



## Operation First-Time Homebuyer: Brian Pullis, U.S. Army Veteran



First-time homebuild project partners, United Way of Long Island and the Suffolk County Landbank, recently celebrated the construction and soon-to-be sale of 23 Furman Avenue in East Patchogue. This formerly abandoned structure, now a state-of-the-art, healthy Smart Home will be the residence of first-time homebuyer...U.S. Army Veteran and Coram native, Brian Pullis.

Brian enlisted in the US Army post-9/11 and served for seven years in The 82nd Airborne division 1st of the 508th parachute infantry regiment, with an end rank of Sergeant E-05. He served three tours in Afghanistan.

When he left the military in 2013, he found it difficult, like many veterans, to find secure employment. Upon the encouragement of a friend, Brian enrolled in United Way of Long Island's VetsBuild program, where he received training in green construction, Information Technology and HVAC systems.

Today, Brian's story comes full circle. VetsBuild gave him the tools needed to successfully transition into the civilian workforce, including connecting him to his current employer Meenan. Brian has been with the company, servicing air conditioning and natural gas units, since 2014. As a result, Brian has gained the financial stability needed to become a first-time homebuyer.

As Brian describes, "Before VetsBuild, I was paying all of my expenses with credit cards and got into debt. After the program, I was able to find full-time employment that afforded me the ability to create a savings and a retirement fund. Now I've been given the opportunity of the American dream of home ownership. Knowing that I will be able to afford the monthly maintenance, means that I can continue to build my savings for my future. Without United Way of Long Island, my life would be completely different."

Brian's new 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom house - including an electrical vehicle charging station in the driveway - is Energy Star, Indoor airPLUS and WaterSense certified by the EPA. The house provides a continuous flow of purified air, includes superior insulation and windows, uses non-toxic materials and utilizes the principles of Universal Design, which allows residents to age in place safely. The electricity, heating and cooling systems are run entirely from solar energy and are controlled with SmartTechnology resulting in the lowest possible operating costs; the solar system was generously donated and installed by SUNation Cares, the philanthropic division of Ronkonkoma based company, SUNation Solar Systems. Living in this Zero Energy home will allow Brian to save up to \$9,000 annually in electric and heating utility costs, as compared to a home that uses traditional energy sources.