

FRIDAY, April 19, 2019

## Hiring Heroes Job Fair can help veterans improve career prospects



Amy's conviction made her lose eligibility at her current job. When she started the Veterans Court program, she was unsure of how to get re-connected to employment. She met a career counselor from WorkSource Spokane at a Veterans Forum meeting, who invited her to attend the annual Hiring Heroes Job Fair, scheduled for the very next day.

Although the timeframe was short, WorkSource staff helped Amy create a résumé that highlighted her current administrative skills as well as her helicopter mechanic skills learned in the Army.

The following day, Amy arrived at the job fair feeling nervous. She didn't know how to approach employers or explain her background barrier. WorkSource career counselors coached her on some introduction techniques, including methods for talking to employers that don't appear to have openings that match a job seeker's skills. This technique helped Amy land an

interview with a fabrication company that was intrigued by her Apache mechanic experience. They offered her a training position as a CNC machinist, earning an income that matched her previous position.

A few short months later, an even better opportunity was made available to Amy. An administration position came open at her company, and the HR department recalled Amy's administrative experience. Amy performed excellently at an impromptu interview, and they offered her the job, which included a significant wage increase.

Veteran career counselors at WorkSource are able to assist any veteran in their career, regardless of justice-involvement or other

background barriers. A Jumpstart to Employment workshop is held at WorkSource (130 S. Arthur St., Spokane) every Friday at 9:30 a.m. All are welcome to attend! Call (509) 532-3120 or visit [worksourcespokane.com](http://worksourcespokane.com) for more information.

*WorkSource is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities (Washington Relay 711).*



## Skills'kin is hiring



Since 1970, Skills'kin's services have continued to grow and adapt while meeting the most pressing needs of the community. Through collaboration with

their employees and business partners, Skills'kin has been able to assist a variety of people to become more independent and economically self-sufficient.

One partnership Skills'kin continues to grow and nurture is with the veteran community. From the Spokane headquarters to satellite locations nationwide, Skills'kin is committed to veterans.

Skills'kin's primary government contracts operate out of Air Force bases, including Fairchild Air Force Base. The community at these

operations reflects the culture of each location. In the words of a current veteran employee, "Our positions, at all of our locations, can give veterans the comfort of 'coming home.'" Working on military bases alongside active duty service members, Skills'kin is proud that its mission and values support the work of our troops.

Skills'kin supports its community, clients, employees and all veterans with a commitment to enriching exceptional lives. As veterans transition into civilian life, Skills'kin understands their

needs as employees and are ready to actively build unique accommodations for veterans.

*If you're ready to launch your career at Skills'kin, visit <https://skills-kin.org> or call at (509) 326-6760.*



SKILLS'KIN

## Rich's story: "It's all good"

By Rich Henning



I am a proud, retired, 100 percent disabled soldier. For those who serve, we realize quickly that we sometimes have a mission that is much bigger than ourselves; a mission that involves not only service to our country, but service to others.

Yet when we leave our military environment – after one tour or 20 years – we somehow lose ourselves. We lose our calling and where we fit in. I was no different!

Ten years after my retirement I was still lost, still

trying to fit in.

In March of last year, I reached the lowest point in my life that I could possibly reach. I completely fell apart and found myself at the Urgent Care Center of the Spokane VAMC. Reluctantly, I decided to stay the night, believing I would be going home the next day.

To my surprise, I ended up staying on the acute psych ward for 2 weeks. I joyously announce that it was the best thing that happened to me.

There is a lot of negativity about the VA (and some is

certainly justified), but my experience with the Spokane VA was life changing.

The therapy I received was a combination of talk therapy, cognitive therapy and dialectical behavior therapy. It opened my mind to the hope that I can handle my PTSD and I live a comfortable life. A year later I still use these therapy methods to control my emotions and ruminating thoughts. I use eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) as an additional therapy method and it works tremendously.

Finally, the staff at the Spokane acute ward helped reduce my medication! I was taking too many pills and after testing my blood specifically, they saw I only needed two specific meds and it has changed my life!

After I left the hospital, I met Theresa Hart and began volunteering for her at Newby-Ginnings. In short, it helped me find the person I was – the person I lost along the way.

I also began walking again.

