

## **A Veteran Rewrites His Own History, One Day at a Time**

***How you are helping reshape the life of a local veteran***

*“They said ‘you’re going to be okay, we’ve got your back and we’re going to get you back on track so you can just live your life.’”*

- Doug, Liberty House resident

The late Spring sun glared through the window as Doug Grant sat down at the table to dig into his latest historical fiction book. It was his moment of peace after a hard day at work.

Doug carries a long career in manufacturing, including the production of prosthetics for veterans and even hardware installed on the International Space Station. But he’s not one to put his professional successes on a pedestal; rather, his story is a powerful reminder that even those who have accomplished much have their personal struggles.

Today, Doug is almost a year into his stay at Liberty House. The program provides substance-free housing for veterans facing homelessness and other significant barriers in their lives, as well as assistance with food, clothing, transportation and other daily needs for veterans in the community.

As he takes a break from reading, he reflects on how grateful he is – for this moment, for Liberty House and how donor support has helped him get his life back on track.

### **Choosing His Path in Life**

Doug grew up in Dorchester, Mass., where most kids in the ‘60s and ‘70s faced constant exposure to “run with the bad crowds.” While many of his childhood friends spent nights in jail, Doug instead spent hours immersed in his passion for reading. His favorites included the Old Testament and everything related to American, world or military history.

After graduating high school, he got his own apartment and eventually became a machinist. Within five years, Doug and his childhood friend, Jim, took out a loan to buy some machine shop equipment and they started a business in a cellar space. As that was getting off the ground, Doug, then married with two children, worked various part-time jobs to help make ends meet for his family.

Jim and Doug were soon approached by an investor in precision gear manufacturing and they took on contracts for military and aerospace applications, including work related to the Hubble Space Telescope and International Space Station. They also made gears for arm and leg prosthetics for veterans.



**Continued Inside**

## **A Veteran Rewrites His Own History: Continued**

Doug always dreamed of serving his country. In 1983, he joined the Army National Guard and went to Fort Benning in Georgia for infantry training, with a focus on anti-tank TOW missiles. After six years of service and advanced training, he was honorably discharged.

### **“It Can Happen to Anyone”**

Doug drank daily for years, without any apparent impact on his life. After his marriage fell apart and his children moved away, the drinks became higher in frequency and volume. He received 2 DWIs over the course of a few years. He knew he was losing control.

“While I was still functioning and supporting my family, something was different,” said Doug. “It got to a point where I would have a drink and not know how to shut it off.”

With the support of his children and now former wife, he attended his first 28-day rehab program in New Hampshire. After bouncing around a few other programs, he began to understand that being an alcoholic is a cyclical journey. He would relapse, attend another program, relapse again and so on.

Doug needed more structure, a sense of community and a feeling of purpose. He heard about Liberty House from another veteran while at a treatment center. Within a week, he interviewed with and moved into Liberty House.

### **Liberty House: A Safe, Supportive Haven filled with Comradery**

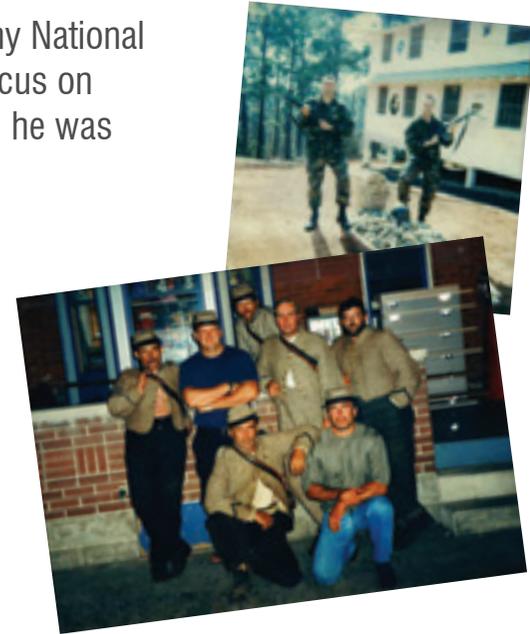
Liberty House was acquired by Catholic Charities NH in 2019, which allowed the program to expand its services and ability to serve more veterans like Doug. In 2020, it moved into a 16,000-square-foot home in Manchester, which more than doubled its residential capacity. The building was also renovated to meet the needs of local veterans, including the creation of the Center for Veterans, a central location for recovery meetings, community gatherings, job skills seminars and other veteran resources.

