

We Owe it to Them

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Written by: Fernando Vazquez

The National Alliance to End Homelessness reported that communities across the country counted a total of 49,933 homeless veterans which is 8.6 percent of the homeless population (2015).

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), "Veterans have historically been at greater risk of experiencing homelessness than other U.S. adults." (USICH, 2013). While the reasons for this are not all related to military service, combat exposure, wartime trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder can cause people to isolate themselves from friends and family and need psychiatric help which USICH describes as primary risk factors for homelessness (2013). Around 10 percent of any population that undergoes the criminal justice system is made up of veterans which is another risk factor for homelessness (USICH, 2013).

91 percent of homeless veterans are male and 98 percent are single (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015). 54 percent of homeless veterans are physically or mentally disabled and 76 percent live in a city (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015).

Although most veterans are males between the ages of 51 and 61 and have served in the Vietnam War, there is an increasing amount of homeless veterans who are younger, female, and heads of households (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015). Despite this, it is estimated that there may be a sharp increase in the number of homeless veterans over 55 in the next 10 to 15 years (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015).

As citizens, we owe a tremendous debt to our veterans. Whether or not you agree with the things our government has them do does not matter at this point. Our veterans have taken a risk many of us are too afraid to take and that deserves recognition. How can people say that they support the troops one minute and scoff at the idea of helping homeless people the next? You can not call yourself a true patriot if you're apathetic towards the idea of helping your fellow citizens. Here at T's 4 Hope, it is our mission to raise awareness of homelessness and hunger. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us at Ts4Hope@yahoo.com or 954-867-6765.

References:

National Alliance to End Homelessness. (n.d.). Fact Sheet: Veteran Homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/fact-sheet-veteran-homelessness>
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013).