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roi

community.

home. independence.

To support children and adults with disabilities and their families, so that they may enjoy community and home and pursue health and independence.

*In this edition of our newsletter we're highlighting one of our newest components Stone Cottage Residence. While Stone Cottage is new to ROI, in reading Beulah Price's article below you note the history of this service.*

# Stone Cottage Residence

by Beulah Price, Program Coordinator

The main building at Stone Cottage Residence is a group home, licensed for twenty people. In addition, there are two independent cottages on the premises that serve individuals often living more independently but needing a level of support and assistance. Between both cottages, there are nine individuals; so Stone Cottage actually serves up to twenty-nine individuals. Almost everyone that resides here is challenged by one or more mental health-issues, although all the residents are very functional adults. The vast majority are veterans, ranging from World War II to present, and, as such, presented with a potential additional set of mental health issues. We feel privileged and honored to serve these residents who have so bravely served us.

### History

Stone Cottage was built in the 1930's by Dr. Willard Howard as his medical clinic and home. The small replica cottage was built for his mother-in-law, who, at the age of ninety-nine, got remarried and moved in with her new husband. In the 1960's,

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US Representative Fred Upton presents a flag flown over the Capitol to Stone Cottage. Accepting are Veterans, and Stone Cottage residents Robert Blom and Samantha Roeder.

Felicia Matheson bought the building and operated the facility as a Basic Nursing Home, licensed for forty- five residents. The Matheson family closed the facility in 1973 and moved the nursing home to their current location on 35<sup>th</sup> street, near Galesburg. In 1986, the Battle Creek Veterans hospital contacted Henry Matheson and asked him if he would be willing to open a home for veterans. Excited about a new venture and also the chance to serve veterans, Henry asked his Nursing Home Administrator Beulah Price if she would be willing to run the home. Both gladly welcomed this opportunity. The VA contracted with Henry and the home flourished. Beulah Price continues to run the home, and one of the original veterans still resides here today.

### Current Referrals

Stone Cottage also offers services to other groups of individuals in need of a safe, stable, loving home. We continue to work mainly with the VA, but we also work closely with the Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Services, Michigan Prisoner Reentry Program, Community Mental Health, InterAct, Mental Health Intensive Case Management, Senior Services and Bridgeways, just to name a few.

### Future Trends

The number of returning veterans with a need for a home is increasing rapidly. We, as well as the VA, are thankful that we have the capacity to serve these residents. Mental health treatment has moved to a more independent, personalized plan, and the living options at Stone Cottage allow for this personalization. Stone Cottage is dedicated to helping those that most of society has forgotten or ignored and we are thankful that we have such a strong knit family that truly loves and takes care of one another.

### Matters of the Heart

One of our residents, who has been with us for twenty years, was replaced here by a very kind social worker. This resident had been in seemingly every AFC home, including ours, in Michigan and been discharged from all of them. The social worker was a very dedicated VA worker and between her and the resident's mother, the resident was placed here because they knew if anyone could work with this resident that Beulah and Stone Cottage could and would. He continues to reside here and is a wonderful part of our family.

A DHS worker called and had a special request. She had a married couple with a little dog that needed emergency placement. The couple had been kicked out of their apartment due to their poor hygiene and living conditions and were staying at the mission. The wife would walk the streets at night with the little dog because pets were not allowed at the mission and the husband would walk the streets all day with the dog. Stone Cottage was able to accommodate them and the little dog brought so much joy to the residents. When, sadly, the little dog passed away last fall, we all mourned. Now we are able to smile when we think about our little "dust mop."

A broken heart led one Vietnam Veteran to us. When he was in Vietnam, he fell in love with a beautiful woman and they were together for a few years. He asked her to marry him and come back to the US with him, but she said no. His family tried to comfort and care for him, but he would scream his love's name and had to be placed at the VA. Continued on Page 3

This resident has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Schizophrenia but is doing extremely well. Once in a while, he will talk about his love, but now it is with a tender sadness instead of uncontrollable outrage and hurt. He's a celebrity at the VA and they have complemented us on how well this resident has recovered. Perhaps time can heal most wounds.

A young boy of thirteen enlisted in the United States Navy. His age was forged so that he could fight for his country. Tragically, the young boy was in severe combat that forever changed him. He has the occasional flashbacks and suffers from PTSD. This veteran has managed to cope and find happiness in the simple pleasures of life. He has been with us for almost nineteen years. There is no way to thank this veteran for giving up his childhood and innocence so that we may live in this free and beautiful country. He left as a child, but returned as a man.

A mother separated from her four children and already missing them as she served in the United States Navy, has finally found stability. When she told us that this is the first time that she felt that someone has cared about her in a long time, it brings tears to one's eyes. She has started having a healthy relationship with her children. Not only is she a fierce mother, she continues to be an advocate for veterans alike. She is learning her worth and helping those less fortunate. She told us that she has dared to hope and dream again because of the kind servitude of her home. We feel honored to have this proud veteran who is continuing to work hard for fellow veterans.

## Garden of Remembrance...

On August 13 we honored the 6 people served by ROI who have passed away in the previous 12 months with dedication of an engraved brick in their honor in the Memorial Garden at ROI's Rose Street Offices. Additionally We honored 4 people significant in ROI's history and development.

*Honored with engraved bricks were:*

James Chuck Ditmars  
Michael "Deon" Evans  
Sandra Hill  
Brenda Horton  
Jim Kaye  
Walter "Beezer" Leisinger  
Ralph Lovejoy  
Shirley Marsh  
Pam Miller  
Bob and Ruth VanderRoest  
Esther Westra





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### ***Advisory Committee***

You are invited to join us at the next ROI Advisory Committee. Active since ROI's inception 31 years ago & is made up of those interested in the folks we serve; family members, neighbors and those committed to the most vulnerable in our community. It is not necessary to make a long term commitment although such is welcome!  
The next meetings are September 22 and October 27, noon, ROI Offices.

### **Planned Giving**

Please consider including ROI in your will or Trust.  
For more information, call Doug Thompson at 343-3731 extension 234  
or  
[dthompson@resopp.org](mailto:dthompson@resopp.org)

