

HEAR FROM A VETERAN

*I never thought in a million years I would be homeless.
... I would stand on heater grates to try and stay warm.*

Tamara, 53, served in the United States Army and also worked as a health care assistant for 20 years. She is a participant in TLC's Veterans' Victory House. Here is her story in her own words.

"I never thought in a million years I would be homeless. I have battled with bi-polar disorder which caused me to lose employment and then I lost my home.

"For some time I slept on friends' couches or on a friend's floor and eventually at the women's winter shelter. At the women's shelter you wake up at 5 A.M. and need to be out by 6 A.M., no matter how cold it was outside. I would stand on heater grates to try and stay warm.

"The breakfast club would open up at 8 and I could be warm for a while, until the library would open up. Sundays I would need to be outside all day.

"I met a Homeless Outreach Worker who brought me into Veteran's Victory House. I finally had a warm and safe place to sleep. But I had no income and I felt depressed and alone. With the help of, Sheila, my Case Manager we were able to get me the help I needed.

"I was able to get the mental health treatment I needed through the Veterans' Administration and we applied for disability. And soon I will be able to save enough money to move into my own apartment again.

"This whole experience has made me a better person, it has taught me to never take anything for granted. It has taught me it's OK to ask for help.

"What I plan on taking with me when I graduate from Veteran's Victory House is not just a suitcase of clothing... I am taking my pride, a better understanding of myself and moving into stable housing.

"This has truly been a journey and I would like to thank everyone at TLC who has helped me grow and become the person I am today. Thank you."

"Tamara is a changed lady," Sheila attests. "She laughed today. [In the past] getting her to smile was next to impossible ... and today she laughed!" Like so many successful TLC participants who benefit from our services, Tamara wants to give back and is getting involved with her community: working the polls on election day and volunteering at a winter shelter.



Bridging Homelessness to Housing

*A Program of Tabor Community Services
Home to Veterans' Victory House*