

# Gimme shelter vote



## Veterans could win \$250G Facebook contest

By Brendan Lynch | Friday, November 11, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Technology Coverage](#)

Boston's New England Center for Homeless Veterans, facing a wave of vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, wants you.

All you have to do is vote on Facebook for the center — one of four nonprofit finalists in a Home Depot contest — and the veteran's shelter could win a \$25,000 Home Depot gift card this month, and possibly \$250,000 cash next spring.

"We have a 103-year-old building to care for — 152,000 square feet and 10 stories," Stephen Cunniff, the center's director of community relations, told the Herald. "It would give us the opportunity for plumbing upgrades that would increase efficiency. It would help us invest in the building, which I call 'This Old House.'"

Chris Feener, a local captain for the Home Depot Foundation, has worked with the New England shelter before and says it serves as a key hub for other nonprofits that work with veterans.

The Court Street building has a 306-bed shelter and 59 one-room, low-income apartments.

Since it opened in 1989, the number of U.S. homeless veterans has shrunk from as many as 500,000 to about 107,000 today, Cunniff said. But about 250 new Iraq and Afghanistan vets have passed through the center's doors in the past few years, often having served multiple deployments and suffering from traumatic brain injuries or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"We're already seeing an increase," Cunniff said. "Our youngest veteran is in his 20s. They're facing the same economic challenges we're all facing, including unemployment and underemployment."

If more Facebook users vote for the shelter at [facebook.com/homedepotfoundation](http://facebook.com/homedepotfoundation) than three other nonprofit finalists by the end of the month, it will win the \$25,000 gift card. Facebook users will vote for the winner of the \$500,000 grand prize from among the monthly winners in March.

"People ask me all the time, 'How can I help veterans?'" he said. "If you're on Facebook, this is the best and easiest way you can help vets on Veterans Day."

**VOTE DAILY NOW THROUGH NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>**

**[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/HOMEDEPOTFOUNDATION](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/HOMEDEPOTFOUNDATION)**