



Dear Community Partner,

Family & Community Services, Inc. (FCS) has served veterans and their family members since World War II. The agency, incorporated in 1941, developed programming in 1945 to support Portage County's veterans who were struggling to make ends meet. Our roots began with serving all who've served our country and is an essential part of what we do.

Sixty years after our first veteran program opened, FCS received a capital grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to meet yet another growing need among veterans – emergency shelter. With the continuous rise in numbers of veterans becoming homeless after being discharged, the need for an emergency shelter was answered, and FCS built Freedom House, a 9-bed, 4,000 square foot facility for male veterans of Portage County that was equipped with five bedrooms, three full bathrooms, a kitchen, dining room, living room, and office space for 24/7 staff.

The Freedom House has served us well over the past 15 years, but the space does not meet a number of emerging needs we are currently experiencing – specifically to accommodate female veterans, as well as to allow safer spaces for social distancing and COVID mandates for all veterans served. Thanks to funding provided from the VA yet again, FCS will be able to make renovations to Freedom House to create individual bedrooms and bathrooms for each veteran sheltered. The renovations will give them the space, privacy and safety they need to work towards obtaining permanent housing, and will also now allow FCS to “Serve All Who've Served,” regardless of their gender.

Funds are needed to complete this project. You can help us “Serve All Who've Served” through a donation, sponsorship, or volunteering. Please review the materials enclosed to learn more about how to get involved.

Thank you for your support of Freedom House and the many veterans we have served throughout the years. The agency believes that no veteran should ever be homeless, and with your help, we can make sure we can serve all veterans. For more information, please contact Matthew Slater, Director of Development, at 330-687-8136 or [m Slater@fcsOhio.org](mailto:m Slater@fcsOhio.org).

Sincerely,

Mark Frisone  
Executive Director

Matthew Slater  
Director of Development



# Our Fundraising Goal

## History of Freedom House

Nearly twenty years ago, Freedom House was an idea born from a need to help a growing homeless veteran population in Portage County. That idea soon became a reality thanks to the collaborative efforts of the local housing authority, donors, and staff. After many preparations, Freedom House officially opened its doors on January 10, 2005. By the end of the day, there were two veterans sheltered, and by the end of the month, the 9-bed facility was full.

With funding from the United Way of Portage County, the Ravenna American Legion #331, and the Streetsboro VFW #9716, Freedom House served veterans at this facility, located near campus in downtown Kent, for three years. The facility, however, still could not accommodate the demand for housing for homeless veterans. So staff set out to obtain capital funding through the Department of Veteran Services to build a new facility and expand programming space.

In 2007, a capital grant was awarded to Freedom House, and construction plans were underway with the goal of increasing the facility space from 9 to 14 beds. The new facility would also include shared living areas, including a kitchen, living room, and meeting room, as well as a fenced in back yard. With the help of Habitat for Humanity and many local businesses, community groups, churches, and volunteers, the new Freedom House was built. Due to shared bedrooms, however, the facility only accommodated male veterans.

Today, Freedom House embarks on yet another journey to serve both men and women at its facility through a renovation project that will provide private living spaces for all residents who have served. With the number of homeless female veterans on the rise, Family & Community Services believes it is imperative to be able to serve all veterans, regardless of gender. With your help, we will be able to transform our facility from one with congregate, shared spaces to one that offers private bathrooms and bedrooms for each veteran served. This will help us ensure that we can "Serve All Who Have Served." Thank you for helping us meet this growing need in our community, and for ensuring that no veteran is left behind.

## Budget

<b>Total Project Cost</b> .....	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
VA Grant Funding .....	\$875,000
Fundraising Goal .....	\$125,000

# Our Goal: \$125,000



# Community Need

Family & Community Services, Inc. (FCS) is leading the charge on housing all veterans who find themselves homeless, including females. In fact, female veterans are the fastest growing homeless population. And they are dealing with unique challenges like military sexual trauma. F&CS believes that we have a duty to respond to all veterans and their children in need and is committed to providing services that accommodate the needs of all genders.

