



Mather Veterans Village

Rancho Cordova, California

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

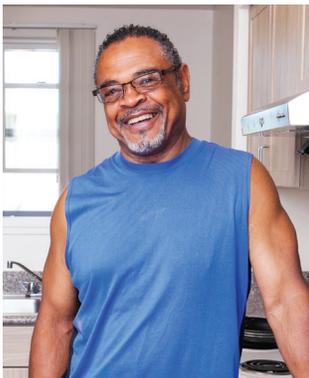
Five Veterans Find a Healing Home in the City of Rancho Cordova, CA

Disabled and homeless veterans have a new place to call home in the City of Rancho Cordova, CA. Welcome to Mather Veterans Village. Residents are moving in to Phase I of the project, which includes 50 permanent supportive homes and a rich menu of supportive services, including counseling, job training, medical assistance, group and individual therapy, and a healing environment. This newly constructed village is dedicated to the care and housing of our nation’s veterans, and we invite you for an insider’s look into the lives and homes of five of them – and the journey that led them to Mather Veterans Village, a place they now call home.



Ernesto Hayles, U.S. Army, Served 1974-76: Ernesto was 17½ years old when he enlisted in the Vietnam War-era as a wireless communications operator and cook. When he came home two years later, Ernesto and other Vietnam War-era veterans were spit on and called baby killers by citizens. He suffered from unspeakable nightmares that prevented him from keeping the cooking jobs he loved and a home that allowed the one thing that comforted him, his dogs. It took 40 years for him to be diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A helping hand came in the form of the Veterans Resource Centers of America, and Ernesto finally received the help he, his wife Roxanne and his faithful dog Shadow needed. They have gone from being homeless and jobless, to having a beautiful home, job training and hope. Mather Veterans Village is Ernesto, Roxanne and Shadow’s place to call home.

Edward Hill (Ed), U.S. Army, Served 1976-82: Ed served all over the world during his time in the U.S. Army as a mechanic. When he returned, he worked at clubs as a back door bouncer, yet he struggled with the effects of his service and abused drugs. In 1989, Ed made a change and to this day is 27 years clean and sober. Another helping hand came from the VOW to Hire Heroes Act that paid for one year of schooling for Ed. Life was going well until 18 months ago when he was admitted to the hospital with congestive heart failure. Ed’s life changed for the worse: he lost his house, his wife left him and he lived in his car. Ed called a national hotline for help and was connected with the Veterans Resource Centers of America. He was put on the waitlist for Mather Veterans Village, and one day his wish came true. Ed can now get care at the nearby VA Hospital, has a woman who loves him, and other veterans who support him. Mather Veterans Village is Ed’s place to call home.



George Thomas, U.S. Army, Served 1979-86: George served as a field radio repairman and earned the rank of E5 Sergeant in the U.S. Army. Six years ago, he lost his father who was his best friend. George became addicted to drugs to try and stop the pain, which led to him becoming homeless. One day, he reached out to the Veterans Resource Centers of America and was placed on the waiting list for Mather Veterans Village. George will tell you that he was praying in his car one weekend for the village to open and that Monday, he got the phone call. He has since moved into his new home, enrolled in a drug recovery program, and is looking for employment. He has hope for the future and believes he can set a good example for his 11 grandchildren. Mather Veterans Village is George’s place to call home.





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Richard Tincher, U.S. Army, Served 1973-76: Richard joined the U.S. Army in the 3rd Infantry Division at 18 years old. He was trained for battle on the frontlines and spent the majority of his time in Germany. Richard struggled with the reality of his service and became addicted to alcohol and, when his service ended, drugs. He spent time in and out of jail, lost relationships and became homeless. This was compounded by the passing of Richard’s wife during one of his stints in prison. In 2011, Richard sought help in rehabilitation programs. But his life fell apart when his 24-year-old son was murdered, leaving behind a wife and three children. Richard set everything aside to help his family and decided then to change his life completely. He relied on his faith and social workers at the Mather VA Hospital to treat his addiction and a chronic heart condition. Richard learned about Mather Veterans Village during this process and was put on the waitlist. Now, he enjoys life and waking up every day in his own bed. Mather Veterans Village is Richard’s place to call home.

Michael Vercelli, U.S. Navy, Served 1978-81: Michael joined the U.S. Navy as a mechanic at 18 years old. He graduated as the most outstanding recruit and the youngest lower level man. Michael loved serving and enjoyed the structure, traveling through Asia and the comradery. Everything changed when he was in a car accident during his leave. Michael’s injuries prevented his continued service, and he was honorably discharged. He became a carpenter for the next 28 years, but he turned to alcohol, an addiction he’d suffered from since his teens. Seven years ago, Michael met his wife April during an AA meeting. They became close friends and built a life together with a house, cars and jobs. But they still struggled with addiction and eventually lost everything they had to it. One day, the Vercellis checked into a rehabilitation program, started to use veteran benefits and learned of Mather Veterans Village. They lived homeless for five weeks waiting for their home and even ate lunch near the construction site, watching their dream come to life. Mather Veterans Village is Michael and April’s place to call home.

