

CALIFORNIA VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION



THE ALLIANCE

1400 Easton Dr., Suite 102, Bakersfield, CA 93309 661-695-3626 www.cavaf.org

Summer 2014

WE ARE KERN COUNTY'S ONLY VETERANS SPECIFIC HOMELESS PROGRAM

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Summer is almost over and fall is just around the corner. That means that the 16th Annual Kern County Veterans Stand Down is almost here. This year we have more vendors than in previous years...45 and counting! We are excited to be part of an event that can provide a large array of services to the veterans in our community.

I am proud to announce that I was elected VFW State Surgeon for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California, during the 94th State VFW Convention in Riverside. It is with great honor that I can serve veterans throughout the great state of California in addition to my duties with CVAF.

There have been a few other exciting projects CVAF has been involved in the last couple of months. CVAF partnered with another local nonprofit, Rockout to Knockout RSD, on a fireworks booth. We spent four days selling fireworks, setting up and tearing down a booth in northeast Bakersfield. This resulted in a \$3,552 donation to CVAF. New Life Center also set up a fireworks booth and a dunk tank. CVAF received a \$1,000 donation from them, as well.

On August 18th, local officials broke ground in downtown Bakersfield on Park 20th – a new housing project that is under construction and due to open in the next nine to twelve months. This is a public/private partnership between the California Veterans

Assistance Foundation, Flood Bakersfield Ministries and the Kern County Housing Authority. Our agencies have embarked on a community project that will transform lives by creating homes and removing barriers for homeless veterans, a portion of our downtown homeless population and families in our community that are surviving on limited financial resources. Park 20th is a 56-unit, low-income apartment complex aimed at housing homeless veterans (25 units), other homeless individuals (17 units) and households earning 50% of Area Median Income or less (13 units).



Rockout to Knockout RSD. Pictured, L-R: Heather Kimmel, Ashley Goodall and Deborah Johnson.

Lastly, CVAF Program Directors Ruben Cortez, Tunisha Crite and Brian Fox attended the groundbreaking for the Integrated Community Care Center (ICCC) for Homeless Veterans at the VA Greater



New Life Center. Pictured, L-R: Deborah Johnson, Jessie Pierce, Heather Kimmel and Ray Turner.



Park 20th. Pictured, L-R: Randy Coates (Golden Empire Affordable Housing), Kim Elbers (Flood Bakersfield Ministries), Deborah Johnson (CVAF) and Stephen Pelz (Housing Authority).

Los Angeles, Building 402. B402 provides homeless Veterans with same day access to housing, primary care, mental health and substance abuse treatment delivered by trans-disciplinary Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams. As you can see, we have been busy...and we have a lot more work to do!

SAN DIEGO HVRP POST-AWARD CONFERENCE

CVAF has been awarded the HVRP renewal grant for the 2014/2015 year. This is very exciting news and we can help many unemployed Veterans get back into the working field. As you may not know, HVRP is to provide services to assist homeless veterans with meaningful employment within the labor force and to address the complex problems facing homeless veterans. CVAF provides a case

management approach that directly assists homeless veterans, as well as provide linkages to a variety of supportive services available in Kern County. The program is "employment focused" and veterans receive the employment and training services they need to re-enter the labor force.

CVAF has also been awarded again our VRP Grant from Swords to Plowshares

that allows CVAF to not only help out the homeless unemployed Veterans in Kern County, but stability unemployed Veterans who are needing some extra helping transitioning back into the workforce.

On August 12-14, HVRP staff members Chris Allen, David Laurence and Executive Director Heather Kimmel attended the Post-Award Conference that was held in sunny San Diego, California. The event

HVRP POST AWARD CONFERENCE, continued on page 2

was put on by Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and was held at the South Metro Career Center. At the conference

we learned a lot of amazing information on what reports need to be done and by when, what goals we need to meet each quarter, Case Management Techniques and various

outreaching techniques. The HVRP staff is ready for this next year to help and place as many Veterans as possible into jobs and training programs.