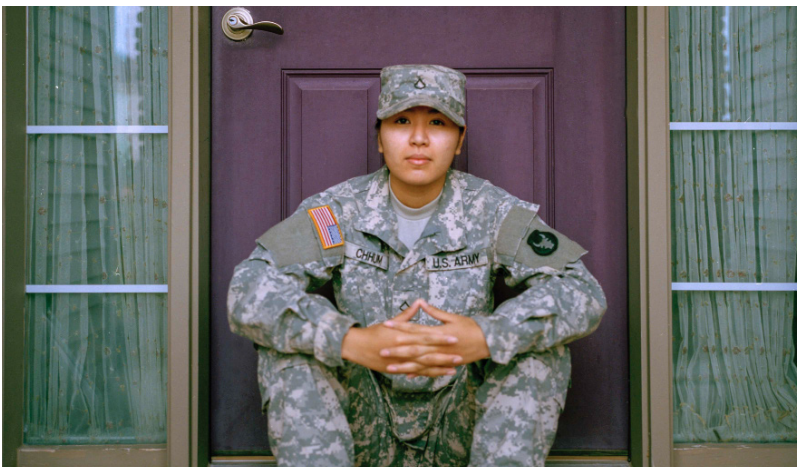
Our facility renovations will allow us to serve the growing population of female veterans in addition to providing private bedrooms and bathrooms for all veterans.

This will help us meet the two major needs of female veterans that are often unmet:

1. Safe, transitional housing to reside in while searching for safe, affordable permanent housing.
2. Programming that targets the specific needs of homeless female veterans and their children.

**Female veterans are the fastest growing homeless population.**

**They have grown from just 2% of the homeless population to 8%.**



**Only around 40% of female veterans receive any benefits from The Department of Veterans Affairs paints a bleak picture of our Country serving all veterans.**

With your support, we can make sure that Portage County's female veterans who are homeless also can be served at Freedom House. With your support, we will be able to transform Freedom House from serving veterans in congregate bedrooms with shared bathrooms to a facility that has individual bedrooms and bathrooms, allowing for more privacy and the ability to house men and women together.



# Our Services

## A Home Away from Home

At Freedom House, our facility is truly a home away from home. With a large kitchen, dining room, living room, and private outdoor area, residents can tend to their daily needs and start to get their lives back on track in a comfortable, welcoming environment. After renovations are made, each veteran will also have their own private bedroom and bathroom. Staff are available on site 24/7 to provide support and resources for those who need it. Veterans also have access to a fully stocked pantry where they can access food, household supplies and toiletries.

## Support Plan

While at our facility, veterans meet weekly with staff for the first 12 weeks to establish goals that help the veteran work toward permanent housing and address other needs they may have. This can include signing up for VA benefits, accessing food and medical assistance, obtaining employment or other forms of income, and coming up with a housing plan.

## Therapeutic Groups

Therapeutic Groups include an employment integration group, a psycho-educational group for stress management conducted by SUMMA's stress center, as well as creative arts therapy (art, music, creative writing) for both veterans.

## Weekend Retreats to the Red Bird Center

The Red Bird Center (RBC) is a multi-cultural healing center located in Guernsey County, OH. The Center is run by Shianne Eagleheart, a licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor, with over 30 years of experience working with people in trauma, including 10 years of experience working with veterans in trauma. During weekend retreats, veterans have the opportunity to participate in Native American based healing ceremonies such as healing circles, welcome back home ceremonies, healing lodges, medicine walks, and witnessing the modern day healing story of The Wounded Bear.





# Sponsorship and Donor Info

## Donor Tree of Life Sponsorship Levels

Three levels of giving that will be recognized on our Donor Tree of Life, which will be displayed in the main living area of Freedom House. All donations will be used toward the capital campaign to help us reach our fundraising goal of \$125,000.

- Yes, I want to sponsor the Donor Tree of Life. Select level below.**
- \$5,000 – Liberty
- \$10,000 – Equality
- \$ 25,000 – Freedom
  
- Yes, I want to make a one-time donation. Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**  
\*Please make check payable to Freedom House

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Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Please complete and mail your contribution to:

Trisia Allerton at 705 Oakwood Street, Suite 115, Ravenna, OH 44266

Freedom House is a program of Family & Community Services, Inc. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law. Please consult with your tax advisor to determine advice in this regard. All contributions will be acknowledged by a receipt from Freedom House, which may be used for tax filing documentation.





# Volunteer Opportunities

Help us serve all who have served by volunteering your time. We are in need of volunteers for the projects below. Whether you come with a group or would like to volunteer individually, your skills and time will make a huge impact on our project!

## Painting New Rooms

We will have XX rooms that need a fresh coat of paint. We will provide supplies and equipment, we just need a few helping hands.

## Putting Furniture Together

Rooms will be equipped with new furniture for our veterans. If you are handy and good at following instructions, you can help us make a veteran's room come to life.

## Landscaping

The final project will be completing the landscaping at our facility. We'll need help with cleaning up existing beds, planting new flowers or shrubs, and laying mulch.

