

Esperanza En Escalante Sentinel Post (E₃ S P)

3700 S Calle Polar Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 571-8294 Transitional Housing for Veterans and Families

Steve Louie, Editor: Volume 18 Number 1 MAY 2011

Page 1

Paws Up!



One of your closest personal relationships doesn't even have to be human. It could be a dog, cat, bird, and/or horse. *Esperanza En Escalante* Transitional Housing for veterans permits residents with approval to have pets on premises.

A pet can help you not only as a companion, but responsibility for your animal can help you recover yourself.

If you're thinking about adopting a dog, consider enrolling your 8 week to 4 year old canine in a training program with a local organization.

Insofar as recovery is concerned, and particularly if your animal has been "rescued," both of you may require a consistent and well organized approach to achieve the best result. There are a number of organizations throughout Southern Arizona that have a variety of programs that may work for you.

New rules governing bringing animals into public places may also be important to learn.

Particularly if you plan on bringing your animal to the VA, we all need to be considerate animal owners and handlers.

There are three recognized levels of animals insofar as public regulations are concerned: pets, therapeutic animals and service animals. These levels are legally defined.

1. *Pets*. There are three levels of pets (including untrained, personally trained and certified "good citizens").

Remember that no matter how well you may think your personally trained animal is, if it isn't used to being around people in an unfamiliar environment, it can be very stressful for you, the public and that animal. Because animals have very powerful sensory abilities, being around a place with unpleasant smells, noises and traffic can be confusing and the first instinct an animal has in that situation is to flee.

Canine "good citizens" according to a spokesperson of Handi-Dog of Tucson have successfully completed a 20 week course that results in certification that the animal behaves positively, consistently and obediently for its primary handler.

2. *Therapy Animal*. The difference between this category and the next is the duration, intensity, focus and success of training for both the animal and its handler. Therapy animals can be trained for a variety of tasks, but are not considered SERVICE animals, essential for the medical maintenance and safety of the handler. On the other hand, the training can be quite specific and beneficial, beyond the 20-week "good citizen" course.

Therapy animals (example would be a dog brought into a nursing home, or the hospital who has a very kind temperament and doesn't mind being petted by strangers), often come to SAVAHCS. Therapy animals (even those used for emotional support and/or comfort), do NOT qualify as unlimited public access animals.

This means that the animal could be denied access into a clinic, hotel, apartment, or other publicly accessible event (such as the recently held street faire). If you live in an apartment, expect to pay a pet deposit and be responsible for your animal as a pet.

3. *Service Animals*. Up to two years of training and periodic refresher courses are necessary to achieve this level. If you need such an animal, you can obtain a statement from your VA physician and submit it to the organization you have checked out, that can issue certification that will be recognized by authorities.

According to Handi-Dog trainers, the Department of Justice has now issued guidelines that might be used by law enforcement personnel in ascertaining the level of your animal, and its appropriateness to the public situation that you find yourself. They will ask you two questions:

1. *Is your animal a fully trained service animal?*
2. *Do you have full control of your animal?*

Animals at all levels **ARE NOT** required to wear vests, but frequently, when an animal has completed training, they often do wear vests issued by their respective training organization.

Service animals in particular are eligible to travel as medically necessary agents, as determined by recommendations made by your physician. Additionally, they may accompany an individual to all public locations (AS LONG AS THEY ARE WELL BEHAVED AND ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR TRAINING).

If you have a service animal and live in an apartment, you are not required to pay a pet deposit. Stay tuned to our website, as we will have information about a presentation to take place on May 12th, 2011 at Agave Clinic at SAVAHCS on animal therapy.

Disclaimer

The provision of this resource information does NOT constitute an endorsement of any program by either the VA, EEE, or ESP News. Readers are advised to research any program prior to committing to it.

Service training occurs in two different levels: Assistance 1 and Assistance 2. Trained SERVICE dogs can open refrigerators, turn on lights, check out an environment prior to your entry, and provide you with a PAWS UP! In cases of PTSD, animals have been trained to notice anxiety on the part of their handlers and to elicit a calming influence by putting their PAWS UP on their handler's body.

Special programs exist for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury, PTSD, anxiety disorders, amputation, and other disabilities.

