Housing needed for Warrior veterans

By Kerin Magill
Staff Reporter

Preparations are under way for the 11th annual Warrior Beach Week in Bethany Beach, and the surrounding community and organizers are putting out the call for housing for the veterans and their families, who will visit the area during the first week of September.

The weeklong event, organized by the non-profit group Operation SEAs the Day, offers post-9/11 wounded or ill veterans, along with their families, a time to rest and relax away from the stresses of their lives, which often include a lot of time spent at medical appointments.

"These veterans have gone from a battlefield to a hospital, then home," said OSTD spokesperson Jen Fitzsimmons. "Bethany Beach's Warrior Beach Week is a way our extended community gives back to these heroes who are recovering from injuries sustained while serving our country."

During the week, the Very Important Families (VIFs) can take part in a number of scheduled activities, which include boat trips, spa days and golf outings, or just relax on the beach. Past participants have said an important part of the week for them is the bonds they form with other families who have been through what they've been through and can relate to their struggles.

Each year, the community welcomes the families with a parade that goes from Bethany Beach to the Freeman Arts Pavilion. Community members line the route, waving flags in honor of the veterans. The families are then treated to dinner and show at the Freeman facility west of Fenwick Island.

This year as always, Operation SEAs the Day is seeking homeowners to donate the use of their beach homes to the VIFs for the week of Sept. 3 to Sept. 8, Fitzsimmons said.

"The home will be well-maintained and professionally cleaned," she said.

Anyone who would like to offer the use of their home or condominium can call or email Debbie Cobb at dcfrde@gmail.com or (302) 249-7301.

Since its beginnings, more than 2,000 veterans and their families have benefited from Operation's SEAs the Day's programs. For more information on Operation SEAs the Day, Go to www.operationseastheday.org.