

News Release

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Greta Johnson
Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of Executive Shapiro
gjohnson@summitoh.net
330-643-2656



Local Officials Cut Ribbon on First Housing Facility for Female Veterans

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—On Thursday, September 26, 2019, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, City of Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan, Summit County Fiscal Officer Kristen Scalise, Summit County Veterans Service Commission Director Larry Moore, Summit County Land Bank Executive Director Patrick Bravo and Family and Community Services Executive Director Mark Frisone cut the ribbon on Summit Liberty House, the County’s first homeless female veteran housing facility. In response to a need for homeless female veteran housing, various Summit County entities, the City of Akron and Family and Community Services joined together to acquire and renovate a four unit apartment building on Arch Street in Akron.

“Female veterans are the fastest growing segment among homeless veterans. As more women answer the call to serve our nation, we must be ready to serve them when they return home,” said Executive Shapiro. “Summit Liberty House represents one step in our preparation for a changing veteran population. We will continue to listen, identify needs and take action to ensure all our veterans are receiving the support they need.”

The property was acquired by the Summit County Land Bank in 2018. Over the course of the last year, Executive Shapiro’s Department of Community and Economic Development and the City of Akron led the work to renovate the building using federal funds and Summit County Public Health contributed lead abatement funds. The deed to the property was transferred to Family and Community Services and the nonprofit will run the day to day management of the housing facility. Family and Community Services operates a similar facility for female veterans in Portage County, as well as Valor House for male veterans in Summit County.

“The vision for the Summit Liberty House fits perfectly with the mission of the Summit County Land Bank: to support neighborhoods and communities through reinvestment and revitalization,” said Fiscal Officer and Chair of the Land Bank Scalise. “I expect this facility, through its support of female veterans and their children, will uplift Summit County.”

The facility is move-in ready and Family and Community Services is working with Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Summit County Continuum of Care to place female veterans in the housing facility.

“Every person in our community deserves to live in dignified housing, especially those who have given so much through their service in the armed forces,” said Mayor Horrigan. “Summit Liberty House is a commitment to that belief and a promise that we will take care of our heroes when they return home from duty.”

Family and Community Services received a grant from the Women’s Endowment Fund of Akron Community Foundation to provide support services, ensuring all services offered at the male veteran Valor Home will be offered to female veterans at Liberty House. Residents will have access to case management, creative art therapy, the Summa Stress Center and services from The Red Bird Center, a multicultural healing center specializing in trauma recovery. The neighboring property was recently demolished by the Land Bank and a playground will soon be constructed through donations from Huntington Bank and others local organizations.

“Our organization is grateful for the support of our local elected officials and community and philanthropic leaders. This project could not have become a reality without a strong commitment to collaboration from each,” said Executive Director Frisone. “Family and Community Services has a proud history of serving veterans and we look forward to continuing this tradition with female veterans in Summit County.”

Summit Liberty House is one of two charities selected to receive funds from the 2019 Halloween Charity Ball. The donated funds will go towards programming for female veterans and their children. Learn more at <https://www.halloweencharityball.org/>.



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