“How can we address and prevent veteran homelessness in our communities?”

How would it feel to risk your life in war for millions of people in your country so they could live free, but after returning home, ending up living on the streets with no shelter, food, or assistance? According to nationalhomeless.org, in the United States alone "approximately 40% of homeless men are veterans." This is a problem all American citizens can help resolve. Here are a few steps we can take to address and prevent veteran homelessness in our communities.

The first step in helping homeless veterans is getting to know the possible causes of homelessness. Low income, no supporting family, no job, no motivation, and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are some of the many examples leading to veterans becoming homeless. One of the leading causes of veteran homelessness is PTSD. According to the Mayo Clinic Website, “PTSD is a mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event --- either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.” This may negatively affect the veteran’s ability to complete everyday tasks because of negative moods and thoughts.

The second step in helping homeless veterans is forming relationships with them, so we can easily help veterans get their lives to how they were before the war. We can host a free meal, such as a barbeque or Sunday breakfast. We can also invite our community to a veterans program so we have the opportunity to thank the veterans for their time and service defending the freedoms of our country.

One action we can perform to help the veterans is to contact a local organization for veterans and offer ourselves as volunteers. Leading a game of bingo, cleaning the indoors, or weeding the outdoor landscape are just a few actions we can perform at the veteran homes. We can also encourage veterans who have a mental disorder as a result of the war to find counseling. One other idea for assisting homeless veterans is to help them find jobs and future careers. If the veterans can get jobs, they lead productive, self-sustaining lives.

How would it feel to risk your life in war for millions of people so they could live free, but after returning home, ending up living on the streets with no shelter, food, or assistance? In this essay I have stated steps to take to address and prevent veteran homelessness in our communities. First of all, get to know the possible causes of veteran homeless, then form relationships with veterans and finally, we can volunteer in our communities. With these steps, we can take action to help the heroes of our country who fought for our lives.

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