

SEPTEMBER 2025



Putting Veterans First Since 1992  
**NEW DIRECTIONS *for* VETERANS**

## REMEMBERING, SUPPORTING, HEALING

Friends,

More than twenty-four years ago, on September 11th, our nation witnessed one of the most devastating days in modern history. Nearly 3,000 lives were lost that day, but the toll of the post-9/11 era has been even greater. According to Brown University's *Costs of War Project*, up to 940,000 individuals have died in post-9/11 war zones, including civilians, U.S. service members, contractors, and aid workers.

More than 5,400 U.S. service members were killed in action, and over 53,000 were wounded. Nearly 3 million Americans served in Iraq and Afghanistan; at least 250,000 developed PTSD, and many more suffer from undiagnosed mental health conditions. Veteran homelessness remains a national crisis, with over 33,000 experiencing homelessness on any given night. In Post 9/11 veterans, the rate of suicide is 3 times higher than that of U.S. civilians.



**Leo Cuadrado, M.B.A.**  
**Captain (Retired)**  
**United States Marine Corps**  
**Executive Director**

This September, during National Suicide Prevention Month, we are reminded of the importance of our work. At New Directions, we honor a sacred commitment: to leave no veteran behind. Our programs empower veterans to rebuild their lives honor, dignity, well-being, and respect. Their resilience is what fuels our mission.

On November 13th, our Honoring Our Heroes Gala will celebrate the progress of our veterans and the partners who walk beside them. I hope you'll join us. Your support helps transform sacrifice into hope, and service into healing.

In Community,

## Honoring Our Heroes Gala

*Save the Date*

**Thursday, November 13, 2025**

**5:30 p.m. - Cocktail Reception**

**7 p.m. - Dinner and Program**

**Skirball Cultural Center**  
**2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.**  
**Los Angeles, CA**

To learn more about the opportunity, please reach out to:

Scott Brumer, Director of Development

SBrumer@ndvets.org

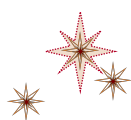
310.806.8413

or visit [ndvets.org](http://ndvets.org)



**To learn how you can help enrich the lives and wellbeing of veterans [CLICK HERE](#)**





# Honoring Our Heroes Gala

Thursday, November 13th, we will be holding our 17th annual Honoring Our Heroes Gala at the Skirball Cultural Center. This signature event honors veterans within our program who have made meaningful gains, leaned into the program, and ultimately have enhanced their quality of life. This year we are honored to recognize Seth Ferraro ( U.S. Marine Corps) and Anthony Robinson ( U.S. Army) as our Male Heroes of the Year; and, Donita Berry (U.S. Army) as our Female Hero of the Year.



**We Look Forward to You Joining Us this Year!**



**2024 Celebrity Emcee Steven Weber and Pin-ups for Veterans volunteers**



**2024 Veteran Honorees: Darryl Mosby, Sr., Daniel Martin, and Joy Brickhouse, pictured with their guests.**



**2024 Female Hero of the Year Joy Brickhouse (U.S. Army) with Steven Weber (L) and Leo Cuadrado (R)**



**2024 Male Hero of the Year Darryl Mosby Sr. (U.S. Marine Corps) and family**



**2024 Male Hero of the Year Daniel Martin (U.S. Army)**

**To sponsor or attend the *Honoring Our Heroes Gala*, please [register here](http://www.ndvets.org) or on our website at [www.ndvets.org](http://www.ndvets.org)**



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



## Welcome Home Veterans



On September 4th, veterans began moving into our newest Permanent Supportive Housing program, located on the Greater West Los Angeles VA Campus, MacArthur Field B!

Leading up to the move-in, we came together with volunteers to assemble and distribute welcome baskets for the 74 new units. We are thankful to those who lent a hand to pack supplies and essentials for residents' new homes. The joyous celebration culminated in a **Welcome Home Celebration** on September 12th. This event allowed residents to meet their new neighbors, service providers, and check out all that the building has to offer; all while enjoying some tacos courtesy of Rosy's Catering.



