



The American Legion

DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY

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Department Project 2016/2017

As Commander for 2016/2017, I have chosen a department Project which focuses on the problems of homeless veterans. Many have histories of PTSD, previous addictions, suicide attempts and other forms of mental illness. After much research, I identified what I believe to be the most urgent need. It is a program called "Hope for Veterans" at Community Hope, which opened in 2004 as the largest and most comprehensive program for homeless veterans in New Jersey. It is a 95 bed transitional housing program located on the Lyons Campus. It works cooperatively with the two Vet Havens. Last year Community Hope instituted a pilot program, which included a Mental Health therapist to provide on-site therapy for the residents. The result of the pilot program was a significant decrease in addiction relapses, and fewer hospitalizations for psychiatric issues. "Hope for Veterans" is in need of a funding grant to continue this on-site therapy program, with the intention of making this a permanent part of their services. With the help of the **Sons of the American Legion**, our project will be to provide the funding of this on-site therapy program. It will not just improve the lives of veterans - it will save lives!

In addition to the funding for "Hope for Veterans", this year's project will include improvements to both Vets Haven North and Vets Haven South. For Vets Haven North, the project will include the purchase of 15 new computers and 30 computer chairs. For Vets Haven South, we will erect a 12 foot gazebo at the wood's edge and patio furniture to provide a place for peace and relaxation.

The projected cost of the project is approximately \$121,000.00 (Hope for Veterans - \$98,000, Vets Haven North - \$16,000, Vets Haven South - \$6,500). Your contributions, large or small, will be greatly appreciated. Please make checks payable to "The American Legion Department of New Jersey" and note in the memo line "Department Project". Our homeless veterans are looking to put their lives back together and **THEY NEED OUR HELP!** This important segment of our veteran population thanks you, their families' thank you, and we thank you.

For God and Country,

Roger Gengaro, Commander

Jack Dunne, Project Chairman

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