

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA IMPACT STORIES

JANUARY 2020



After years struggling with addiction, **AMY KALBER** found help at the Volunteers of America (VOA) Mid-State's Freedom House and now has been sober for five years. Located in Louisville, Ky., Freedom House provides residential treatment for alcohol- and drug-dependent pregnant women, as well as, women with young children. The program was designed to treat women with chemical dependency, break the cycle of addiction in families, reunite families broken apart by addiction, and promote the healthy birth of drug-free babies. With the support of VOA, Amy learned she was strong, loved and capable. She regained custody of her children, attended the University of Louisville and today works as a social worker. The family recently purchased a home of their own with down payment assistance facilitated by VOA.



RICK FOURNIER wanted to believe his battles ended in Vietnam, but 50 after years he still struggles with life after combat. After retiring from active duty, he worked as a correctional officer, married and settled down in Queens, N.Y., but, just a few years later, lost his wife to cancer. He lived in the same home for ten more years, until it was sold. Unable to cope, he fell into a life of drugs and alcohol. At the urging of friends, Rick entered rehab, becoming clean and sober for the first time in years. Today, Rick lives at VOA Greater New York's East 119th Street Veterans Residence, where he's found a community of peers. "I'm comfortable being around other veterans," he says. "Even my case manager is a combat veteran." Rick participated in the first class of VOA-GNY's Resilience Strength Training (RST), a week-long peer-facilitated retreat that helps veterans battling moral injury.



Caring for an elderly parent is never easy, but when dementia is involved, the toll of that stress can often become too much for the caregiver. To make matters worse, finding age-friendly care can be a challenging and expensive. Fortunately, VOA Minnesota and Wisconsin's Culturally Responsive Caregiver Support and Dementia Services was there to help **DOREA MOORE** with her mother **EMILY MOORE**. When Emily first started showing signs of dementia, doctors brushed it off stating that her mother was "just getting old." Dorea shared this experience in a photo essay on PBS' Next Avenue credits VOA with helping them survive. With compassionate support from VOA Minnesota and Wisconsin, Dorea has learned coping skills as she cares for her mother and connects with a loving support network.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA IMPACT STORIES

JANUARY 2020



After having a biological daughter of their own, the **CHENERYS** decided they wanted to adopt. With the counseling and help of VOA Illinois, the Chenerys began the process to become foster parents as a first step to adoption. In January 2017, they received the call that one-year-old twin baby girls were in need of foster care. A short time later, the twin's biological mother, seeing the love the Chenerys had for the twins and knowing she was not in a position to take care of them herself, gave the girls up for adoption. The Chenerys said yes and officially adopted the girls on April 25, 2018. This past November the twins celebrated their third birthday, and the family is looking forward to celebrating their first Christmas together as a family of five.



After navigating a troubled childhood which consisted of moving through various foster homes, **J.T. TILSON** found himself living on the streets at age 18. Turning obstacles into inspiration, J.T. Tilson leads a healthy and productive life as a former participant of VOA Northern California Northern Nevada's program for emancipated foster youth. There, he received stability, guidance and a roof over his head. Today, the 23- year-old is a professional artist who teaches art to adults with developmental disabilities.

WE'RE 125 YEARS STRONG!

Since our humble, but passionate beginning on March 8, 1896, Volunteers of America has grown to serve more than 1.5 million people in over 400 communities annually.

To celebrate our 125th anniversary, we're inviting our entire organization to join us in New York City in March 2021. Be on the lookout for more to come.