

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2 | FALL 2021

# CONNECTIONS

THE DIFFERENCE **YOU** ARE MAKING FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED



**“Thank You!!”**

*How you took a veteran from homeless to housed in a global pandemic.*





Tanika with her two children.



Tanika pictured with her dog, Faith.



**“I’d rather go without than ask [because] maybe there’s someone that needs it more than me.”**



# Finding home in a pandemic

How YOU showed up for Tanika and her family when they needed it most

When COVID hit, most people in Tanika's life didn't realize just how bad things had gotten for her. They didn't know her hours at work had been dramatically cut. **They didn't know that she had lost her home. And almost nobody was aware that for six months, she was living in her car.**

**"I'd rather go without than ask [because] maybe there's someone that needs it more than me."**

When things didn't feel like they could get any worse, they did. The car she was living in had been towed. **Tanika was left with nothing.**

Let's rewind a bit. While in the United States Air Force, Tanika gave birth to her firstborn, her pride and joy, her son. When he was 9 months old, Tanika started training for a tour overseas. Then she learned the shocking news: she would have to give up her rights to her son if she wanted to go. That was the end of Tanika's career in the Air Force. She couldn't give up her son.

When things didn't feel like they could get any worse, they did. The car she was living in had been towed. **Tanika was left with nothing.**

**Suddenly she had to find her place back in civilian life.** It wasn't easy, especially as a single mom. Tanika was extremely determined. The leadership skills she cultivated in the Air Force served her well in the workplace. She found a good job, a home for her family, and even gave birth to her beautiful daughter.

There were still challenges ahead. The house Tanika was renting had been sold five times while she lived there. Each time the house changed hands, Tanika was worried she would have to leave. **Her fears came true when the last owner kicked them out.**

Unfortunately, at that time, Tanika's hours at her job were cut due to the pandemic. She didn't know what to do. She couldn't afford to move into a new place without warning.

She hoped she would be able to stay with her girlfriend, but her girlfriend's family did not approve of their relationship. Her children were able to stay with family members, but **Tanika was left living in her car. She didn't have anywhere else to go.**

Tanika wasn't used to asking for help. She was used to being the person who helped others. When asked about the lessons she learned in the Air Force, Tanika says, **"The discipline. Teamwork. The willingness to overcome adversity, and to take on helping others, even if you're struggling yourself. If I've got \$10, and someone needs \$9, that's ok because at least I would still have \$1 left."**

Tanika was an incredibly dedicated mother, and she knew her family needed stability. She knew she had to put her pride aside to get help.

That's when **YOU** stepped up. **YOU** made sure Tanika had the resources she needed and was able to find a stable home for herself and her daughter.

When they moved in, **it was the first time her daughter had a room of her own in six years!** She couldn't wait to decorate it! When it was time for her daughter to return to school, **YOU** provided a backpack with supplies to set her up for success!

Most importantly, she doesn't have to go through the pain of seeing her mother struggle through homelessness, or the pain of living apart. **Thanks to YOU, they are together in their very own home.**

**"Thank you! I'm so grateful! [YOU] could have said no. [YOU] didn't have to do what [YOU] did."** said Tanika.

**YOU** have shown Tanika that she has your support and you are always cheering her on.

**Your support has truly been a blessing for Tanika and her family. You have given them a new lease on life. From the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU!!**



Tanika in front of her new house.



**“I didn’t have no place to go.”**

## Helping heroes rebuild their lives

### **YOU gave Andrew the best gift of all: self worth**

When Andrew’s long-term relationship ended, he found himself in a devastating situation he never could have imagined. As a veteran of the United States Army and Marine Corps, he was homeless in the middle of a pandemic! To make matters worse, he was suffering from severe PTSD after a devastating truck driving accident which left him unable to work.

Andrew’s world was crumbling around him and he didn’t know if he would make it. Then, in this terrifying time, **YOU** were his lifeline of hope. Thanks to **YOUR** kindness, Andrew found his way to our Detroit Veterans Housing Program. Immediately upon arrival, he was relieved to finally have shelter and food.

