



## Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

# Building Veterans

11 S. Maryland Ave.

Brunswick, MD 21716

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[www.buildingveterans.org](http://www.buildingveterans.org)

Non-Profit peer-to-peer veterans' house

Member since May 2015

## Management and Leadership



### **Environmentally Preferable Products and Services**

*As a peer-to-peer house, we serve in many capacities. A large portion of our program is dedicated to teaching our participants new skills and getting them active in new ways. One of the many skills we are working on with our participants is wood working. This skill is both rewarding and challenging. It teaches the participants to use their hands for creative purposes. It allows them to take pride in their tasks and see the outcome of hard work and perseverance. This particular skill is very much wrapped in the environmental aspect. For starters, we only use reclaimed wood. When local barns are being torn down, we take the wood and instead of letting it be taken to the landfill, we turn it into new projects. In addition to the use of reclaimed wood, we also create many environmentally friendly things out of the wood. When we started with wood working, the easiest starting point was bird houses. Quickly, our participants began making elaborate bird houses and feeders that were sold in a local coffee shop. These houses and feeders now dot the streets in Brunswick, and provide housing to many birds. Finally, as we stain and oil the wood projects, we only use biodegradable stains and oils, as to not cause any harm to the environment.*



### **Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects**

*We work very closely with a partner company in town to complete environmental and community restoration projects. With the help of this other company, we have adopted a local park. Once a week our participants go to the park to clean up and pick up any trash in the area. We also have plans to plant a bee and bird friendly flower garden there.*

## Waste

### **Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse**

*At Building Veterans, both in our peer-to-peer houses and in our offices, we do everything we can to reduce and reuse solid waste. In our wood shop, we reuse any scraps of wood or metal that are left over from projects. Whether the scraps are turned into mulch, or used for smaller projects, nothing goes to waste. We also cook family style meals at least once a week, in order to minimize waste from cooking separate meals for each of the 10 men living in a house. Our partner company is a small coffee shop, which occasionally makes too much food that can't be used in a day. Instead of allowing it to be thrown away, one of our participants walks over each day and brings back any of the food which otherwise would be thrown in the garbage. As a house of 10 men, we can honestly say the food never gets wasted and the arrangement benefits both partners in the relationship.*

### **Recycling**

*Teaching ten men to recycle when it was never a part of their life has been tough. We keep a recycling container in the house directly next to the trash. As dishes are being done, and the kitchen is being cleaned, we talk about what goes into which container. In the beginning, it was a real challenge to get things into the right containers. After several meetings about it, we are finally diverting about half of our trash into recycling, and have been steadily increasing that amount for over a year. In the past year, we have recycled, on average, 40 lbs of material a week. This is equivalent to 2,080 lbs this year alone, and we are always increasing.*

## Energy

### **Energy Efficiency**

*Our first house, which was purchased over a year ago was a foreclosure with a lot of work needed before it was truly inhabitable. Our men learned various trades and put their hearts and souls into rebuilding their home. While rebuilding, the men and the administrative staff made very conscious decisions to rebuild this home as green as possible. All the lights were replaced with LED bulbs, and much of the structural work was redone with the intention of maximizing insulation and energy efficiency. Since the rebuild was completed, we have had two energy audits performed on the home to find areas that still need more work. This summer, we will be replacing all the windows in favor of more*

*energy efficient and insulated models. Also on our project list for this year will be an audit of the electrical work in the home, to see what can be updated.*



**Maryland**

*Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.*

*Learn more at [www.green.maryland.gov/registry](http://www.green.maryland.gov/registry)*