Walking has been something I truly love and

I always wanted to do a long distance walk. After discussions with my wife, she encouraged me to make a plan and do it!

On June 24, 2019, I am beginning a 500-mile Walking Journey to bring PTSD awareness to veterans and their communities. My mission is to share my story with everyone and help other warriors believe that they have the potential to manage their PTSD and access helpful veteran agencies.

In the May issue of Veterans Chronicle, my story continues as I outline my Walking Journey and what I hope to accomplish, both personally and for fellow warriors on the path to recovery.

*Read Rich's complete story at [www.veteranshelpnet.com](http://www.veteranshelpnet.com). Follow his journey and make donations at [www.walkawayfromptsd.com](http://www.walkawayfromptsd.com). Contact Rich at [richforcuisine@yahoo.com](mailto:richforcuisine@yahoo.com) or by (208) 651-9673.*



## HEY, VETERANS DID YOU KNOW

**Blue Water Navy veterans are eligible for Agent Orange exposure disability benefits?**

If you served on a Blue Water Navy ship on the inland waterways or coastal waterways of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, or if you ever came ashore in Vietnam during that time, a recent court case decided that you qualify for the same disability benefits as "boots on the ground" veterans.

There are 14 presumptive diseases that qualify Vietnam veterans for disability benefits due to presumed Agent Orange exposure. A surviving spouse may qualify for monthly financial benefits.

To find out if you qualify and file a claim, contact a VSO (see "How Can I Get Help?" on page 3) or visit [www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim/](http://www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim/).

# SERVICE. SACRIFICE. SUPPORT.



Surprisingly affordable options for veterans and eligible family members.

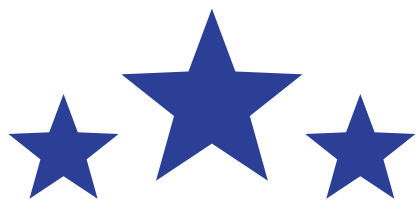
- Full-time undergraduate day program
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- More than 20 graduate programs

[whitworth.edu/veterans](http://whitworth.edu/veterans)



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## North Idaho Veterans Stand Down

The Veterans Stand Down has been assisting veterans with housing, services, food and clothing for the last 26 years. The mission of the Stand Down is to help homeless veterans connect with services needed to improve a present living situation. These services provide support for both veterans and their families.

Stand Down has also established several community programs, including a weight-lifting competition for disabled veterans, blanket distribution to veterans in care facilities and a Stand Down Veterans Scholarship endowed at North Idaho College.

The North Idaho Veterans Stand Down on Saturday, May 11, 2019, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., at North Idaho College is open to all veterans and their families. The event will include services like the VA Medical bus, VA benefits advocacy, a job fair, legal services, dental services, counseling, veterinary care for pets, bike repair and haircuts.

Coffee, breakfast and lunch will be provided (while supplies last).



*If you would like to participate as a service provider or volunteer, or make a donation, please call (208) 664-3095, extension 314. Funds donated from the event are used to assist families throughout the year.*

## Telehealth allows veterans to connect to care at home

By Bret Bowers

Public Affairs Officer, Mann-Grandstaff VAMC

As debate swirls around expanding VA health care – and whether “privatization” of VA will become a reality as veterans choose between VA and a Care in the Community (CITC) authorized provider – VA Telehealth Services are becoming more popular for veterans.

Technology is getting better at connecting veterans with VA health care as they learn more about the convenience and use of home telehealth (HT) in part because “telehealth is mission-critical to the future of VHA care for veterans.” It allows the veteran to receive quality and timely care while living independently.

Put simply, telehealth helps veterans. For a variety of ailments or needs, VA can authorize or issue specialized telecommunication technologies when the veteran patient and practitioner are separated by geographical distance, eliminating the need for the patient to travel for an appointment. With telehealth, they can accomplish the same thing right in the comfort and privacy of their own home, reducing hospital admissions and focusing on disease prevention.

VA’s year-end numbers from Fiscal Year 2017 indicate more than 725,000 veterans are already using VA Telehealth, amounting to more than 2.18 million “episodes of care.”

Among them is Air Force Veteran Richard O’Boyle, who is enrolled at Spokane’s Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center. HT technology automatically monitors his blood-sugar levels and sends reports directly to his cell phone, as well as his VA nurse and case managers who assist him with his diabetes.