THE MANY FACES OF THE CALIFORNIA VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

It's hard to get a photo of all the CVAF staff together, as they are always kept very busy giving quality assistance to the resident veterans, plus all the other great things going on in the program and in the community.

After a staff meeting for a little fun, they played "CVAF Jeopardy." Nancy Price and Chris Allen came out the big winners, hence they are wearing the "BK Crowns" in the photo. President Deborah Johnson was given a tiara, just because.



Pictured, Front Row, L-R: Ruben Cortez, Regina Farrar, Ashley Hulcy, Heather Kimmel, Fatema Dossajee, Lisvett Garcia, Tunisha Crite and Vicki Sykes. Back Row, L-R: Nancy Price, Dan Bayus, David Laurence, Shawn Raymond, Chris Allen, Deborah Johnson, Caroline Twocats-Romero and Brian Fox.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT



As we move ahead in our day to day battle to make an impact on the lives of the veterans in this community, it becomes very easy to forget the huge impact that our work has on those we serve. It is also very easy to forget how this line of work affects the staff that is on the front line fighting for housing and stability alongside our veteran clients.

At the last staff meeting, I was taken aback by the compassion and emotion displayed by our team. It is quite

emotional to hear a case manager share that a veteran found employment after three months of searching and have the whole room erupt in cheer, or to listen to a program director become choked up over the amount of hard work her team puts in on a daily basis.

So, as we move forward on our quest to provide services to those veterans in our community who need us most, I want to acknowledge the doers. I want to thank the individuals who have chosen CVAF as their place of employment, and have decided to dedicate their time to making a difference in the lives of countless veterans. It is because of these people that

CVAF has been able to expand services from transitional housing for single male veterans to housing services which are now available to all homeless veterans. It is because of this dedication that CVAF also provides employment and training opportunities, not to mention all the supplemental programs that are offered here at CVAF to provide additional assistance. It is an honor to be a part of this organization and to work with such inspirational people on a daily basis.

If you would like more information on the programs offered by CVAF or how to request assistance, please visit our website at www.cavaf.org

MEET NEW CASE MANAGER ASHLEY HULCY



I am a Bakersfield Native, I joined the United States Navy in 2007 and was stationed on the *USS Nimitz* (CVN 68) out of San Diego, California, then followed her up to Washington State where she was dry-

docked for repairs. I currently continue my service as a Navy Reservist; I have 7 years and 3 months of service. I got out of active duty in 2011.

I currently attend the University of Phoenix, where I am working on my Bachelors of Science in business management. I'm expecting to graduate in early 2016.

Upon completion of my active duty service, I worked for a nonprofit that was geared towards helping people. I knew then that I had found my personal mission, which is to help people any way that I can. I am honored the California Veterans Assistance foundation gave me

this opportunity. To be able to give back to my brothers and sisters in arms is a second chance to serve. To be a first line of support for the Veterans here is awesome! Nothing motivates me more than a person on a mission to better themselves! People are codependent creatures; we all fall and I know if it were me, there would be an extended hand of a comrade to help me up.

Given the right tools and support there is nothing that can't be accomplished! I may not have all the answers as a new case manager, but I am not afraid to get dirty while looking or assisting a fellow veteran in figuring it out – together!

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING CORNER

The CVAF Employment and Training team has been hard at work developing new training opportunities for the unemployed homeless veterans that our organization serves. CVAF would like to introduce their newest partners in training facilities: The Regional Occupation Center, who developed a pilot program for the veterans we serve.

This program is a four week course that will provide the veterans with a certificate of completion for introduction in the fields of HVAC and welding. Another Pilot program that was developed this quarter (just for the veterans in our programs) is through Synergy Learning Institute. This institution developed an automotive



HVAC Training at Regional Occupation Center.

program utilizing retired professors from Bakersfield College Automotive courses. This training will provide the veterans an opportunity to become certified air-conditioning repairmen. Finally, the Employment and Training Program has partnered with Safety Seminars to allow the veterans an opportunity to obtain their certificates in Crane Operations.