“They were so welcoming,” Doug recalls. “They said ‘you’re going to be okay, we’ve got your back and we’re going to get you back on track so you can just live your life.’ It brought me a feeling of comfort that I didn’t have before.”

Residents like Doug move through Liberty House’s unique 4-step program. This includes recovery support, mental and physical wellness, gaining meaningful employment and the ultimate transition to independence. Most of these veterans either lack or have limited veteran benefits and often find difficulty accessing appropriate services.

Despite feeling a sense of connection, Doug experienced some doubt and anxiety. One day, he escaped to alcohol once again. Liberty House’s strict zero-tolerance policy meant that Doug could no longer stay there.

“Relapse is a normal part of the recovery process,” said Jeff Nelson, executive director of Liberty House. “Nearly three-fourths of our residents will relapse in some capacity. We’ve seen over time how our ‘open door’ policy can be beneficial and natural for a veteran to reset things and progress to where they need to go.”



“I made an irrational choice, but the staff really rallied for me to get me back to a place where I could resume my Liberty House journey,” said Doug.

When he moved back in, Doug vowed to himself that there would be no more “thoughtless mistakes.” He regularly met with his case manager, Jen Barlow, setting goals to help in his recovery – exercising again, opening a savings account and finding a job.

“One of the things that stands out about Doug is his commitment to self-improvement and growth, and the importance of plasticity over resiliency,” said Barlow. “For him, resiliency is the ability to bounce back stronger from a setback whereas plasticity goes beyond resiliency in that a person also has the ability to evaluate and modify his behavior based on past experience.”

Building a healthier lifestyle is at the core of the Liberty House program requirements. A 10 p.m. curfew keeps residents like Doug accountable and helps further promote positive sleep habits. Liberty House provides daily meals, clothing allowances and other forms of support, such as transportation to job interviews or appointments, as well as connections to medical providers. Residents are also required to go through financial literacy training so they can learn valuable ways to decrease debt, manage their money and work on a reasonable budget.

For Doug, this structure has instilled a new level of confidence. “I grew up with some structure in my life. But I also know how the throes of addiction can take that away quickly. This has been an opportunity for me to rebuild and maintain that discipline again and become more responsible.”

As his time at Liberty House winds down, Doug wants to pay it forward.

“Doug is a very humble, thoughtful and bright guy who has had his fair share of successes and downfalls in life, and he’s using those experiences and lessons to be a positive leader,” added Nelson. “Our residents really look up to him and they can always count on him, whether it’s getting guys to a meeting or helping them avoid making bad choices. He truly cares about others and is one most compassionate people I’ve met.”

“Doug is an excellent mentor, not just in recovery but in life in general,” said Jason, a fellow Liberty House veteran. “He has experience and wisdom and always extends his hand to help others without hesitation.”

## **Filled with Gratitude**

Now 62 and sober for a year, Doug is back on the road to independence. He’s stabilized his recovery and has meaningful work as a quality engineer in the Lakes Region.

When asked about the impact Liberty House had on him, one word comes to mind – gratitude.

“There was a lot of pain and despair in my life, but Liberty House helped me recognize how far I’ve come and how hopeful I am,” said Doug. “And that starts with gratitude – gratitude for the simple things in life, gratitude for how we are continually here for each other, and gratitude to the donors who have created this opportunity to start over again.”

