entitled to receive, but demurred in obtaining because of his belief that others were more worthy.

"His wife reached out, knowing that the assistance was there, and that it was both needed and deserving. It took some convincing from both of us, but eventually he agreed. He now receives his benefits, which is a great help to him and his family."

Beacon House stands ready to assist! Contact the Legal Clinic at 631.560.4054, or by email at cbruno@uvbh.com.

Join Us for the Veterans Salute Gala on October 18th

This year's Veterans Salute Gala, slated for October 18th at the Heritage Club in Bethpage State Park, Farmingdale, will bring back Beacon House's faithful supporters and sponsors for a joyous night of celebration in honor of our veterans. Over 400 people joined us last year, and this year promises to bring out even more supporters for what is always a festive, yet moving, evening

The upcoming event will feature a glorious cocktail hour, followed by live music and a delicious formal

dinner. The Red Carpet Salute – now a hallmark of the annual event – will once again showcase veterans from Long Island, as selected by their employers. This event provides an opportunity for area employers to acknowledge and honor their employees – often among their best employees! – who have served in the US armed forces.

This dramatic feature always stuns as the lights dim and each veteran walks the red carpet, while our emcee, Doug Geed from News 12

Long Island, provides a brief bio for each honoree.

The gala is Beacon House's marquis fund raising event, and provides much-needed funds for programs and services not covered by existing grants. We expect to break a record this year by exceeding our goal of \$325,000.

We hope you will join us for a memorable evening in service of a great cause – honoring those who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms.



Left: Honoring our Nation's Heroes, Retired Army Reserve Veteran, Captain Kenneth Hoffman, Ranger Robert T. Oakes, Veteran U.S. Army, and Beacon House Chairman of the Board Adam Wood stand hand on heart, pledging allegiance to our great nation.

Below: More than 400 Gala attendees sit in anticipation of our Red Carpet Salute Veteran Honorees.



National Grid Partnership



Left: Team National Grid joins Beacon House President/CEO Frank Amalfitano to proudly announce their support in helping launch the Beacon House Linen Closet. Pictured are Alex Paoli, National Grid Analyst; Frank Amalfitano, Beacon House CEO/President; Kathy Wisniewski, National Grid Director of Customer and Community Management; and National Grid Intern, Amy Pasquale.

Above: National Grid Project C team leaders Dominic Graziani, Keith Rooney & Phillip Echevarrio are on-site with Beacon House President/CEO Frank Amalfitano at a volunteer event to revitalize the grounds of a veteran group home.

Beacon House is pleased to announce its partnership with National Grid. Begun last year, this unique collaboration with the utility's Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG) has already yielded tremendous benefit.

National Grid's generous commitment to Beacon House elicited great media coverage from joint events – including the Suffolk County Veterans Agency's "Stand Down" event in Hauppauge; Over 150 veterans gathered at to the H. Lee Dennison Building in Hauppauge, where volunteers from Beacon House and National Grid distributed \$50 food gift cards, insulated bags and first aid kits to veterans as they drove up in their vehicles.

In addition, National Grid volunteers dedicated their time and resources to enhance our veteran homes. Spring plantings, sprucing up and general good cheer permeate the veterans' homes during these group endeavors. This in-person involvement with our veterans is very special, and we at Beacon House truly appreciate their efforts.

Beacon House's "Linen Closet" program – facilitated through National Grid's funding and contributions of kitchen, bathroom and bedding items, has been a big hit. Dozens of our resident veterans now have comfortable, new linens.

We at Beacon House believe strongly in providing a respectable

level of accommodations to those struggling with maintaining their independence. Thanks to National Grid's support, we continue to provide clean, comfortable environments as our veterans undertake the hard work of reclaiming their lives.

There will be more collaborative events with National Grid this year, and we thank them for their commitment to the many veterans we serve.

**To learn more about
how you can make a difference
in the life of a veteran,
[click here.](#)**

Anne Shybunko-Moore

2023 Veterans Salute Gala Honoree



Anne D. Shybunko-Moore is CEO and Owner of GSE Dynamics Inc., a Woman Owned Small Business, and a U.S. Defense Manufacturer. GSE was founded in 1971 and has two manufacturing facilities located on Long Island. GSE specializes in providing complex structural assemblies direct to the United States Air Force, Navy and Army, as well as Major

Aerospace Primes. Anne joined GSE in 2001, and has been strategically growing the company and expanding its capabilities.

The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) awarded her company the prestigious Outstanding Readiness Support award for Woman Owned Business. GSE Dynamics was recognized as a Top Shop for the Composites Industry by Composites World Magazine for the past three years. In 2022, GSE was awarded with the Herald's Legacy Award for Family Business and the Inaugural "Voice of Industry" award from the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA). GSE continues to be a top supplier to DLA in terms of business volume for Small Businesses and for Woman Owned Small Businesses.

Nationally, Anne is a member of the Supplier Management Council of the AIA and also currently serves on the AIA Board of Governors. In 2023 she was elected to a two-year term on the Executive

Committee, the leading governing body of the AIA comprised of senior representatives of member companies, to be the voice of Small Business. From 2014-2017, Anne was an appointed member of The National Women's Business Council (NWBC), a non-partisan federal advisory council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners.