With these new training opportunities, our homeless veterans have doors opening to them that will lead to employment. Since the beginning of this Employment and Training program at CVAF, 60 veterans have been successful in obtaining employment above the minimum livable wage. We look forward to continuing this trend of breaking down barriers and placing our veterans into gainful employment and furthering them on their path to stability and independence. Michael G. a current participant in the Employment and Training program stated, "This program has helped me gain skills through training to become employable and stand out to employers. I feel that this program can be a great asset to veterans looking to get back to work!"



Automotive Training at Synergy Learning Institute.



Crane Training Course at Safety Seminars.

BRIAN FOX ACCEPTS SSVF PROGRAM MANAGER POSITION



My name is Brian Fox. I was born and raised in Southern California. I have spent the better part of my career working in the nonprofit sector assisting a wide range of clients in reaching their goals and leading a better and more fulfilling life.

I recently returned to the United States from living abroad and relocated to the Bakersfield area when I accepted the SSVF Program Manager position with California Veterans Assistance Foundation.

It is an honor and privilege to work with an organization that shares the same beliefs and ideology in regards to assisting clients that I do. I feel very fortunate to work with an organization that is willing to roll up their sleeves in order to make a positive impact in our community.

RUBEN CORTEZ JOINS CVAF STAFF



I recently retired from the Department of Corrections as a Correctional Officer and a Correctional Sergeant. The work I was doing was with adult males that had been incarcerated.

During the years in the Department of Corrections, I worked with individuals that were labeled by the prisons as "Triple CCCMS". These were adults that were taking medicine for their mental health.

After I retired, I was home for approximately six months; I could not stay retired at such a young age – 49-1/2. I went back to work with a law firm in town doing the medical side of the work. I assisted many that were in need of reducing their share of cost for Medi-Cal and assisted several individuals get into other programs within the Medicare program.

Then one day I saw a job position for the California Veteran Assistance Foundation. I applied for the position and had an interview. After a few days, I received a telephone call from CVAF and accepted the position.

Working with the California Veteran Assistance Foundation has opened my eyes; the Veteran community has housing needs and also needs assistance with food and clothing. This is something that should be given to our veterans, as they gave their time, effort and in some cases, their lives.

I am so thankful to be working with the California Veterans Assistance Foundation to assist a veteran in need. I want to help our veterans with anything I can. Because I now work closely with the veterans, I can see what they have gone through and are still going through now. They need everyone's help.

I will forever be thankful for the veterans and for being a veteran, as well.

HIRE COMMITTEE REPORT

The focus of the Kern County HIRE Committee is to connect job-ready employees with disabilities to employers interested in hiring people with disabilities. CVAF HVRP Job Developer David Laurence currently sits on this committee.

The first annual HIRE Committee Employer Luncheon was held in 2005. At the luncheons, hosted by Bakersfield Mayor Harvey Hall, awards are given for Employer of the Year, Employee of the Year and Humanitarian of the Year. This

HIRE COMMITTEE REPORT, continued on page 4



year's luncheon will be held on October 9, 2014.

The criteria for choosing the Employer of the Year are: a willingness to employ persons with disabilities; employing at least one person with a disability during 2013/2014; active recruitment/hiring practices; the sensitization of other employees; assimilation, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities; promoting the concept of employment of persons with disabilities; and special orientation of training procedures.

The criteria for choosing the Employee of the Year are: a documented disability and demonstrated positive adjustment to the disability; stable employment – full- or part-time (has been successfully employed

for a minimum of 1 year); other than necessary and reasonable accommodations, does not expect special treatment; has positive interpersonal relationships; and has good attendance and demonstrates good job safety practices.

