

# Liberty veterans home effort gets a \$15,000 boost

BY DAN HUST

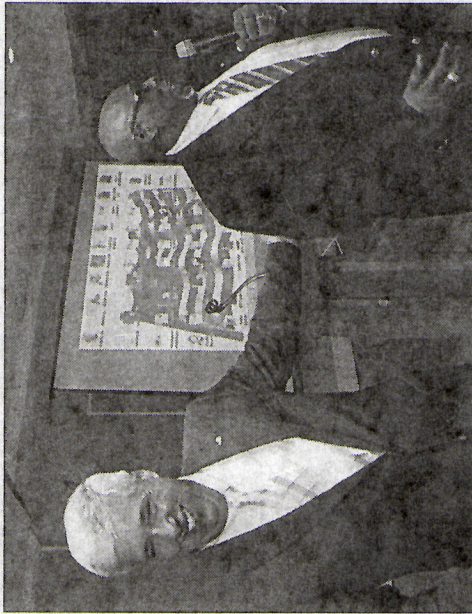
**BLOOMINGBURG** — The plan to convert a Liberty home into a veterans facility is \$15,000 closer to reality, thanks to Friday's first annual benefit dinner.

"We are not a homeless shelter. We are not a treatment center. We are not a handout," Rev. Norman Graves told the crowd of

around 100 supporters. "But we are a step up, a pathway to a better quality of life."

Graves is pastor of the New Beginnings Community Worship Center, a Liberty church that is spearheading Begin Again Transitional Services (BATS).

BATS was founded to meet the needs of veterans who are homeless and/or transitioning back into society after



DAN HUST | DEMOCRAT  
Emcee Greg Goldstein, left, and Rev. Norman Graves share a laugh at Friday's fundraiser for a veterans home in Liberty, held at the Eagle's Nest in Bloomingburg.

veterans is just the beginning," added Col. Charlie Johnson, a Fallsburg High School graduate who now lives in Maryland. "... I believe God can make this happen."

Indeed, Graves said BATS was a vision God gave him and it seems to be a vision many more share, as Friday's fundraiser brought in about \$15,000.

"It's amazing to me how much money the people of Sullivan County will donate," admired Greg Goldstein, the evening's master of ceremonies. "... This county is very generous."

And more is needed, as

Graves estimated the total startup cost — to get the house ready for occupancy and staff hired to provide referral services — hovers around \$150,000.

BATS is also seeking grantwriters, volunteer Advisory Board members and financial planners.

"We want the BATS house to be the shining star of Sullivan County," he said.

More info can be found at [www.batsforvets.org](http://www.batsforvets.org), [fundme.com/iw4le4](http://fundme.com/iw4le4), or by contacting [bats.nbcwc@gmail.com](mailto:bats.nbcwc@gmail.com) or 914-850-6189.



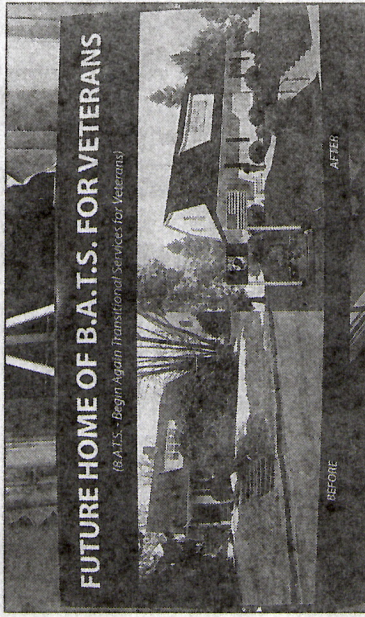
The late Jack and Arline Greenberg were honored in a heart-tugging presentation Friday. Their children, daughter Nancy Greenberg Pirthis and son Ronald Greenberg, donated their parents' home to BATS and were on hand to accept a plaque of recognition. "To know our family home will live on forever in the capable hands of BATS means a great deal to us," said Nancy.

service abroad. The nonprofit recently acquired a home at 15 Dixon Avenue in Liberty, and Friday's fundraiser in Bloomingburg showcased what Graves and BATS Advisory Board Vice Chairman Anthony Covington hope to bring about.

Housing up to eight veterans, some temporary and some possibly long-term, the home and professional staff will "assist veterans who are homeless and in housing

crises to obtain proper support services," explained Graves. "The single most important thing you can do for a veteran returning home is to extend yourself to them and be a resource for them," lauded Sgt. Daniel Ryan, a veteran representing Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther at the fundraiser. "Veterans aren't looking for a handout — they're looking for a hand up."

"My prayer is that BATS for



**FUTURE HOME OF B.A.T.S. FOR VETERANS**  
(B.A.T.S. - Begin Again Transitional Services for Veterans)

The current house at 15 Dixon Avenue in Liberty (left) will see quite a bit of work inside and out to turn it into a veterans transitional home (right).