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<https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/veterans-community-project-enters-new-phase-helps-more-homeless-vets>

## A Ray of Hope for Veterans

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One of the greatest ironies of America today is that, despite America's laudation of veterans, many of them ultimately fall through the cracks. Lacking a solid support system—and, in many cases, struggling with PTSD—they find themselves alone and at serious risk of succumbing to homelessness.

And yet, there is hope. A nonprofit foundation located in Kansas City called the Veteran's Community Project has recently begun providing tiny houses to homeless veterans. Ranging in size from 240 to 320 square feet, each home is comfortable, furnished, and fully powered. Inhabitants can enter free of charge, and while living there, receive all the necessary support they need to reestablish themselves and address the root causes of their homelessness. Each home comes fully furnished, with most of it donated by volunteers or corporations. A specially trained team of caseworkers awaits each new resident to help them restart their life.

The houses are built with the veterans' needs in mind. Due to the many cases of PTSD among this struggling population, many of the houses have special features designed to accommodate the residents' needs and provide them with a long-forgotten feeling of safety. Each house has only one entrance and exit, making it so the veterans have only one exit to monitor. Each house has windows only on the left side from the entrance, so no resident can see into another resident's house. This also frees up the right wall for utilities and plumbing—the kitchenette and

bathroom are located on the right wall. This feature makes it much easier to diagnose plumbing or electrical problems, and as such cuts down on the amount of expenses and volunteer manpower needed. All the houses are fully hooked up to city utilities, and a community center has been established to give the veterans a sense of belonging and fellowship.

Founded in summer 2016 by Brandonn Mixon, Mark Solomon, and Bryan Myers, this program offers housing and a supportive environment to homeless and struggling veterans. The three veterans, all of whom live in the Kansas City area, established the program after noticing the amount of veterans falling through the cracks in conventional veterans' aid programs.

In addition to offering homes for veterans suffering from homelessness, the program also provides many other services to veterans. The Veterans' Outreach Center, located in the Kansas City metropolitan area, provides such services as meals, hygiene kits, bus passes, employment rehabilitation and training, counseling referrals, and more. Construction on the houses started in 2017, with the first residents being moved in in January 2018. The project has since expanded to provide housing for veterans in multiple cities, such as St. Louis, Missouri and Longmont, Colorado, with a planned expansion into Phoenix, Arizona.

In these dark times, community is now more important than ever. Homeless people, and *especially* those among the homeless who have made great sacrifices to protect and defend this country, need us. They need our support, our compassion, and our respect, so that they may lead their lives with dignity and worth. Few organizations capture the spirit of this necessary uplifting quite like Veterans Community Project, and for that reason they are performing a valuable service for the community.

### **Citations**

Tiny Houses for Homeless Veterans: About: Veterans Community Project. (n.d.). Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <https://www.veteranscommunityproject.org/about>

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