Volunteers came together to build *Welcome Home Kits* for 74 new units

Signed, Sealed, Delivered!  
Left: VA housing worker welcomes NDVets alum Darius Mosely into his new apartment.



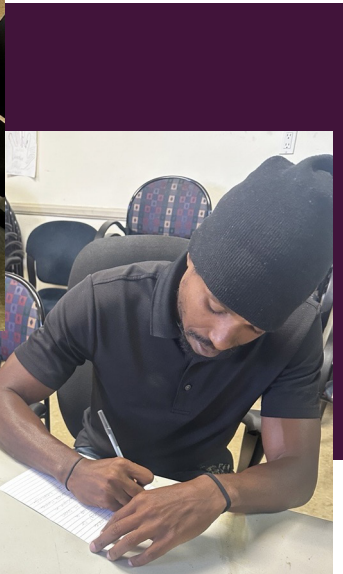
U.S. Navy Veteran Josh Politti enjoying the company of new neighbors



The tacos were quite the hit, veterans gathered to introduce more members to the community.

## Finding the Art in Heart 💖💖💖

Led by Gissele Hernandez, NDVets Programs Assistant, veterans came together through painting, fabric work, and original poetry to create a powerful multi-medium piece in honor of Purple Heart Day. Purple Heart Day commemorates those wounded or killed in action while serving in the U.S. military. We honor their sacrifices today and every day; and this amazing piece will be hung in our building as a lasting tribute.



*Do the skies upon attack cry or cease their own breathing?  
Can a vast land reap a mortal pain from its own bleeding?  
Some weight in meaning behind one's Purple Heart still beating.*  
- Jeffa- U.S. Marine Corps



# PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

## NUTRITION SERVICES — ★ —

September is National Food Insecurity Month. Every day our Food Service team works in Building 116, our Veteran Opportunity Center, providing three meals a day, 365 days a year, to veterans in our care. The team, led by Chef Michael Holguin, not only provides nutritious and filling meals, but also a warm smile and a listening ear. Collective impact is imperative, and donations are always welcome. Non-profit organizations like Everyday Action, help supplement and diversify the offerings, from traditional American to Mediterranean, Asian and Mexican dishes. “Breakfast is the most important meal because it nourishes both the body and mind. For many veterans, it’s also the first time in a long while that they’re experiencing regular meals,” says Chef Krystal, who has been with NDVets for six years.



NDVets Food Service Chef Krystal Brown

## MENTAL HEALTH CARE

One of the most essential facets of our organization is our Behavioral Healthcare program, which provides veterans with the tools needed to process trauma, foster personal growth, strengthen emotional regulation, and improve their overall mental health. By addressing the underlying challenges that often contribute to homelessness, unemployment, and substance use disorder, clinicians help veterans create a stable foundation for long-term well-being.

The program includes our Full-Service Partnership (FSP) which provides comprehensive mental health care to unhoused individuals across Los Angeles County, regardless of their veteran status. As well as the Clinical Treatment Program which focuses on supporting veteran residents within the Veteran Opportunity Center (VOC).



NDVets Clinical Treatment Trainees (L-R) Cece and Jordan holding a Group Counseling Session.

For many veterans this is the first time they have ever seen a therapist and have found someone who truly hears and sees them. One such clinician is Samantha Thomas (MA, LPCC, AMFT) who has been with our organization for 6 years, from volunteer, to trainee, and now licensed clinical psychologist. The empathy and care that she shows each veteran cannot be understated, and the bond between herself and many of her clients continues far after they have successfully graduated from the program.

For Anthony Robinson, he credits Samantha for showing him the mental health tools that have completely transformed his life, and that he uses to this day. They have helped him maintain sobriety, retain his apartment and job beautifying the VA Campus, and reconnect with his family.