“They know if I’m not eating right,” said O’Boyle, a former nurse himself. “And if I don’t take care of myself, I’m not going to live.”

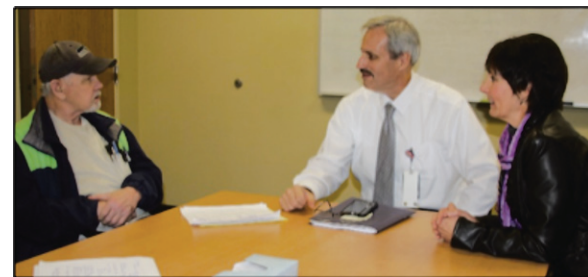
For the past two-and-a-half years, O’Boyle and his Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) and telehealth nurses have kept diaries and metrics of his care while adhering to a diet and regular contact with each other.

“I can’t say I didn’t eat (high-sugar foods) because the numbers don’t lie and they’re sent directly to my nurse and care managers,” said O’Boyle.

VA telehealth nurses Gordon Winters and Karen Saucier-Renner, with primary care nurses, diagnosed, authorized and located the equipment and devices needed to advance O’Boyle’s care. A company outfitted him with a small device that is connected to his stomach and monitors his sugar levels and other vitals.

“They push me hard, but it’s worth it,” said O’Boyle, who previously had several unexpected health scares that required paramedic help through emergency services. But not anymore!

To qualify for HT services, veterans must live in a stable housing situation; have a landline or cell phone; and enroll in VA health care for any one of the following diseases: congestive heart failure;



chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); diabetes; hypertension (high blood pressure); or obesity. Telehealth options can also help veteran patients struggling with PTSD, depression, or anxiety when those ailments are secondary to the physical concerns of the patient.

HT is also complemented by other telehealth modalities, such as clinical video telehealth (CVT), which includes more than 50 clinical applications within VA specialty and primary care. In addition, “store-and-forward” telehealth (SFT) allows for review of data, images and sound by another provider at a different location who can then make a clinical evaluation, whether at VA or a CITC provider.

The 50-plus specialty areas are included in VA telehealth menu of services, such as Women’s Telehealth, TeleWound, TeleDentistry, TeleCardiology and TeleNeurology.

Best of all, veterans expressed high “Satisfaction Rates” for telehealth in FY2017, with 93 percent for SFT, 92 percent for CVT and 88 percent for HT.

*To learn more about VA Telehealth Services offered at Mann-Grandstaff VAMC, please contact (509) 434-7763 or visit [www.telehealth.va.gov](http://www.telehealth.va.gov).*

### HEY, VETERANS DID YOU KNOW

**The VA does not pay for veteran funeral or cremations?**

Veteran burial or inurnment is free of charge at a state or national veteran cemetery (spouses are \$300). Veterans that qualify must either be cremated or in a casket, but the VA does not pay for caskets, embalming, cremation, urns, memorial or funeral services.

For veterans who qualify for VA death benefits, there is a partial reimbursement after the fact. The amounts provided are a fraction of actual costs in most cases. For more information, contact Kellie Richardson at [KellieR91@yahoo.com](mailto:KellieR91@yahoo.com) or (509) 714-7482.

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## HEY, VETERANS DID YOU KNOW

### Disabled vets can get reduced hunting/fishing licenses?

In Idaho, you must have at least a 40 percent service-connected disability. A 3- year resident DAV license is \$5. Information is available at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/licenses/dav-programs>.

In Washington, you must have at least a 30 percent service-connected disability or be age 65 or older with any service-connected disability. Information is available at [https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requirements\\_veterans.html](https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requirements_veterans.html).

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# HOW CAN I GET HELP?

Every county and state has a Veteran Affairs office to answer questions about benefits and provide assistance. There are also other useful resources for veterans in the Inland Northwest.



### GO ONLINE

#### VA.gov

The Department of Veterans Affairs website has resources on every topic relevant to veterans.

#### VA.gov/welcome-kit

The VA Welcome Guide covers all types of benefits and services available for veterans, new recruits, active service members and their families.

#### DAV9.com

Based in Post Falls, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 9 Fort Sherman shares links and information to both local and national help organizations for veterans.

