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Helping Homeless Veterans

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Homeless veterans are a big eye opener for every community. We see these people who dedicated their lives to fight for our country and it leaves us to question the government and the policies that are put in place for people when they leave the military. We question whether the VA is doing their part to keep these people safe and in the right mental state. The fact of the matter is that the VA does not know everything about a person if the person does not want them to know that information. The question then becomes how do you reach out to those individuals who are not willing to talk about their problems. Many veterans have too much pride to speak about the problems going on in their lives and this is part of a mentality that the military instills in people without realizing they do that. The military lifestyle is all about getting the job done and not the people involved. People are awarded for doing an above average job no matter the mental condition of that person. So, to reach the people you have to be willing to go out of your way and talk to them first and find out a little about them to get them to open up. Some of these people may be considered hostile. Some of these people may have been through some rough fights and this caused PTSD. All I want to do in this project is to reach out and lend information to these individuals to assure them that they have help when they are ready. I am going to dig into how I went about this now.

I researched information about what programs are out there for housing and mental health. I found that there are many programs both through the VA and through the state for veterans who become homeless. These programs are designed to help veterans get back on their feet by helping them find jobs and provide adequate housing. The Boise Rescue Mission is a place where many veterans can be found. They provide housing and food for the homeless and even can help them get medical attention as needed. Still I wanted to provide more information than what I had found. So I decided to dig deeper into it and came up with a solution

where I would gather the information and talk to these veterans to bring the information to them and explain to them that there is more than what most people will ever tell them. The problem comes about because the VA and government does not openly share information to all veterans. I found information through SEICAA, VA, and Boise Rescue Mission. All of these have programs that are designed to help veterans who are in need of mental help or housing to get back on the right track. The question that I then asked myself was how will I get this information to the veterans in a way that they will listen to me as a stranger to them?

This is where I had to get creative and decide what matters most to them: is it the information or is it someone who cares? The answer is neither of these, there are plenty of people around who are showing support to these people and the information is everywhere. So what else could I do? Well first off, I had to find out what was causing most of them to become homeless in the first place. Some of them were due to mental health and some of them were due to financial problems. I did not want to come in the same way as most of the other people have, and that is just providing food or information and leaving never to be seen again. I want to make a lasting impact where these veterans are not afraid to spread the information around. I knew that I would get the attention if they understood that I was once just like them struggling with PTSD and my family life was upside down. I have three kids and was once kicked out of my house in an area where I had no family support and I knew no one. I did not know about any of the programs that were available and felt alone. By connecting with them I was able to gain the trust of some of them and then, I was able to pass on the information about all the different programs that are out there to help them find jobs and get mental health.

In the end this all came down to gaining the trust of many of these veterans to get to a level where they would listen to me and hear the information I had for them. It was not about just giving them information, it was about creating a relationship with them first and figuring out how to reach them emotionally. Many of them were not willing to go see a therapist because they felt that it would not change anything in their lives. It is all about how I can inspire them to want to

become a working person or a family person again. You see some people go out there and just want to give handouts to them and hope for the best to come of it. This is not the case at all, these people need inspiration in their lives to see that it is possible for them to rise back to the top and to become better people. Most of them are in dark places and they just need to know that there is a way to get out and it is not as hard as it may seem. By simply communicating to them and just talking to them I was able to reach a level to where they were comfortable with me and they were sharing what had happened to them that made them become homeless. I am not going to share their personal stories but I will say that many of them are not bad people who just had a rough patch in their lives that lead to them being where they are now. I am happy to say that I reached my own goal and it did not involve any other people other than myself and the veterans. I initially thought that I would go about this in another way but in the end I took the time to realize that many people had done what I was going to do and it did not change anything for most. This is why I took the time to research and come up with a better plan to where I was simply just talking to them to gain trust. I will not know how effective I was but I do know that many of these people thanked me for my efforts and time just talking to them. We all can do this at any time and it will help make a difference.