**“It was a blessing to be there because I didn’t have no place to go, especially in the middle of this pandemic. It gave me a place to rearrange my life and recoup something that is important to me: my own self-worth.”**

The blessings you provided didn’t stop there. Thanks to **YOU**, he has a peaceful, safe, and comfortable home of his own. When Andrew looks around his new home he is overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. **“It feels wonderful!”** he exclaimed. **“I’m taking control of my life again.”**

The blessings continued as Ray of 5th Avenue Furniture teamed up with Christine and Diana from The Farmington Elks Lodge to provide much need essentials for Andrew. Their extremely generous donations have made a life-changing impact.

**“I thank God for it,”** Andrew says, about the assistance he has received. **“The people that make contributions to donate, I thank them. I am, and I will be eternally grateful.”**

Andrew continued, **“now that all of this has come together I don’t have to worry about it, and I can concentrate on looking further down the line.”**

**Thank you for being there when Andrew needed you the most.** There are more veterans just like Andrew, and we hope you will join us in supporting them, too.



Left to right: Diana Campbell, Ray Zerke, Christine Doby, Danilo Tuzan



Andrew with VOA Case Manager, Thomas Bradley



# YOU can create miracles

How YOU can make sure no child goes without

COVID hit hard for most of us, but for some the challenges it brought were life-changing. That's how it was for Stephanie, single mom of two. After the father of her children left and moved to Florida, she was left alone to raise her two children: 8-year-old, Kierstin, and 5-year-old, Cameron.

Even though the cards were stacked against her, she was determined to provide the best life she could for them. Then **2020 hit and her world came crashing down.** Her sister passed away. Her kids were sent home from school as the world shut down and they were forced to shelter in place. Stephanie didn't have the luxury of working remote, so she lost her job of four years because of her need to stay home with the kids. She started to receive unemployment, but it wasn't enough to cover all of the bills.

As the bills continued to pile, she did her best to be the mom and dad that Kierstin and Cameron deserved. But how much longer could she take it? **How long could she keep burning the candle at both ends?**

March and April had flown by, and the summer passed even quicker. Now it was fall, and the bills kept adding up. Christmas was around the corner, and she couldn't even pay the electric bill.

**"When my babies tell me what they want from Santa, I smile... but deep down, I hurt because I know that I am barely making bills,"** Stephanie explained. **"All I want for Christmas is for my children to know that Santa hasn't forgot about them and put a smile on their faces."**

Stephanie's story is just one of many we see each year. Right now, **YOU** have the opportunity to make sure that kids like Kierstin and Cameron wake up to gifts from Santa this year. **We hope we can count on you to let your kindness shine this season.**



**"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor."**

*Proverbs 22:9*

**YES!** I want to give a family a real Christmas miracle!

**Give**  
the gift of  
**Hope**

To donate online visit us at [www.voami.org](http://www.voami.org)

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of  \$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  \$\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make this a  monthly gift  annual gift  one time gift

Check Enclosed  Credit Card:  Visa  Mastercard  Discover  Amex

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_





# Students ready to succeed

**YOU** provided school supplies to homeless students

Thank you, thank you, **thank YOU!** Your support and dedication to helping children in need made a HUGE impact in your community. Your gift showed students you believe in them, and it gave them the confidence needed to succeed.

Every time they use their new backpack, they will be reminded they have people in their corner.

**THANK YOU!**



**1,150**  
Students  
Served



**188**  
Caring  
Donors



**23,000+**  
Pounds of  
Supplies



**93**  
Districts  
Supported

## ✂️ Did you know?

You can continue your impact by leaving a gift in your will for Volunteers of America Michigan.

- Please send me information on how to continue my impact by leaving a gift in my will.
- Please call me to discuss leaving a gift in my will for Volunteers of America Michigan.  
My phone number is: \_\_\_\_\_  
The best time to call is: \_\_\_\_\_
- My employer offers matching gift funds. Enclosed is the appropriate form from my Human Resources Department.