#### Explore.VA.gov/benefits-navigator

Explore VA benefits and discover which ones you and your family may be eligible to receive.



### IN PERSON

#### Spokane County Regional Veteran Service

**1117 N. Evergreen Rd.,  
Spokane Valley, WA  
(509) 477-3690**

Apply for emergency services, or have any benefits or service questions answered by 5 Veteran Service Officers (VSO) and staff.

#### North Idaho Veteran Services and Benefits Office

**120 E. Railroad Ave., Post Falls, ID (208) 446-1092**

Meet with a VSO or staff for help with VA benefits enrollment, claims or other veteran needs.

#### Goodwill Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

**130 E. Third Ave., Spokane, WA (509) 828-2449**

SSVF helps homeless veterans and their families find housing and connects veterans with other support organizations.



### BY PHONE

#### Spokane County Regional Veteran Service

**(509) 477-3690**

#### North Idaho Veteran Services and Benefits Office

**(208) 446-1092**

#### Veteran Crisis Line

**1 (800) 273-8255, press 1**

#### North Idaho Crisis Center

**(208) 625-4884**

#### Washington or Idaho 2-1-1

**Dial "2-1-1" for health and human resources referrals.**

#### Healthcare for Homeless Veterans HCHV

**In Person or Phone**

**504 E. Second Ave.,  
Spokane, WA**

**Phone: (509)-435-2019**

Provides healthcare and outreach for housing, job opportunities and counseling.

# Vets on the Farm

Established in 2015 by the Spokane Conservation District, Vets on the Farm (VOTF) assists veterans transitioning to civilian life explore careers in agriculture, farming, ranching and other conservation based industries.

VOTF provides resources and opportunities for education, partnership and employment in these industries. By networking with community members, veterans are able to connect with industry professionals, financial and technical resources, and fellow veterans. VOTF also supports agricultural education with programs and curriculum

in partnership with Washington State University Extension and Spokane Community Colleges.

Visit [www.vetsonthefarm.org](http://www.vetsonthefarm.org) to learn more about applying for VOTF. For more information, contact Vicki Carter at (509) 535-7274, ext. 213, or [vicki-carter@sccd.org](mailto:vicki-carter@sccd.org).



## Eastern Washington Veterans Task Force

The Eastern Washington Veteran Task Force (EWVTF) was started over 40 years ago to provide a forum for the many veteran service organizations and veteran support groups to share ideas and resources to find hope and help for local veterans. This group is about people, programs and services that focus on serving veterans in our local community.

EWVTF meets on the second Wednesday of every month at different places in the community, usually at a restaurant. Every meeting includes an update on the latest VA program and benefit changes, as well as sharing stories of success or frustration in hopes to learn new paths to help veterans in our community.

This is a valuable resource when you're in the business of helping veterans. When you encounter a veteran with an individualized need that you're not quite sure how to address, you can reach out to the group through email for instant collaboration with other members for ideas to best support the veteran.

To get involved, attend the next meeting, introduce yourself and your agency, program or service, and sign up on the group email list.

Like the EWVTF Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/EWVTF/](http://www.facebook.com/EWVTF/)) to join the community and receive updates.



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# Paraplegic paragliding: Adaptive activity allow disabled veterans to reach new heights



By Brent King

After jumping out of C-130s at Airborne School in the U.S. Army and breaking my back in 1994, I thought my days of high-risk adrenaline seeking fun were over. I had no idea what the future held for me after becoming a paraplegic.

A wheelchair means freedom to many of us veterans that were stuck in a military or VA hospital bed for a long period of time. My first time rolling around on a tile floor was exhausting and I was afraid of flipping over or falling out. Coming out of that wheelchair seat was like being on the edge of a cliff.

Once you learn to use the wheelchair as a productive mobility tool and shed fear of the unknown, you can do most everything you used to do with adaptive equipment.

In August 2011, I received a call from a former Air Force Pararescue (PJ) buddy to ask if I would like to paraglide in Sun Valley, Idaho, off the top of the ski hill. The Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Christopher Reeves Foundation had funded an experimental adaptive

paragliding week for five disabled veterans and someone had backed out. I didn't blink – I was going as the fill in!