Anne also lends her leadership strengths to various councils. On the State level, Anne is an appointed member of Governor Hochul's Long Island Regional Economic Development Council, and served on the State Workforce Investment Board from 2014-2018. On the local level, Anne is on the Board of Directors of the Hauppauge Industrial Association (HIA), representing the largest innovation park in the northeast.

A Match Made in Heaven (from page 1)

"When I and members of the family foundation met with Frank [Amalfitano] and Tina [Sferrazza], we quickly realized we were kindred spirits in the cause of supporting our veterans," said Harry Singh.

"The Bolla Charity Foundation has and will continue to support

need, particularly those men and women who have sacrificed so much for this country.

When we visited the site in Levittown, which houses six veterans, we knew right away that we would commit to doing more than a simple update. On the spot, we decided to adopt the residence as a Foundation project. A year later, we adopted another group in Freeport, which houses 13 veterans."

This partnership, between the Bolla Family Foundation and United Veterans Beacon House, is the first of its kind for the agency.

More information on this exciting program, and the Bolla Charity Foundation's commitment to Beacon House, is forthcoming in the very near future.

"The generosity and commitment shown by Harry Singh and his family's foundation is so incredibly meaningful," said Frank Amalfitano, president and CEO of UVBH.

"These word-of-mouth connections always yield great results, and I encourage everyone involved with our mission to continue to talk to others about what we do."



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT | ADAM WOOD

How does a lawyer-turned-wealth-management-advisor become the chairman of Long Island's largest veterans' organization? If you're Adam Wood, it comes about the "Beacon House Way" – through word of mouth, friendships, personal engagement and the realization that United Veterans Beacon House is a very special organization.

"Jackie DeLeonardis (COO, UVBH) is a close family friend," shares Adam. "And she introduced me to the organization. At first, I assisted in legal matters for some of the veteran residents – minor landlord/tenant and estate planning cases. It was very rewarding to help."

An estate planning attorney by trade, Adam spent nearly ten years running his own successful law firm when, in 2019, he joined Merrill Lynch. A people-person at heart, Adam knew that relationship building would comprise a big part his work. Indeed, Adam's commitment to bringing exponential value to his clients through a fully customized financial planning process has yielded personal and professional rewards.

"Guiding individuals, business founders and executives through key financial decisions – for them-



selves and those whom they love – is well-matched to my personality," shares Adam.

Adam's volunteer work with Beacon House enabled him to see first-hand the myriad ways the organization helps veterans, and the passionate dedication of its staff. Ultimately, Adam accepted an invitation to join the Beacon House board of directors in 2012-13. Six years later, he became chairman.

"Guiding and working with the board of directors at Beacon House is indescribably rewarding. This board truly operates on a granular level, as we've come to know individual veterans and their stories. When I see the difference our work makes in the lives of

individual veterans, I'm both humbled and proud."

During Adam's tenure, Beacon House has expanded its services to include 52 residences for homeless veterans, dozens of new programs designed to enable independent living, and a substantial increase in private donations.

As for the future of Beacon House, Adam foresees a continued focus on transitional housing to facilitate formerly homeless veterans' independence, along with identifying and implementing timely programs to assist in all facets of a veteran's life.

"As long as there are veterans in need, Beacon House will be here," adds Adam. "And I'll be a part of it as long as they will have me."

Adam holds a Juris Doctorate from The Touro College Jacob Fuchsberg Law Center. He earned a Bachelor's degree from University of Scranton where he also played lacrosse. In addition to making fitness and good nutrition a priority, Adam and his wife, Allyson, are the proud parents of three children. They reside in Kings Park, New York.

Trivia Corner Answers

1: b. *Operation Neptune* was the naval component of the larger Operation Overlord, and is commonly referred to as D-Day or the Normandy Landings. Operation Neptune had the largest amphibious invasion force ever assembled and accounts for the largest seaborne invasion ever executed in history.

2: c. *Navy Fighter Weapons School*; nicknamed TOPGUN, or more popularly Top Gun (due to the famous 1986 movie). This program was established during the Vietnam War due to the unprecedented number of airplanes and aircrew being lost in the war. The TOPGUN

program paid off in that it developed a reputation for excellence, produced top fighter pilots, and became a model for other military training programs.

3: a. *The Purple Heart*; whose reverse says, "For Military Merit." The original Purple Heart, known as the Badge of Military Merit (which took the form of a heart made from purple cloth), was originally established by George Washington in 1782. The US awards Purple Hearts to soldiers wounded or killed by enemy means and it can only be earned in combat.

4: a. *The Merchant Marines* are made up of civilian mariners and merchant vessels engaged in commerce and transport in

and out of the navigable waters of the US. While Merchant Marines aren't a government agency or military service, in wartime it can become a Navy auxiliary service to deliver military personnel and material. The Navy also maintains a Department of Naval Sciences at the Merchant Marine Academy.

5: d. *The USS Nautilus* was launched in 1954 and was the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine as well as the first submarine to complete a submerged transit of the North Pole in 1958. This submarine shares its name with fictional submarine belonging to Captain Nemo in Jules Verne's famous novel "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."