The criteria for choosing the Humanitarian of the Year are: an organization, agency, business or individual (within HIRE's geographic area) that has championed the cause of equal opportunity and independence for a person or persons with disabilities by demonstrating a record of advocacy, showing a spirit of sensitivity and awareness and devoting benevolent and humanitarian service to the community at large, including a person or persons with disabilities.

BUENA VISTA REMODEL



CVAF's Buena Vista Street housing facility is currently undergoing a remodeling process for all their Veteran apartments!

CVAF is working with Lowes Home Improvement team to accomplish these renovations. The Lowes team has been a major contributor on this project, donating both materials and time. The tasks that their team has tackled has been anywhere from demolition to painting to cleaning up the individual apartment sites.

Other community partners that have contributed to CVAF's renovation process are Gunsolus Construction, which volunteer time and talent to install all the kitchen appliances; Indoor-N-Outdoor Electric; and Hallamore Floors.

A big thanks to all the volunteers thus far that have contributed to making this project a success! Two apartments are completed; two are ready for installation and a fresh coat of paint, and four apartments are standing by for their upgrades.

FOSTER BOYS JOIN CVAF RESIDENTS FOR FATHER'S DAY BBQ

On Saturday, June 14, 2014, Valley Bible Fellowship and Unicorn Boys Home Joined CVAF at the Decatur site for a Father's Day BBQ. The VBF Block Party crew towed in their trailer BBQ and grilled hotdogs and hamburgers for all. Excitement was in the air as everyone played horseshoes, target toss and the boys



challenged our Veterans to board games (and usually won).

CVAF resident Veteran David S. said, "Having the foster boys here with us to celebrate Fathers Day was awesome, being able to play games and talk with them, share good food and fun, it was just so heartwarming and inspiring. We all can't wait to have the boys over to visit again."

California Veterans Assistance Foundation is thankful to Pam Miller of Valley Bible Fellowship for working with us to coordinate this day of fellowship and fun. We would also like to thank the VBF Block Party Crew for supplying the wonderful food!

And...a huge thank you to the staff and boys of Unicorn Boys Home for taking time to be here with us and brighten the day of CVAF Veterans!

FRANK – AN SSVF SUCCESS STORY

It is my pleasure this quarter to write about a U.S. Army Veteran named Frank. Frank has had the ups and downs in life that could be the script for any Hollywood blockbuster movie. He is an extremely humble and caring individual that I am lucky to have met and hopefully, I might be lucky enough to be a brief footnote in the story of his life.

Frank started out as a large majority of veterans do; growing up poor and joining

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Providing services takes money; foundations and corporations fight hard for a share of big federal and state grants. The California Veterans Assistance Foundation relies on the generosity of people like you to help end the national disgrace of homeless veterans who are (MIA) missing in America.

Please send your tax-deductible donations to:

**California Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc.
1400 Easton Dr., Suite 102
Bakersfield, CA 93309**

Please help us to continue our efforts to help those veterans who need a "hand-up and not a hand-out."

CFC Donation

94262 California Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc. EIN #30000186044

Transitional housing programs with supportive services that assist veterans in identifying, treating and diminishing the issues that lead to homelessness.

Toll-free: 888-805-2490

CVAF MISSION STATEMENT

To serve veterans and other individuals and their families who are homeless, at risk, and low income. To restore and improve lives by alleviating homelessness through information, advocacy, and service.

the military as a way to escape poverty. He served honorably in the U.S. Army, married and had three sons.

Sounds like a perfect story and not much to write about, doesn't it? Well, here is the plot builder. In 2004 Frank and his wife were divorced, shortly after he started using heroin. This addiction led Frank down a dark and destructive path that led him to becoming homeless. Frank finally hit bottom and went into treatment for his addictions. Currently Frank is clean and sober. He and his new wife are off the streets and living in their own apartment. Frank has walked a long hard road and lived to tell the story.

Frank is a veteran that was successfully housed through CVAF's Supportive Services for Veterans and Families Program. Through many challenges, he has stuck with CVAF; and through case management, he works hard every day on his issues of sobriety and housing stability.