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**LHOP RECEIVES \$15,000 GRANT INITIATING 1ST PHASE OF
THE VETERANS COURT "LANCASTER BARRACKS" PROJECT**

Lancaster, PA – Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership (LHOP) will announce on Aug. 3rd funding received from the Pennsylvania Veterans Foundation assisting LHOP, the Veterans County Community Partnership (VCCP) and Veterans Court to reach a milestone in the 1st phase of the "Lancaster Barracks" campaign tipping donations over 51% of the campaign goal of \$100,000. This gift provides LHOP and the VCCP the resources to move forward in purchasing a house.

Veterans Court is a 5-year-old treatment court in Lancaster County developed by and under the direction of Judge Jeffery Wright. The Court provides veterans in the criminal justice system, charged with certain crimes, an individualized treatment program based on proven national research and program models. There have been 34 graduates of the program to date. The benefits of the program for our veterans and their families are a return to a "normal life".

In addition to the personal benefits for the veteran and their families, the community benefits as well. In addition to helping the veterans, the program is much more cost-effective than traditional incarceration. It costs nearly \$25,000 annually to incarcerate someone as opposed to approximately \$3,100 in the Veterans Court Program, saving tax payers over \$325,000+ in saved jail costs, \$123,000+ in fines, costs and restitution paid and 6,000+ hours of community service.

Volunteers with the Veterans Court Community Partnership (VCCP) have identified an acute need for our veterans participating in the Veterans Court program in Lancaster County, stable housing. "We are excited and honored to be a part of this trail blazing project by making a difference to the veterans who need a hand-up and at the same time making a significant impact in our community," stated D'Agostino, a veteran himself and a member of the VCCP. To address

this vital need, community partners have come together to develop a unique solution, the “Lancaster Barracks”. “We are honored to support this initiative, which we believe can be a model program for Counties across Pennsylvania” states Mike Gould, Chairman and Founder of the Pennsylvania Veterans Foundation. “Any program that can integrate the positive impact of Veterans Court, safe and secure housing, self-enabling skills, and employment, while bettering the larger Community, well, we are all in.”

Through this partnership of VCCP of American Legion Post 34, Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership (LHOP) and CAPital Workforce (a program of the Community Action Partnership), a vacant dilapidated house within Lancaster City will now be purchased and rehabilitated into a home that will accommodate up to three Veterans Court participants at a time in the advanced phases of the Veterans Court program. Barracks supporters believe this is the first type of housing project within a Veterans Court program in the nation.

Graduates and current participants of Veterans Court have committed to volunteer to rehab the house through “sweat equity,” along with CAPital Workforce and other partners who will provide time, skills, training and materials. Through this combined effort we will be able to keep the cost reasonable and the project sustainable for the future. Some of the veteran participants will have the opportunity to work full-time with CAPital Workforce to continue their apprenticeship training with the goal of being hired by private contractors, for a rewarding career in the construction trades, something our employers in the community need.

Through the 1st phase of the campaign, \$51,294 has been received in a very small, quiet and grassroots effort in a four-month span. The Barracks will be purchased in the City of Lancaster within walking distance of the Lancaster Courthouse. “The Barracks will give resident participants another step toward healing, accountability and independence,” stated Bonnie Bowman, Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds and chairperson of the VCCP.

LHOP will own the Barracks house, be managed by a professional property manager and residents subject to the rules of the Veterans Court program. For more information or to donate visit <http://www.lhop.org/lancaster-barracks/> or call (717) 291-9945 x108.

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