Esperanza En Escalante Sentinel Post (E₃ S P)

3700 S Calle Polar Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 571-8294 Transitional Housing for Veterans and Families

Steve Louie, Editor: Volume 18 Number 1 MAY 2011

Page 2

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS LEADING TO HOMELESSNESS

There is an Encyclopedia of Homelessness by David Levinson, Editor (2004), Berkshire Publishing Group, ISBN 0-7619-2751-4 (cloth).

In the United States, Peter Rossi believes that homelessness is not so much a character flaw than a problem in obtaining regular access to successful work. Residential instability is an outcome of worklessness.

This definition frames an important aspect of our changing culture of work, that is not only a problem for the United States, but a global phenomena as well.

With respect to veterans, this also illuminates issues of transforming care from a medical issue to one of productivity. Recently, the editor interviewed Daniel Standage, a veteran who began the University of Arizona VET Center who states “only three percent of veterans enrolled at the University ever exhaust their GI Bill benefits.”

Research shows some interesting racial disparities in homelessness that might surprise you.

Of course, the fact that homelessness persists longer for African Americans is expected, but not acceptable. This is certainly tied to the flexibility of training and educational opportunities that make future employment, after periods of homelessness more possible.

European-Americans have higher numbers of episodes of homelessness than African-Americans.

Studies have also found that European-American women exhibit higher rates of psychological disorders than homeless African-American women. But, this might be a statistical fluke related to accessibility of treatment. African-American women report that they wanted treatment but were unable to obtain it with the same ease that perhaps their European-American counterparts achieved.

Because the population of veterans is aging, the issue is made more complex by comorbidities that frequently accompany unemployment and homelessness. Add to that disincentives related to disability ratings and compensation policy,

and the issue of Public Policy clearly has a significant impact.

Currently, the VA only has minimal occupational assistance services, relying upon heavily impacted services offered by local agencies and organizations.

During economic downturns, recessions and depressions, the ability of local communities to offer employment to veterans is significantly curtailed—but not impossible.

There are three avenues which the VA in Southern Arizona can help:

1. Compensated Work Therapy
2. Supported Employment
3. Direct Hire

The issue as illustrated above is REGULAR accessible and sustained work.

Worklessness and homelessness are directly related and remains a challenge.

Retraining is intimately related to the issue of worklessness and remains largely unaddressed for minimally educated veterans.

What are your thoughts?

Iraq and Afghan Vets

At the end of 2010, some two million Americans have served in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

800,000 of those vets deployed more than once.

250,000 of those vets have sought mental health treatment.

The VA estimates that 9,000 of those vets are already homeless.

MilVet Transition Program

It is clear that more is needed for the transition from military service to veteran status is needed. The GI Bill in whatever form it takes is just the beginning.

It is also highly likely that military force structure is not likely to change either with respect to the demands placed upon our active duty personnel, nor the level of crisis in the world on a consistent basis.

The reality of transition need to be recognized by Public Policy makers. Modern realities

include the fact that services such as the Postal System, that employed many veterans within the Federal system is declining.

The enlistment and training process should take into consideration transferrable skills and avenues of employing those skills. Hiring and evaluation processes within businesses need to remove the stigma associated with seeking assistance.

Take for example the disconnect between those employed in public safety jobs where any hint of PTSD is likely to void employment. Even though we know many vets are employed in law enforcement in critical public safety jobs are likely to have PTSD, whether diagnosed or not, and yet perform adequately and even in an exemplary manner.

As long as we stigmatize and discriminate against those who have served, marking us as unacceptable risks, though the government placed trust and leadership roles in us, we need to have public policy support us even as civilian veterans.

Abandoning veterans in civilian life runs counter to the policy of military ethics where no-one is left behind. There are many forms of abandonment and some of them are emotional. Let's pay more than lip service to our commitment to veterans and begin a MilVet Transition Program that protects occupational as well as educational opportunity.

There will always be those who CHOOSE homelessness. Let us not as a society choose worklessness for veterans who wish to be employed. It will save the taxpayer money in the long run and we were worthy of the investment in the first place.

In underdeveloped countries, and particularly where the United States is worried about radicalization of the populace, demoralization due to unemployment not only leads to homelessness, but terrorist-prone identification. Where the demoralized are ex-military veterans with experience in combat, this represents a breeding ground for trouble.

Percentage-wise, homeless American veterans are far less likely to rebel against the government, and more likely to become unintended public welfare burdens.

