

SUMMER 2020

# STORIES OF HOPE

brighter futures,  
because of you.



 Volunteers of America®  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA & NORTHERN NEVADA

## Because of you, I no longer have to risk my health to eat.

After a difficult divorce and with several chronic medical conditions, Mary found herself homeless. After 15 years living in a tent along the river with her two pets, **Mary found a safe place to live in VOA's permanent supportive housing.**

Now housed, Mary still struggled to eat. Mary would visit local food pantries several times a week, but because of her struggles with arthritis, she couldn't afford to leave her apartment to shop for food or visit local pantries.

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**“I’m so grateful to you for making sure  
I always have something to eat.”**

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**Because of you Mary, and seniors in all VOA properties, can now access fresh food and ready-to-eat meals.** Mary now enjoys fresh vegetables and nutritious meals, and is very grateful that she doesn't have to leave her apartment to get the food she needs.

**\$75 provides a week of meals and shelter to a senior in need.**

# A message from Leo McFarland, CEO



For 114 years, VOA has worked within communities during some of the most difficult times in our nation's history while staying true to our mission. We have adapted and grown while staying focused on the people we care for and our staff who support them.

**Our work has not stopped in the midst of this pandemic.**

Although safety has been an issue as our staff make their way to work -- they show up. They do this because they know the homeless men and women residing in our shelter depend on them for safety and security.

This year VOA had a budgeted funding gap of \$2.6 million dollars. That is the difference between what the government provides and the true cost of our life-changing programs.

**When the pandemic hit, unexpected expenses increased our funding gap by \$900,000.**

With your support, that number has been reduced to \$655,510. To say 'yes' to everyone who walks through our doors, we must close that gap. **With your help, we will close that gap.**

I recognize this has been a challenging time for many of us, but if you have the resources to help, please join us today to change lives in a meaningful and sustainable way. Thank you for your continued partnership.

God bless,  
Leo

**\$500 will help us cover increased program expenses due to COVID-19**

# In uncertain times, graduating foster youth still 'Dare to Dream' about college

**While most students await word on when they'll return to school, foster youth graduating high school this year are wondering if they'll be able to afford to enroll at all.**

Many former foster youth arrive at Volunteers of America having survived a chaotic home life, living with addicted and unstable parents, violence, abuse and the feeling of being alone and terrified.

Joseph, a 2018 scholarship recipient, tried his best to manage everything a foster youth endures but, at 18, found himself out on his own because his foster family no longer had a legal obligation to support him.

**Through it all, Joseph knew that education was his way out of poverty.**

With the help of compassionate donors like you, Joseph, like many other scholarship recipients, will be the first person in his family to graduate college, changing the path he thought he was destined to follow.

**Your contribution makes it possible for foster youth like Joseph to achieve their education dreams.** Since launching the "Dare to Dream" Scholarship Program in 2006 – thanks to kind and caring donors like you – VOA has awarded \$379,000 in academic scholarships to 192 Northern California former foster youth like Joseph.



*Joseph, UC Davis Graduate*

**\$1,000 covers tuition and expenses for a former foster youth attending college this fall**

# Your compassion helped Greg quarantine safely in his own apartment

**Greg's life began with many disadvantages. As the child of an alcoholic and abusive father, Greg witnessed things no child should ever see. Not only was his home life unstable, but Greg also experienced unspeakable harm at the hands of his uncle.**

As you can imagine, Greg's childhood was filled with rage, depression, and anxiety. At 12, Greg entered the foster care system, where he stayed until he aged out at 18.

As an adult, Greg turned to drugs and alcohol to mask his childhood pain. **"The secrets I carried around were eating me up inside,"** he recalled.

At age 55, he'd spent 35 years running from traumas he'd experienced and the deep scars embedded in his soul. Living in a tent was taking a toll on his physical and mental health.

But, there was a quiet voice that kept reminding Greg that education was his way out of his chaotic, difficult life on the streets.

He enrolled in community college and spent his first full year in school while living in his tent.

Greg knew he needed housing and dependable electricity so he could charge his laptop and do his school work.

After completing his first year of school and making great progress as a psychology major, Greg turned to Volunteers of America and asked for help.

