

Ending Veteran Homelessness

The nation has a strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness for Veterans by 2015. Florida has one of the largest homeless veteran populations in the nation. Programs are in place to meet this goal but partnerships are a key ingredient for success and partnerships are what the Florida Housing Coalition is all about. We organized two statewide symposiums on Ending Veteran Homelessness by 2015 with funding from Wells Fargo and the Home Depot Foundation.

Building on the two statewide symposiums, the Florida Housing Coalition included a track on Housing Veterans at the 2012 Conference. Chase sponsored two sessions: (1) *Housing Homeless Veterans: Critical Programs and Solutions*; and (2) *Collaborations to House Veterans*. Todd Bowers, a veteran who served four military tours and who was awarded the Purple Heart and Navy Commendation Medal with a combat “V” for valor, spearheaded both sessions. Sergeant Bowers now serves as Vice President in the JP Morgan Chase & Company office of Global Philanthropy focusing on Military and Veteran Affairs.

Joined by Edwin Johnson, 21 years in the military and now Minority Affairs Specialist with the Orlando



CHASE Sponsored: *Critical Programs and Solutions (L to R) Todd Bowers, Vice President, JP Morgan Chase & Company; Barbara Inman, President/CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County; Edwin Johnson, Minority Affairs Specialist, VA Medical Center; and Ken Mueller, Program Coordinator, Health Care of Homeless Veterans.*

VA Medical Center, Johnson knows what outreach means—he explains the need to have people who can go to the veterans, whether that is in the woods or under bridges, to begin the process of housing homeless veterans.

Ken Mueller, Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program Coordinator at the Orlando VA Medical Center, and Askia Aquil along with Todd Bowers provided models for the partnerships currently at work to help service members and their families.



CHASE Sponsored: *Collaborations to House Veterans - Askia Aquil, Co-Founder, Community Housing Solutions, Inc. shared substantial and creative resources available specifically for veterans and their families.*

One of the Outcomes/Next Steps from the Statewide Symposiums to End Veterans Homelessness by 2015 is for Florida to establish regional partnerships throughout the state to ensure effective outreach, especially to minority veterans, and to ensure that everyone who wants to help in the effort to prevent and end veteran homelessness is engaged. To this end, the Florida Housing Coalition is presently outreaching to session participants to assist local advocates, social service providers, housing providers, and the VA to organize or enhance regional efforts. If you are interested in joining the effort, please contact the Housing Coalition at 850-878-4219 or ross@flhousing.org. HNN