Esperanza En Escalante Sentinel Post (E₃ S P)

3700 S Calle Polar Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 571-8294 Transitional Housing for Veterans and Families

Steve Louie, Editor: Volume 18 Number 1 MAY 2011

Page 3

One of the current problems with tracking the issue is defining the problem in measurable terms.

If we use "productive" to include volunteer activity and segment that into employment, versus public contribution, then we would have a more accurate picture of American society.

This is an issue for economists, because the productive value of volunteering and other social activities has never been adequately tracked.

Thus, an individual might be "homeless" and/or participating in a public welfare program that includes housing, transitional housing and/or emergency housing. The degree of productivity should incentivize the availability and extent of support in the direction of those who actively participate.

HUD-VASH

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers are part of a set-aside program that does not absolutely compete with local efforts to house the homeless. Notice PIH 2010-40 (HA) states that the vouchers "... will enable homeless veterans to access affordable housing with an array of supportive services. Any PBVs awarded from this set-aside will not count against the 50 percent of a PHA's total allocation of HUD-VASH vouchers that can be project-based as noted in section 1 of Notice PIH 2010-23."

These vouchers were made available according to Public Law 111-117, enacted December 2009, that provided \$75 million dollars of funding as authorized under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

NAMI

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a local organization (NAMI of Southern Arizona, 6122 E 22nd Street, Tucson, AZ 85711 (520) 622-5582) that has deep ties to veterans issues has a web site that you might want to check out: <http://www.nami.org>. NAMI Veterans Resource Center has contact and information for both vets and families on a variety of issues:

- ▲ PTSD
- ▲ Public Policy and Legislation

- ▲ Veterans and Mental Illness
- ▲ Women Veterans Resources
- ▲ Suicide Prevention
- ▲ Active-Duty Service Members
- ▲ NAMI Veterans Council
- ▲ Traumatic Brain Injury
- ▲ Veterans Affairs and VISNS
- ▲ For Families, Children and Spouses
- ▲ Multicultural Resources
- ▲ Homelessness
- ▲ Veterans in the NAMI Advocate
- ▲ Online Discussion Groups
- ▲ Veterans Tribute Honor Roll

WHAT'S HAPPENING?



Proposed Sacramento Housing for Homeless and Working Poor

A proposed \$41 million building for Seventh and H Streets is designed to support both homeless and working poor individuals. The proposed project by Mercy Housing and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency offers an innovative permanent housing situation.

Transitional housing programs are limited to two years of temporary housing. Working poor are defined as earning 40% to 50% of the median income, or about \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year.

ISSUES IN COUNTING HOMELESS

Precise numbers of any kind are difficult to come by. Why? Let's look at the issue from several viewpoints, funding for programs that affect veterans and perhaps a better model that includes estimates of this number from the work- ing poor to the precariously housed.

Precarious housing can be easily determined by data available on median income, late housing payments, and filing for unemployment. The problem with current counts is that it no longer considers those people who are living with others in a non-permanent residence.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regards homelessness as only those who are living in the streets, or in emergency shelters, or transitional housing.

What does this mean for you?

It means that no matter how mobile you may be, housing for the homeless is likely to be at full capacity regardless of where you go. That's because the above situation leads to a disastrous undercount of needed resources.

It means that Public Policy Makers do not have an accurate and/or adequate picture of the need.

It means that the homeless share something in common with those veterans with mental health issues: stigmatization by society.

PUBLIC LIBRARY AND SCHOOL COOPERATIVES

As a non-English speaking student then living in the Watts area of Los Angeles, I realized at an early age what a resource a public library can be.

If you're a homeless vet with children, struggling to help your children break free of the cycles of poverty, you need to check out school/public library cooperative programs. Here's a website:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/externalrelationships/coopacts/schoolplcoopprogs.cfm>

Esperanza En Escalante Sentinel Post (E₃ S P)

3700 S Calle Polar Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 571-8294 Transitional Housing for Veterans and Families

Steve Louie, Editor: Volume 18 Number 1 MAY 2011

Page 4



Non Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Tucson, Arizona
Permit No. 555

EEE Board of Directors

Dan Anderson, Treasurer

Nelle Athougua

Rick Connors

Amy Flores

Carol Goodman, Vice Chair

Roosevelt Pied

Jim Randall, President

Phyllis Russell, Executive Director

Betty Slaybaugh, Director of Development

Ken Sutton

Pat Sutton