

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2022

CONNECTIONS

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



**“I thank
the Lord!”**

*How you helped
Julia celebrate
100 years*



Volunteers of America®
MICHIGAN



Tim



Todd

YOU gave back to heroes



Glenn



Walter

 **Veterans Day**
Car Giveaway
Getting our heroes back on the road.

YOU put heroes back on the road

How YOU changed the lives of four veterans

To celebrate our 125th anniversary, and the 10th anniversary of serving homeless veterans in Detroit, we asked for your help to make Veterans Day 2021 extra special, and you came through in a major way! **YOU** made it possible to give away four quality used vehicles to veterans in need! **YOU changed their lives.**

YOU heard the call and when the big day finally arrived, excitement filled the air as veterans and community members gathered to celebrate and honor those who bravely served our country. Even Darren McCarty, *four time champion of the Detroit Red Wings*, had to be part of the action. He emceed the opening ceremony and helped us celebrate a momentous day for four heroes: Tim, Todd, Glenn, and Walter.

Let's take a closer look at the impact your generosity had on these four veterans!

TIM, a United States Army veteran, **had to walk one and a half hours to work, every single day!** This made his options for employment and housing extremely limited. Now that he has a car, he can stay at his job with the VA and live in a safe neighborhood. Shortly after getting his new car, he started the interview process for a promotion, too. **You gave Tim the freedom to thrive!** He is forever grateful for your kindness.

TODD, a United States Navy Seaman and single father, **was struggling to keep a job and take**

care of his children without transportation. He did what he had to do, which meant riding his mountain bike everywhere, pulling his kids behind him in a bike trailer.

Thanks to your support, he can drive his kids to daycare in a warm vehicle and even get himself to work! He can even take his son and daughter to visit their grandmother. **THANK YOU** for giving Todd a warm, dependable vehicle and changing this family's life for the better!

Without a car, **GLENN**, a United States Army veteran, **had to walk up to five miles to work.** When his back couldn't take it any longer, **he became unemployed and homeless.** Now that he has a car, Glenn found a new job and stable housing. He says, **"THANK YOU for helping me get back on my feet!"**


WALTER, a United States Navy veteran, went through an extremely difficult time when his relationship of 20 years ended. **He lost everything, even his home.** Then, **YOU** stepped in and provided him with a reliable car that would help him get his life back. Now Walter is able to make ends meet and is no longer homeless. **"It has been a blessing!"** he says!

Reliable transportation is something that many people, so often, take for granted. In the case of Tim, Todd, Glenn, and Walter - we hope you can see how life changing your support has been. Thanks to **YOU**, they now have more options for jobs and places to live. They can be on time to work without walking for hours each way. **They can take care of their families.**

This experience was a beautiful reminder of what we can accomplish when we come together as a community to support our heroes! **We hope we can count on you to wrap your arms around our heroes who still need your help.**

THANK YOU
for changing
the story for four
of our nation's
heroes.





**“I don’t
have to be
ashamed of
my past.”**

YOU gave the gift of dignity


You showed Curtis he was worthy of more

At the age of 21, Curtis knew serving in the United States Marine Corps was the direction he wanted his life to go. He served with dedication and pride for four years until an injury brought his career to a screeching halt.

As a disabled veteran, his transition back to civilian life was full of challenges. Finding a new career path, or even just a job to get by, seemed impossible. Curtis leaned on his family for support during this difficult time. They had always been there for him, and he needed them now more than ever. Suddenly though, his support system crumbled beneath him. Within just a few short years, he lost his mother, father and grandmother. **The support system he leaned on was gone.**

Losing so much in such a short period of time was devastating. Curtis was overwhelmed by financial hardship, grief, and loneliness. **He became homeless** and had no idea how he would go on. It all felt like too much to bear.

That’s when YOU stepped in. Because of **YOU**, Curtis found safety and support at our Detroit Veterans Housing Program. **“I don’t have to be ashamed of my past. They are here to help me help myself.”** When Curtis was facing the darkest moments of his life, feeling alone and hopeless, **YOU** were there for him. When he felt like he had nowhere to turn, **YOU** gave him shelter!



Curtis is passionate about leadership and serving others, which are the same values that motivated him as a Marine. **“I try to be a leader for the new guys by setting a good example,”** he says. He helps out in the kitchen, around the building, and in any way he can. Curtis dreams of going back to school, so he can become a coach. He also looks forward to reconnecting with his daughter and four grandchildren.

YOU have given Curtis a safe place to live, three meals a day, and the support he needs to get back on his feet. **YOU** have even made it possible to start an art therapy program so veterans can heal through the arts.