We had numerous top-notch paragliding pilots and instructors coming to teach us. We would be using three experimental adaptive wheelchair carts that were designed and built by University of Utah engineering students. The carts were made of various lightweight metals with mountain bike wheels and some mountain bike suspension thrown into the mix.

We had several days of ground school to learn how the wing functioned, to control the wing and, most importantly, to keep the cart wheel side down. It was a lot of physical work, but very necessary to stay safe.

The final two days were spent flying tandem with a highly experienced pilot standing on a footplate at the back of our cart frame. One at a time, we lifted off in the early morning or late evening to fly in the least turbulent air.

Rolling down the ski hill at a good pace was eye opening, and then we caught a perfect breeze, filling the wing and lifting us up into the blue sky. We caught thermal winds lifting us up higher and higher. I was airborne for an hour and five minutes. Unfortunately, the sun started to go down and it was time to descend to our designated landing zone. Our landing was a fast roll out and smooth. This flight was one of the most amazing experiences of my lifetime!

These programs still exist. If you have severe trouble walking and want to try this type of adaptive gear, I can connect you with program instructors. They possess the knowledge and the adaptive gear to get you up paragliding.

For more information, contact Brent King at [Bkinghomes@gmail.com](mailto:Bkinghomes@gmail.com).

## HEY, VETERANS DID YOU KNOW

### The following facts about Women Warrior?

- There are nearly 2 million female US veterans with over 60,000 from Washington State!
- Over 25,000 women from our area have served just since 9/11.
- In 2010, the unemployment rate of female veterans was 11.2 percent compared to 9.4 percent of male veterans.
- Female veterans report an average of seven years to become fully acclimated to civilian life upon return from deployment.
- The risk of homelessness for female veterans is 3.6 times more likely than non-veteran women.
- Many veterans come home wounded, whether or not their injuries are visible.

These facts were compiled by Cowgirls and Women Warriors, a non-profit organization that arranges weekend retreats and other events for female veterans. Visit [www.CowgirlsandWomenWarriors.org](http://www.CowgirlsandWomenWarriors.org) to learn more.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**DAV** Volunteer DAV Van Drivers are needed in Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint and Spokane. If you can donate one day per week to drive disabled veterans, contact Jeannie Kyle at (509) 434-7019 for more information.

**NEWBY GINNINGS** Newby-ginnings of North Idaho, Inc. provides basic necessities and essential household items to veterans, active military and their families at no cost. For volunteer opportunities, call (208) 619-6996. Hours of operation are Monday-Wednesday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 570 Clearwater Loop, Unit A, Post Falls, Idaho.

**Veterans Help Net** VeteransHelpNet needs volunteers to gather and share stories for Veterans Chronicle, and to help us connect with local organizations that provide support for veterans. For more information, contact Don Walker at (509) 655-9266 or [don@Vethelpnet.com](mailto:don@Vethelpnet.com). Learn more at [VeteransHelpNet.com](http://VeteransHelpNet.com).

VeteransHelpNet partners with *The Spokesman-Review* to publish **Veterans Chronicle** on the third Friday of every month to increase awareness about veteran issues and help veterans find hope and help.

If you would like to share a veteran story or a “Did You Know” fact about resources for veterans, please contact [info@VeteransHelpNet.com](mailto:info@VeteransHelpNet.com) or visit [www.VeteransHelpNet.com](http://www.VeteransHelpNet.com). For advertising information, please contact (509) 459-5095 or [advertising@spokesman.com](mailto:advertising@spokesman.com).

## HEY, VETERANS DID YOU KNOW

### A new federal Veteran ID Card is available?

Any honorably discharged veteran can get a new Veteran ID Card (VIC), a photo ID that shows proof of veteran status without presenting a DD214.

You can apply online at <https://www.va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-cards/vic/>, or bring necessary documents (a current government-issued photo ID and a copy of your DD214) to the 7th floor of the Mann-Granstaff VAMC to begin the application process.

## HEY, VETERANS DID YOU KNOW

### Kaniksu Health Services offers dental care assistance?

Kaniksu Health Services in Bonner County has funded a program to help veterans without dental insurance. Currently Kaniksu has collected about \$4,000 to help local veterans who need dental care. Qualified veterans have a \$300 cap for services.

Veterans can apply to receive assistance by contacting Kaniksu Health Services at (208) 263-7101. You can also contact Kaniksu Health Services if you'd like to make a financial contribution to this program.

