

Orange County Rescue Mission Veterans Joint Task Force

The Orange County Rescue Mission has been serving the love of Jesus Christ to the least, the last, and the lost for 50 years. Restoring the lives of the homeless and hopeless is the core of our mission.

We created the Veterans Joint Task Force because, while many boards, commissions, and committees have been formed to confront the challenges of homeless veterans, success remains elusive. Our approach is to take immediate action: Shelter homeless veterans and provide them with a continuum of care to address all of their needs including medical and mental health services, legal services, and job training and employment assistance. Today, all of this is taking place at the Village of Hope, our flagship campus with 192 beds for men, women, and children.

In partnership with the City of Tustin, the Rescue Mission Veterans Joint Task Force is working to complete the rehabilitation of two four-plexes that will be home to 32 homeless and transitioning veterans. Ultimately, we want our veterans to be happy, healthy, and successfully self-sufficient.



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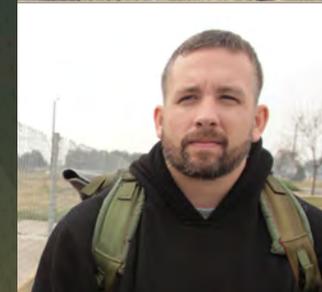


www.RescueMission.org



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Stephen's Story

Stephen Young joined the Marines at 17. He was stationed at Camp Pendleton and then shipped to Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion. The combat engineer with the 7th Engineer Support Battalion of the 1st Field Service Support Group was part of the initial wave to Iraq in March 2003 called Operation Iraqi Freedom. But after serving four years in the Marines, a recurring injury caused Stephen constant pain. That's the first time he was prescribed pain killers.

He came back to Orange County after his discharge from the Marines and took a job with the Transportation Security Administration at John Wayne Airport. At the same time he became a full time student at Long Beach State University. He graduated with a degree in accounting and then got a job doing audits for the Department of Defense. He was determined to do well. But the painkillers weren't working anymore and he moved on to stronger drugs, eventually smoking heroin.

This continued for about four years before he started to have a hard time functioning and decided to quit his job at the Department of Defense. He told fellow workers and family that he needed to get treatment for his 'alcohol problem.' What he says now is that he really wanted access to the \$30,000 401-K he had saved. After he switched from

smoking heroin to shooting up, and then adding meth to the equation, the \$30,000 didn't last long. He soon found himself on the streets.

Alone and addicted, Stephen lived on the streets with nothing. "I slept on a baseball diamond nearby a motel and woke up at 3am to the sprinklers... I stole food from grocery stores and only ate once or twice every couple days."

The only person he could call for help was his drug dealer. Stephen sold the last thing he had (his phone) for drugs. His dealer picked him up from the baseball diamond, bought him food and took him to detox. "It's the lowest anyone could ever possibly be.

When Stephen faced going back to the streets, his mom let him stay for one night before he was accepted at the Rescue Mission. He thought he would just get sober, but didn't realize the entirety of the program at the Village of Hope.

With the Rescue Mission's Veterans Joint Task Force, Stephen was surrounded by other vets, his same age. "Out there, I always felt like God was calling me but I always told Him: 'Not now.'"

Today, Stephen knows his life is in God's hands. "This life shattering experience has humbled me to show me how much I needed Him."



Stephen Young, Marine Corps Veteran

Statistics & Community Need

- It is estimated that 1,388 veterans are homeless in Orange County with only 122 dedicated veterans beds.
- Orange County has the third largest population of veterans in California and the sixth largest in the US.
- 19 percent of post-9/11 veterans reported a lack of consistent housing during the past two months according to a recent study. *(Source; The State of the American Veteran)*

Our Needs

- Financial support
- New furniture
- New bedding
- New bath towel sets
- Target, Walmart or Costco gift cards

How You Can Help

- Make a financial contribution
- Donate products or services
- Volunteer
- Pray for homeless veterans and our task force

"The Rescue Mission welcomed me with open arms. Here, there are other veterans who understand what I'm going through and speak my language. It's a stable environment where I can grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically. I'm getting back to being me."

—Mike Boozier, Army Veteran