“Veterans look forward to Art Therapy. When they’re feeling down or anxious, this is another tool in their toolbox to help them cope,” Ronda Hall, Lead Clinical Case Manager at Volunteers of America Michigan.

YOU have made a huge impact on homeless veterans in Detroit. **We hope more veterans like Curtis can count on you, too.**



Celebrating 100 years of life

YOU gave Julia a community that cares

The pandemic has been challenging and isolating for many senior citizens, but **YOU have risen to the challenge to help them stay safe and thrive!** Last year, you gave the gift of safety, dignity, community, and affordable housing to more than 800 seniors.

Ms. Julia Taylor is one of those seniors who is thriving thanks to your support. In March, Julia, a resident of Oak Village, turned 100 years old! **“99 just wouldn’t do it for me,”** joked Julia who found her home at Oak Village a few years ago after retiring from her job as a nurse’s aide. She calls Oak Village her **“second Heaven on Earth”** and loves that she can keep going to the same church she’s belonged to for **50 years!**

We celebrated with balloons, decorations, cake, and cookies, and went all-out to make Julia’s day as special as she is. Residents were invited to join in on a birthday parade and received goodie bags and treats. Some beloved friends from church came to celebrate with her, too. State Representative, Cynthia A. Johnson, even issued a tribute in honor of the occasion signed by the Governor and Lt. Governor.

It was a joyful day for all, and it was a powerful example of what YOUR support provides for seniors! Thanks to you, seniors like Julia can have a safe place to live. They can be part of a vibrant community that cherishes them. **Because of YOU, they know they are not alone.**



YES! I want to help seniors, families and heroes thrive

To donate online visit us at www.voami.org

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Paying it forward

How Robyn gave back to a family in their time of need

Back in 2017, Robyn, a single mother of four, was working hard to raise her children while attending nursing school. Christmas was coming up, but Robyn didn't feel her usual excitement about the holiday season. She had lost her job and just paying the bills was a struggle, so there was no money for presents. She couldn't bear the sad look on her kids' faces on Christmas morning when they realized there weren't any presents under the tree. **They wouldn't understand why Santa had forgotten about them.** Hadn't they been good all year?

That's when **YOU** stepped in. **YOU** gave Robyn, Se'Aria, SaNya, S'Riyah, and Shammore a Christmas to remember, with a beautiful tree and gifts! Your kindness inspired Robyn and she made herself a promise then: **"Once I get settled, I want to adopt a family myself."**

Fast forward to 2021: Robyn is a nurse and this past year she was able to keep her promise! She and her kids adopted a single mother and her four children. Robyn says, **"Now that I am able to give back, it is super fulfilling."**

For almost 30 years, **YOU** have made sure families, seniors, and veterans don't have to go without during the holiday season. **THANK YOU for giving Robyn the support she needed, so she could be there for another family in their own time of need.**



Robyn's kids having a snowball fight with their their Adopt A Family Sponsor in 2017



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.



“I wish this type of community for anyone who doesn’t have a home.”

YOU gave Marilyn a place to call home

How you made it possible for Marilyn to find the home of her dreams

Marilyn and her husband were living out their dreams in Florida after they retired. They even started their own business creating books for the blind. They were changing lives, every day. But **everything changed when her husband passed away**. Suddenly, being in Florida away from her children and grandchildren became an awfully lonely place to be. In addition to the loneliness, she became legally blind, and couldn’t keep their business going on her own. **She needed to find a home where she could feel safe and continue to live with dignity.**

Thanks to **YOU**, Marilyn found that home at Delta River Senior Village. When she toured the community with her daughters, they knew it was exactly what they needed. Marilyn became one of Delta River’s first residents! Eight years later, Marilyn says the community she found at Delta River feels like family. **“I feel safe here. If I need anything at all, I have neighbors that are wonderful and able to help. I am very grateful!”**

“I’m 84 years old and have some troubles physically, but I’m happy here. I feel being here is a great way to live out the rest of my life. I just love it here. As we get older, we finally have time to talk about our lives.”

YOU helped Marilyn continue to live independently in a place where she feels safe and is a part of a thriving community. **Without you, communities like Delta River could not exist.** Seniors like Marilyn wouldn’t have the support and friendships they now depend on. **“I wish this type of community for anyone who doesn’t have a home.”**

Because of YOU, Marilyn can focus on what she loves most in life: her beautiful grandchildren. Your giving spirit continues to shine bright, ensuring more seniors just like Marilyn can stay happy, safe, and healthy... **EVEN IN TIMES LIKE THESE.**



Marilyn with her neighbors celebrating Delta River winning the 2019 Small Property of the Year Award



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