At our Capitol Park Shelter Greg got more than a warm bed, consistent meals, electricity, and a roof over his head. **The VOA team helped him begin to heal from the traumas of his childhood.**

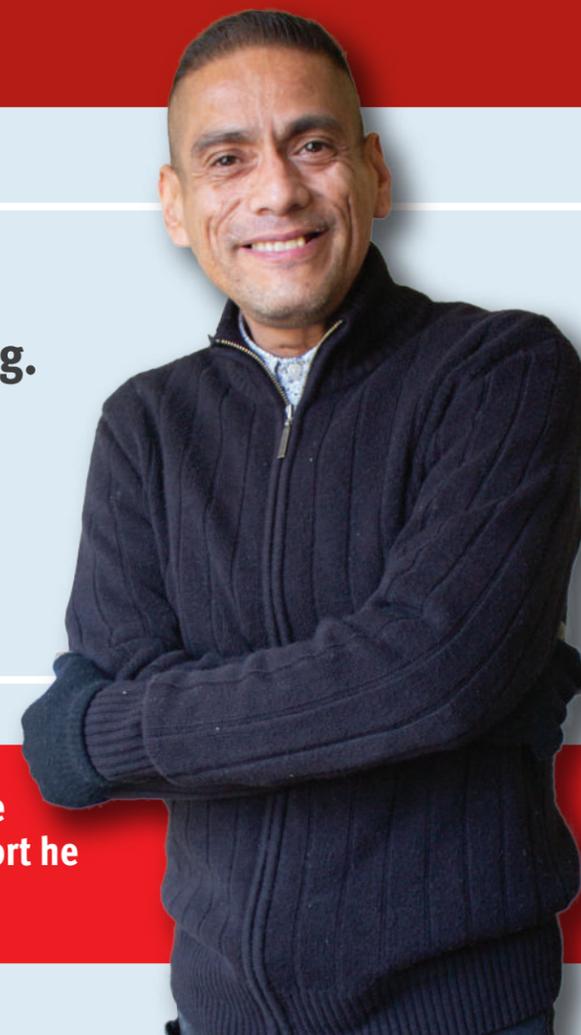
Just before quarantine orders, his case manager helped him locate and rent a small apartment - a place to call his own.

**Because of your caring support for people like Greg, he is now able to have the life he always dreamed of.**

**"I knew I had to start being honest with myself," says Greg.**

**"I had to deal with all those bad memories so I could feel like myself again."**

**Your gift of \$10,000 helps people like Greg move past trauma and find the support he needs to live his full potential**



# #VOACommunity supports essential workers



## Protecting staff, clients, and residents is our highest priority.

Without protective gear, it's almost impossible. Our need for masks, protective equipment, and cleaning supplies is great - but our #VOACommunity is greater! **With your support, we've already accomplished so much:**

- 17,850** meals donated by Raley's and distributed to 1,050 clients in 20+ programs from Santa Cruz to Reno.
- 4,300** face masks lovingly hand sewn and donated to shelter staff, clients, and volunteers.
- 512** cards and letters written to VOA staff who are working tirelessly in essential roles.
- 325** COVID tests administered to shelter residents in partnership with Elica Health Centers & Washoe County.

**\$100 provides protective equipment and supplies to shelter residents**

## We're in this together.

**VOA is a critical nonprofit organization that can not and will not stop serving our clients. Children, families and adults depend on us to shelter them, to provide housing, to keep them safe. Will you be there to keep someone safe?**



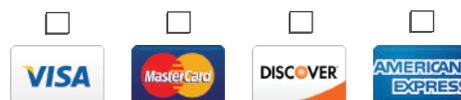
# YES!

I want to make a difference. Please use this enclosed donation to continue serving those in need in my community.

- \$10,000** helps us fulfill our mission to transform lives.
- \$1,000** will fund college scholarships for a foster youth.
- \$500** closes funding gap and ensures continued service to all clients.
- \$75** provides meals and shelter for 3 seniors in need.
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ to fund VOA's most urgent needs.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to charge my gift to:



CARD # \_\_\_\_\_  
EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
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