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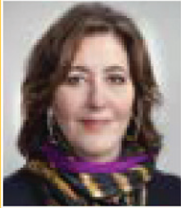
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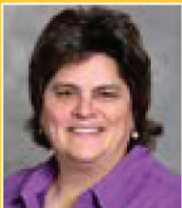
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FORGOTTEN HEROES INTERMENT SERVICE



Unclaimed veteran remains will be ceremoniously turned over to the state Department of Veterans Affairs for interment with full military honors. The public is invited attend and honor these "forgotten heroes."

**Thursday, April 25, 1 p.m.**  
Washington State Veterans Cemetery  
Medical Lake, Washington  
(509) 299-6280  
[www.dva.wa.gov/Cemetery](http://www.dva.wa.gov/Cemetery)

### NORTH IDAHO VETERANS STAND DOWN



Resource, health and benefits fair for veterans and their families. Free meals, support services, entertainment and much more.

**Saturday, May 11**  
North Idaho College, Christiansen Gym  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho  
(208) 664-3095, ext. 314

### COWGIRLS AND WOMEN WARRIORS RETREAT



Enjoy a free weekend of horseback rides, hikes, campfires and camaraderie with other women veterans at no cost. Contact Andrea Rehfield at the Spokane Vet Center for more information.

**May 17-19**  
Green Bluff, Washington  
(509) 983-4752  
[andrea.rehfield@VA.gov](mailto:andrea.rehfield@VA.gov)  
[www.cowgirlsandwomenwarriors.org](http://www.cowgirlsandwomenwarriors.org)

Send events to  
[info@veteranshelpnet.com](mailto:info@veteranshelpnet.com)

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# Support from VAMC leads to recovery, success



By Gordon J. Graves



I am a Navy veteran who served during the Vietnam era. During my stay in the military, I suffered through the death of my best friend and one of my brothers. During the “pull out,” I was offered a General Discharge Under Honorable Conditions that I regrettably took. If I knew then what I know now, I would not have taken the offer. What followed was time spent in jail and a drug treatment program, and years more of chronic gambling and substance abuse. After a divorce and bottoming out in 2003, I connected to the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center and began attending groups in a Substance Abuse Treatment Program.

The VAMC behavior health director at that time, Paul Nicolai, became my mentor as I became serious about recovery for the first time. He encouraged me to go back to school to become a drug and alcohol counselor. While going back to school, I received mental health counseling at the VA and attended a VA invitational aftercare group. During this time, I shared a residence with someone who was also in recovery but kept relapsing. He would become violent, forcing me to leave on two different occasions. I was sleeping in my car when Paul told me about Grant and Per Diem (GPD) transitional housing through the VA. I moved in to GPD and kept studying while holding several jobs. Eventually I got a job at the Airway Heights Prison for six months and I was able to move into my own apartment. But when that job ended, I fell flat on my face again. Thankfully, the VA Health Care for

Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program offered me a place in transitional housing again, and I got a job with Volunteers of America, which allowed me to get an apartment with a HUD/VASH voucher. Everything was going well until that job ended when the grant money ran out again. I did not know what I was going to do until I was offered a four-year term position in the VA’s Homeless Veteran Supported Employment program with training. I became a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist and got an online certificate from Virginia Commonwealth University. Two years later, I was offered a permanent position as a housing specialist for HCHV, and after another two years, I applied for the Community Employment Coordinator position that was new to this VA. I was hired and it is still my job today. Thank God for the VAMC and the fact I was able to receive services for mental health counseling, substance abuse, other physical injuries and ailments, transitional housing, a HUD/VASH voucher and employment!

Over the years I have learned so much from my mentor Paul and my many VA supervisors and co-workers. Most importantly, I learn from the veterans that I get to serve. I know all too well that services have to be individualized because every veteran is in a different situation regarding their health care needs and readiness toward self-empowerment. My job description encourages me to act as a “change agent” for the veterans I get to help. I network in the community and collaborate with other agencies and providers, and I meet with employers and human resource departments to help veterans find suitable long-term employment. Many times I am called upon to “just be there” to help a veteran through difficult times, just as many were there for me as I strove for a better living and a better way of life.

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