**Make a difference today:**  
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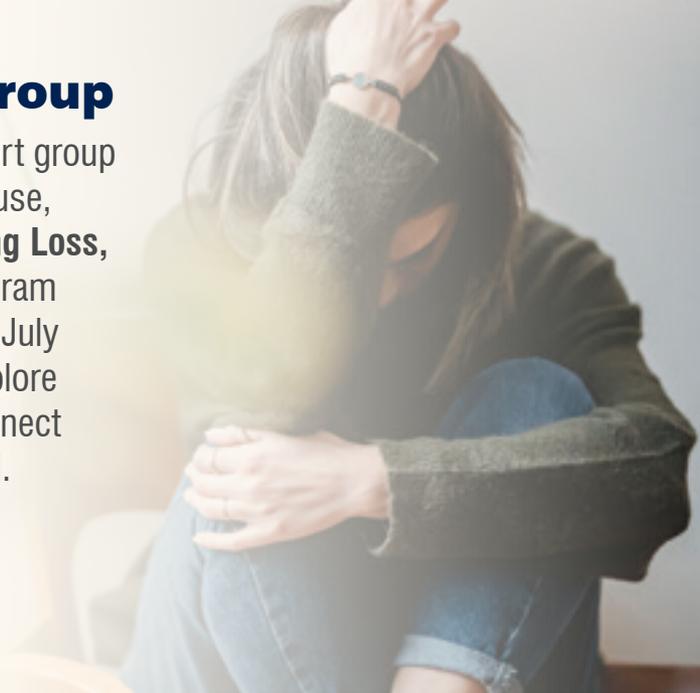
**Scan to view a  
special video  
message from Doug**



## Online Bereavement Support Group

Catholic Charities NH will be hosting another online support group for those who are struggling with the recent loss of a spouse, family member or loved one. **Bereavement – Experiencing Loss, Being Lost and Finding Your Way Again** is a weekly program (six sessions) held online (Zoom), beginning Wednesday, July 13. Participants will learn about the dynamics of grief, explore different coping strategies and have an opportunity to connect with others in similar situations. There is no cost to attend.

To register, visit [cc-nh.org/bereavement](http://cc-nh.org/bereavement) or call Elaine Frenette at 603-752-1325.



## A Need for Volunteers: Caring Rides for Homebound Seniors

CareGivers is seeking volunteers to meet the growing demand for its Caring Rides program, which serves homebound seniors in Greater Manchester, Greater Nashua and now the Lakes Region.

Volunteers drive seniors to medical appointments, dental visits, the pharmacy and other vital appointments. You may choose where and how often you volunteer, whether once a month or every week. To learn how you can make a life-changing impact for seniors facing isolation, visit [caringrides.org](http://caringrides.org) or call 603-622-4948.



## Grant Recognition

Thank you to the following for awarding grants to support Catholic Charities NH's programs and services:

Blanche M. Walsh Charity Trust .....	New Generation
Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust .....	Liberty House
Norwin S. and Elizabeth N. Bean Foundation .....	CareGivers
People United Community Foundation .....	Liberty House
Town of Exeter .....	New Generation
Town of Hampton .....	New Generation
Volunteer NH .....	CareGivers

## Your Legacy

Make a lasting impact by naming Catholic Charities NH in your will or estate plans. For more information contact Karen Moynihan at **603-669-3030**.

## Upcoming Events: Save the Date!

### Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Christmas in July 5k

Sunday, July 10, 2022 @ 8:30am - The Stumble Inn, Londonderry

### CCNH Annual Gathering

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 @ 4:30pm - DoubleTree by Hilton Manchester

### Donor Recognition Mass

Thursday, October 6, 2022 @ 6:00pm - St. Pius X Parish, Manchester

### Liberty House Veterans Day Breakfast

Featuring former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo as guest speaker

Saturday, November 5, 2022 @ 9:00am - LaBelle Winery, Derry

### 26th Annual Mardi Gras Gala

Saturday, February 11, 2022 @ 4:30pm - DoubleTree by Hilton Manchester

Thanks to **Center for Wellbeing** and all their members for the generous support of New Generation.



We appreciate the team at **AutoFair Ford** and **XO Bistro** for their donation to Liberty House from the Taco Tour in May.



And thanks to the **Exeter Area GFWC** for their awesome support of New Generation.





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## The Impact of Your Gifts in the Past Year



**1-in-12**

New Hampshire residents in need directly benefited from our wide range of transformational social service programs.



**5,458**

Household members, facing poverty or other essential needs, were positively impacted with emergency assistance, financial literacy training and other support through our **Community Services** program.



**229**

Homeless and community veterans worked toward overcoming significant barriers with support and assistance from **Liberty House**.



**3,137**

Online and in-person sessions were provided by our **Mental Health Counseling Services**, helping individuals better cope with difficult life situations.