**MICHIGAN**

**Thank you for keeping hope alive in your community!**

Your gift is tax deductible as a charitable contribution. All gifts received are used where most needed to help care for people in need throughout the year.



# Veterans Day Car Giveaway

Getting our heroes back on the road.

**This Veterans Day, we want to help veterans with one of their most critical needs: transportation.** It's not a surprise that vehicles are hard to come by for anyone right now, but that's especially true for homeless veterans who are trying to get back on their feet and get to work. That's why we are doing all we can to raise awareness of this issue and ask for your help.

To celebrate our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary and our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of serving homeless veterans in Detroit, we are giving away quality used vehicles to veterans in need. **This won't be possible without you.** Let your kindness and compassion shine bright by making a difference for our nation's heroes like Tim and Glenn.

**TIM** was in bootcamp for the United States Army when his drill sergeant told him the first tower had been hit on 9/11. Soon after, he was sent to serve in Iraq. It was extremely challenging, both physically and emotionally. Tim bravely persisted and **helped ensure the continued safety and freedom of our nation.**

Coming home was not easy. It was difficult to find a job. Despite the challenges he was facing, he stepped up to raise his two young nephews as if they were his own children.

Tim was already struggling financially before the pandemic, but **when COVID hit he lost everything including his car.** Fortunately for him, **YOU** were there in his time of need. **YOU** gave him a safe place to live while he gets back on his feet.

At work, Tim serves disabled veterans like himself. He won't let them down. Now that he no longer has a car, he walks one and a half hours to work every day. It is extremely difficult and not having a car limits his options for housing. **If Tim received a car it would be life changing for him. YOU can make this possible.**



**GLENN** is a United States Army Veteran who moved in with his mother when she could no longer live on her own. **"Her wishes were for me to take care of her. She didn't want to go in a nursing home."**

Glenn was a dedicated son and caretaker, but **when his mother passed away he became homeless.** It was extremely difficult and unsafe. Glenn eventually ended up in the hospital. Thankfully, the staff there were able to connect him with the Detroit Veterans Housing Program. **Because of YOUR generosity, Glenn had a safe place to heal.**

He didn't know there were places homeless veterans could go for help. He didn't realize there were kind-hearted people out there like **YOU** working hard to fight homelessness and hunger. **"I'm thankful for being off the streets,"** Glenn says. **"It's dangerous out there."**

Glenn walks 3-5 miles each way to work so he won't be late. It has become too painful for his back, so he is looking for a more sustainable path. He is focused on his future and explained **"I want to be a productive member of society."** **YOU can change Glenn's life again by supporting the Veterans Day Car Giveaway!**



**To get involved go to [www.voami.org/veteransdaycargiveaway](http://www.voami.org/veteransdaycargiveaway)**





**Saturday, December 4, 2021**  
Beginning at 6 pm  
*Details coming soon*



To learn more, visit  
[www.voami.org/holidaysofhope](http://www.voami.org/holidaysofhope)

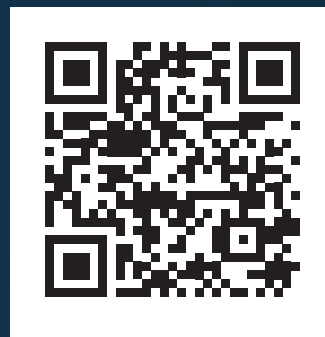
# TEAM VOA VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

**November 11, 2021**  
11:00am - 1:00pm

Join us as we celebrate our Detroit Veterans Housing Program's 10th Anniversary!

**Featuring** our Veterans Day Car Giveaway, lunch sponsored by The Whitney, and a special appearance by the Four Time Stanley Cup Champion of the Detroit Red Wings, Darren McCarty!

RSVP for the event here:



<https://bit.ly/VeteransDayLuncheon21>



21415 Civic Center Drive  
Suite 306  
Southfield, MI 48076

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## GET CONNECTED

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248-223-7317

**Vehicle donations**  
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