

CENTRAL OREGON VETERANS VILLAGE

Central Oregon Veterans Outreach
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VETERANS ARE WELCOMED AT THE VILLAGE



- From November 2021 to March 2023, 28 Veterans have found shelter at the Village
- Veterans are from all branches and all military service eras from Vietnam to the present
- To date, length of stay from entrance to exit ranges from 1 month to 17 months.
- 15 Veterans have exited: 12 to housing; 1 left because of feeling restricted; and 2 were exited due to non-compliance (of these 2, 1 now has permanent housing and 1 went to inpatient rehab). Those exited due to non-compliance still receive COVO services.
- Interestingly nearly all exited Veterans, including those who left due to non-compliance, come back to the Village to visit. The camaraderie that is created at the Village is a key benefit for the Vets.

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS



- COVO emphasizes to Veterans living at the Village, and to the community, that, albeit temporary, the Village is their *home*.
- Because it is their home, Village residents have a voice in the running of the Village and as well, responsibility for upkeep of their cabin, the community building and grounds.
- Residents elect a three-person Village Council to provide a voice from the residents to COVO management and to work directly with the Site Coordinator on daily operations. Giving Veterans support and *leadership* from their peers has proven to be key aspect of the success of the Village. The Council runs security checks, oversee cleaning schedules and run some of the resident meetings

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES



- All Veterans have a COVO case manager to develop and follow an individual service plan
- Case management communication frequency is built around the Veteran's needs and availability.
- All-resident meetings are held twice weekly with Site Coordinator, Executive Director, behavioral health consultant, and periodically community partners present on services
- Our behavioral health consultant, an LCSW who is also a Veteran, interacts weekly with Village residents and as needed provides assessments and referrals to community providers, advises case managers as needed for cases, is available for after-hours crisis intervention and provides ongoing therapy for residents who choose to work with him. He also supports masters in counseling and MSW interns working with Vets at the Village.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES



- The original kitchen didn't have cooking capacity for 15 residents. A commercial dishwasher was donated and a second stove and a second microwave were installed.
- Gates were installed and are locked at night for the safety of the Village residents.
- Security cameras were installed to enhance safety
- Storage for both Village items and residents is necessary. A COVO donor found a 40-foot connex box for a very low price and it will be delivered sometime in March.
- While waiting for TDS and city permits to get broadband infrastructure up to the community building, we have a hot spot from our cell phone provider for staff and residents to use while in the community building

CHANGING LIVES



- M. is a Veteran served by COVO Outreach at China Hat for nearly two years. During that time he declined shelter or housing help and invitations to consider the Village. He finally agreed to tour the Village, and was pleasantly surprised. He decided to sell the camper he was living in and move to the Village where he worked very hard on his goals. In his 6 months there he was employed, obtained a HUD-VASH voucher and found an apartment. M. is a talented musician and artist. Now that he has a place of his own he is making connections in the community to support his artistic pursuits.
- H. was homeless for 6 months when he moved into the Village. He was resistant to following a plan to get him back to living independently. For almost a year COVO, other service providers and mental health specialists ran down every possible strategy to help him get motivated but to no avail. Additionally he frequently had conflict with other Village residents. He was exited for non-compliance but continued to receive COVO services and he stayed in contact with his support team. After living in his car and a shelter for a short-time, he followed through on some of the strategies offered while he was at the Village and within a few months was housed. He is still a frequent visitor at the Village. He is a good example of the importance of the time and support the Village can provide to Veterans to heal and work through what brought them to the point of needing the Village.

CHANGING LIVES



- S. was chronically homeless when he connected with COVO Outreach. S. is a hard worker (he's even biked across the US several times) but his persistent mental health challenges were a barrier for him following through with services long enough to get helped and housed. Living in community with others at the Village took some time to adjust to, but being in one place changed everything for him. He followed through with regular mental health care which allowed him to deal positively with other issues and within 3 months was housed.
- R. came to COVO's Outreach Center in summer 2021 deep in distress. COVO connected him to the Vet Center for counseling. When the Village opened, he moved in. R has income from disability benefits, but his mental health challenges were overwhelming his ability to maintain relationships or housing. He was frequently in conflict with other residents, and resisted most case management efforts to move him forward. After several months of interacting with our behavioral health consultant, R. agreed to meet with him for counseling. That led to agreeing to see a doctor and restart medication. He began accepting guidance from his case manager, and after about 4 months, on his own found an apartment. He continues counseling with the behavioral health consultant, meeting weekly in the Village community building. His social connections through the Village, where he was accepted and supported by other Vets, is an important part of his ongoing mental health wellness journey.