# PROFILES IN COURAGE:

## ANTHONY ROBINSON - U.S. ARMY

Anthony, a Harlem-native, served in the U.S. Army as an infantryman from 1974-1978. The Army seemed like a way that he could “leave his past and family behind.” He struggled to trust others as a child, unprepared for how deeply that mistrust would follow him into adulthood.

In preparation for deployment to Vietnam, a scarring incident on base left him questioning the U.S. military system. After he was discharged, he once again decided to run, this time ending up in Los Angeles. The traumas of service and civilian life led him into addiction, and as the crack epidemic of the 1980s had swept through America, Anthony found himself a victim. **He spent 40 years battling addiction and homelessness.** “The years on the street were a blur, I didn’t even *like* drugs, I just couldn’t live without them.”

Everything changed when his brother, a New Directions alumnus, found him on the streets. “He took me to his house; I had four days to sober up and really decide that this is what I wanted.” Soon after, Anthony entered our Clinical Treatment program. “He saluted me as I entered, and **I haven’t looked back. I take it a day at a time.**”

While Anthony now considers New Directions a “refuge,” at first the program was a challenge. “It was hard, but I had to see my way through it. I had to accept the rules; I had to learn discipline.” Slowly with the “love and care” of his case manager Patricia Womack and his clinician Samantha, Anthony began to rebuild trust after years of struggling with it. “It was my first time having a therapist. I didn’t even talk to my family about what I was going through. But with Samantha, I started to tell her what was bothering and hurting me. It opened the door for me to speak to someone with sadness...this is a new way of life for me.”

**“I STRUGGLE WITH BEING PROUD OF MYSELF. I WANT TO PAT MYSELF ON THE SHOULDER, BUT I’D RATHER BE GRATEFUL.”**

Today, Anthony is three years sober. He has a home of his own on the Greater West LA VA campus and works as a groundskeeper through the VA’s Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program, giving back to the community that helped save his life.



**ANTHONY AND CLINICIAN  
SAMANTHA THOMAS**

Anthony has found joy performing in the Imagination Workshop play 3 years in a row and has even found a role in mentoring fellow veterans. “I’m more open with people that are struggling, I love telling my life story; one veteran told me he felt embarrassed, and I could relate. I told him ‘You can be embarrassed but you’ve got to ask for help, if not you’ll be in trouble’, I was in trouble for so many years and its hell in that hole.”

Through it all, Anthony has found trust again, especially by reconnecting with his family, including his once- estranged daughter.

**“Healing takes time, and I struggled, but a legacy is what is happening in my life today. I’ve got a beautiful family, and the beauty is like flowers blooming every day.”** ✿



# **PATRIOT DAY**

## **A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**

**Thursday, September 11th, we remember the sacrifices of U.S. citizens and service members on a day that forever changed our country, and resulted in the loss of 2,977 innocent lives.**



**On this fateful morning in 2001, disaster struck as four commercial planes were hijacked, thus sparking a decades-long "War on Terror."**

**Images of the planes striking the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and the crash in Pennsylvania; will forever be burned in the minds of those within the nation and worldwide. Today, we honor and mourn the lives lost, as well as reflect on American patriotism, identity and service.**



Putting Veterans First Since 1999  
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR VETERANS

# **SEPTEMBER**

# **NATIONAL**

# **SUICIDE**

# **PREVENTION**

# **MONTH**

**SUICIDE IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR VETERANS YOUNGER THAN 45 YEARS OLD.**

**THE RATE OF SUICIDE AMONG POST 9/11 VETERANS IS 3X HIGHER THAN THE RATE OF U.S. CIVILIANS.**

**PLEASE CLICK ABOVE TO MAKE A CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION AND ENHANCE ESSENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE THAT VETERANS DEPEND ON. TOGETHER, WE ARE HELPING THOSE WHO SERVED REBUILD LIFE AFTER CONFLICT, FIND SOLACE, AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY**

**CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIALS**



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