



Let's get our homeless veterans off the streets

Those who have served our country deserve a safe place to call home, but too many veterans struggle with homelessness, even in Fort Worth. A city-wide *100-Day Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness* began just last week with the goal of securing housing for all our city's homeless veterans in time for Christmas.

Fort Worth Housing Solutions plays a key role in housing homeless veterans through VASH, a collaborative program of HUD and the VA. Recently the agency received an additional 10 VASH vouchers, which will enable 10 more homeless veterans to move into permanent housing as soon as rental units can be found.

This brings the total to 357 veterans who are receiving housing assistance. VASH vouchers work the same way as Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8); the tenant pays 30 percent of his or her income toward rent. The VA screens, refers and helps the veterans get the services they need to become self-sufficient again.

"We are grateful for the new vouchers and hopeful that more landlords will want to join this city-wide effort to house our heroes," said Mary-Margaret Lemons, president of Fort Worth Housing Solutions.

Please contact RaVonda Thompson, 817-333-3667, if you know of a good property or unit for the VASH program. Join us in the *100-Day Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness!*

From living in a car to magna cum laude

A Vietnam era veteran, Stephen Moreland was sleeping in his car near the UTA campus one night when a police officer tapped on the window.

"Are you homeless? Are you a veteran?" she asked as Stephen sat up and shook himself awake. The officer explained that she was an advocate for the homeless.

Stephen forgot about the conversation until two weeks later when he received a phone call from a Fort Worth Housing Solutions housing counselor. A VASH voucher was waiting for him, she said. Within weeks he moved into an apartment and began receiving services from



the VA.

"I owe my life to VASH," recalls Stephen. "I wouldn't have made it much longer out there." Homeless for about 13 months, Stephen's problems began when his company down-sized and he lost his job in I.T. while living in Los Angeles. [Read more about Stephen's journey.](#)

Can affordable housing be this gorgeous?

Our newest mixed-income property, The Standard at Boswell, greets visitors in a spacious waiting room flooded with sunlight, with sleek furniture and views of a sparkling pool.



Developed by Ojala Partners, this small, attractive apartment community opened in July in a fast-growing northwest corner of Fort Worth. Most of the 128 units are reserved for households earning either 50 or 60 percent of Fort Worth's median annual household income (AMI), which is \$75,200 currently.



Ten units are rented at market rate and 12 are occupied by families who relocated from Butler Place through HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. A single-person household earning \$26,350 would qualify for a 50 percent AMI unit. A family of three with an income of \$33,850 would also be eligible.

Here are some average salaries for jobs that would qualify a household for below-market rent, depending upon family size: hotel clerk: \$23,010; floral designer: \$26,810; administrative assistant: \$37,420; barber: \$29,680; health technician: \$40,130.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics - Fort Worth-Arlington wage report.

It all paid off in the end

By Kimberly Hammond, FSS graduate

One of the most rewarding life experiences is accomplishing personal, realistic goals. My objective was to gain financial independence through job security. The journey alone required daily commitment and well-thought-out plans with much patience.



I struggled financially as a divorced mother of four and substitute teacher, 21st century worker on weekdays and Macy's beauty consultant on weekends, bringing home just \$1,640 a month after taxes.

In addition to my already complicated schedule, I attended Tarrant County College and later enrolled in the University of Phoenix to obtain my bachelor's in Psychology, which is

still in progress. Bouncing back and forth between these jobs in certain seasons, not to mention the complexity of situations beyond my control, was not satisfying. What I needed was a real profitable change. I needed to purposely transition to a better paying job as soon as possible.

[Read more!](#)



Elijah McCoy and Alice Grays, crowned king and queen on Valentine's Day

Senior community honored

Villas of Eastwood Terrace was one of three finalists for "Senior Community of the Year" in the Lone Star Awards, a recognition program of the Apartment Association of Tarrant County. One of 38 properties in the Fort Worth Housing Solutions portfolio, the senior community made it to the finals after on-site interviews with staff and residents as well as a tour.

Located in southeast Fort Worth, the gated property is made up of 40 small apartment buildings that resemble houses, with four apartments in each. "We take care of our residents above and beyond," said Brenda Reese, the building manager. "And we have the best-looking property in the neighborhood!"

Open to seniors 62 years and older, the community offers a pool, library, movie room, beauty salon, covered parking, and to top it off, Bingo Tuesdays!

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