



NVHS

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June 15, 2018

Dear Supporter,

It is hard to believe that it has been 10 years since we were first founded in Titusville, Florida with what seemed to be a simple goal: Build a tent city for homeless veterans in Brevard County. Why would we want to do that you might ask? Well, at the time our homeless veteran population was astounding. According to the Department of Veteran Affairs, there were approximately 1,800 homeless veterans living in Brevard County, and so scattered in just about every patch of woods in the county were massive homeless camps, some with upwards of 100 tents. Local governments, inundated with not only massive amounts of homeless veterans, but homeless individuals in general, were trying to respond to this. Unfortunately, often the response was to raid camps and force them to move, hoping the problem would just go away. So, our response was that we would buy land, and have a place for our homeless veterans to live without fear of being arrested or forced out of their little patch of woods. It would turn out that building a tent city was no simple task, however what we discovered quickly was that our true purpose was not to fund a place for them to remain homeless, it was to get them out of the woods permanently. From that point forward we made it our mission to "Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans in Central Florida", and have been dedicated to that mission ever since.

Today the situation in Brevard County is significantly different. According to the last Point in Time Count (bi-annual physical count of homeless population in a given area mandated by HUD), there were 211 homeless veterans found in Brevard County on a single day in January. While this is still an issue that we are diligently working, the positive here is that this means we have achieved an amazing **88% reduction in our homeless veteran population since we started in 2008!** Not only does this reduction mean that we successfully transitioned a significant amount of homeless veterans into housed veterans, but when looked at as follows:

- State of Florida estimates that a single homeless person costs local governments \$31,065 annually to remain homeless when considering law enforcement, jail/court costs, public works, emergency healthcare, etc...
- By reducing the population from 1800 to 211, means 1,589 homeless people are no longer accruing this annual public cost of \$31,065 each

When these two points are combined, it means that by transitioning them, **we save Brevard County \$49.3 Million annually.** Talk about a win-win situation!



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Regardless of the population size, keeping people on the ground to support our long-term homeless as well as rapidly find newly homeless (and more vulnerable) clients will always be a core function of who we are. However, as a result of the substantially reduced unsheltered population, we started in 2016 incorporating more prevention services for at-risk of being homeless veterans and their dependents. The first and foremost need for these clients is usually not basic needs (health, hygiene, food, outdoor gear etc...), it is financial assistance, often for rent or utilities. While every client has a different reason for finding themselves about to lose their home, you can imagine that this need far exceeds anything we have seen on the outreach side from a cost perspective. Regardless, while the need type is different, the procedures are the same for both homeless and at-risk clients: educate the client on available resources in the community that can help them, and connect them to those resources. While there are agencies that offer financial assistance in these situations through grants they are awarded, sometimes the time between becoming homeless (or staying homeless) and the arrival of funding is too great, and at it is in these times we have had to step in.

Since January 1 2016 when we first started offering financial assistance in these situations, **we have distributed more than \$106,000 to at-risk and homeless veterans.** Whether its providing homeless clients with a hotel room while they await their move-in date for their new home they were approved for, or providing gap funding for utilities for at-risk clients waiting on their first payment from their new job, we are always ready to respond to make sure that we keep the population of homeless veterans on a downward track. It is this balance of street level outreach to address the needs of those already homeless, and prevention to ensure our at-risk do not end up on the streets, that is vitally important to achieving our mission.

We are forever grateful to our volunteers, partners, and donors like you, who not only help make our programs possible, but successful at locating and housing homeless and at-risk veterans. As we embark on the next 10 years we hope you will continue to support NVHS and our life changing programs for veterans, because only together will we achieve our mission to “Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans in Central Florida”.

Sincerely,

George Taylor Sr.

George Taylor Sr
President/Founder
NVHS