



STORIES OF HOPE

Spring 2020

Brighter futures, because of you.

I want to be the best mother for my baby

Deep in addiction, Marlaina found herself at rock bottom. Like many of those we serve, she was homeless, wandering each day and night with everything she owned in her car, addicted to meth and heroin, and just 3 days away from giving birth. She was scared and hopeless but knew, for the sake of her baby, she had to make a change.



That's when she found Volunteers of America's Substance Abuse Treatment program for parenting mothers. Now clean, sober, and a new mother, Marlaina is learning how to be the best parent she can be.

“Without you, I would still be living on the street in my car, and I wouldn't be able to take care of my baby. I'd be heartbroken.”

Because of your compassion and support, Marlaina is not only finding the skills to create a new life for herself, but she also has the support of a caring community that she so desperately needs.

Your gift of \$84 helps Marlaina and other new mothers learn new parenting skills so they can be the best parents they can.

My future is much brighter because of you!



Growing up, Hannia survived a chaotic home life. When Hannia was just 4 years old, her alcoholic father and her teenage mother were unable to care for her so they sent her to live with her aunt and uncle. Sadly, Hannia quickly became the target of her aunt's anger, suffering repeated abuse and neglect at the hands of the family she hoped would protect her. Over the years, Hannia's suffering grew more severe; by age 15, she was removed from the only home she knew and placed in the foster care system. Through it all, Hannia knew that education was her way out of poverty.

Because of compassionate donors like you, Hannia received a *Dare to Dream Scholarship* to attend San Diego State University. She's working hard to beat the odds and become the first person in her family to graduate college – forever changing the path she thought she was destined to follow.

According to Childtrends.org, each year 11,602 California children turn 18 years old while in foster care, and a majority are left without the emotional and financial support necessary to succeed in life. Will you be the one to help change a foster child's future through education?

"Your kindness inspires me to be the best student I can be."

Your gift of \$1,000 gives a scholarship to a student like Hannia to cover her tuition, books, and housing.



Serving those who have so bravely served us

According to the U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs, an estimated 37,085 veterans experience homelessness in America on any given night.

Volunteers of America remains committed to providing our country's veterans and their families with compassionate care and much needed services to help them achieve self-sufficiency and stability.

Because of your continued support of the brave men and women who served in the armed forces, hundreds of homeless veterans and their families are no longer living in illegal campsites or sleeping in cars, putting their already fragile health and well-being at greater risk. You are the reason so many local veterans are transitioning from the military to a peaceful, independent, and healthy civilian life. Thank you!



Just \$168 covers one night of emergency shelter for a veteran, and \$350 helps pay for employment training and case management to help veterans get back on their feet.

Your compassion helped Ed move past addiction and create a new life for himself

Unemployed, drinking heavily, addicted to drugs, and surviving on social services, Ed had been homeless on and off for over 10 years– sometimes sleeping in his car, in a tent near the freeway, or on the streets.

"I wasn't working. I was receiving food stamps and whatever services I could get... and taking advantage of all of it." Ed admits he would regularly trade his monthly food subsidy for alcohol and more drugs.

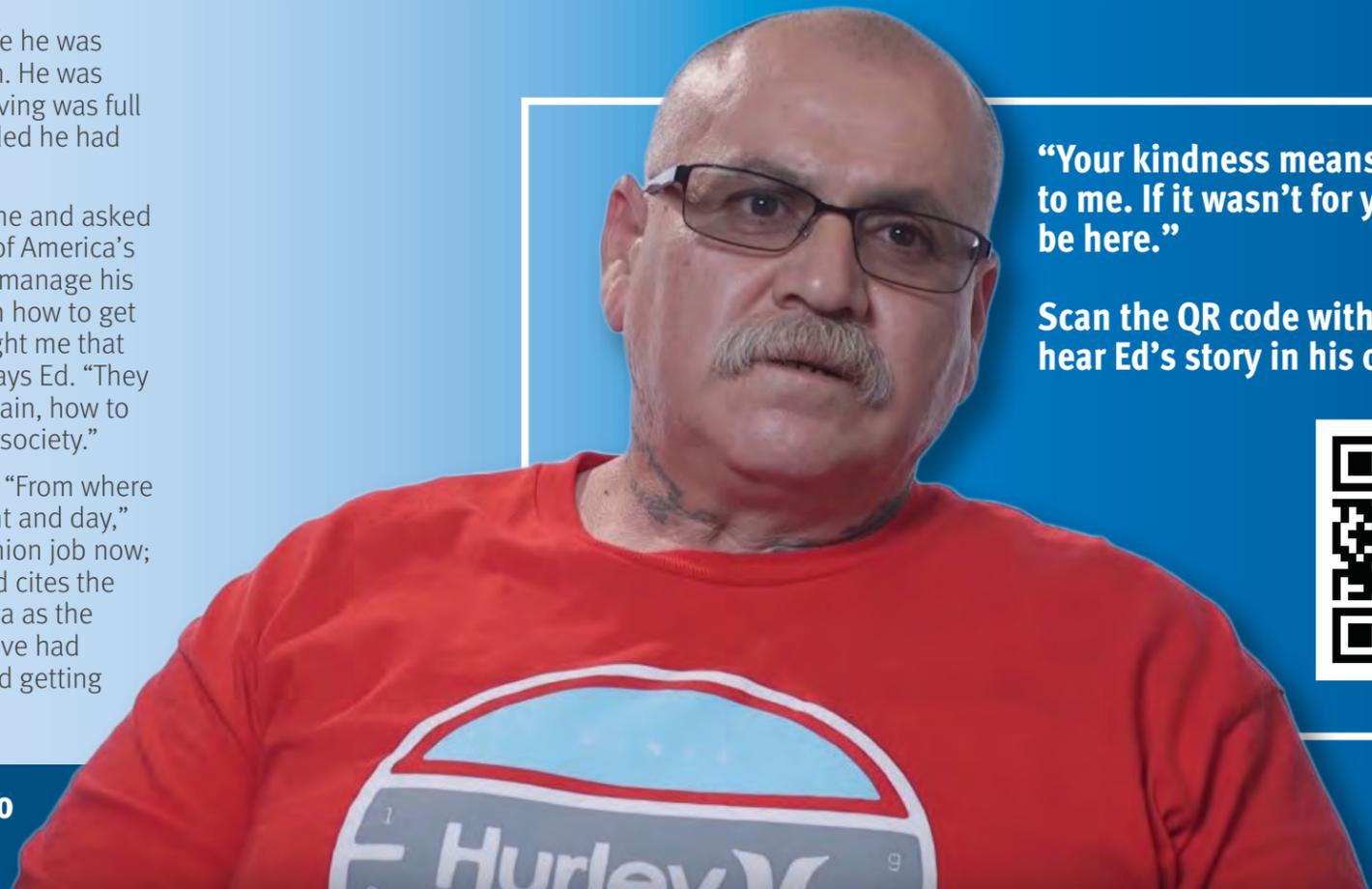
Because of his persistent drug use, Ed spent much of those 10 years in and out of hospitals. His first hospital stay lasted 3 months because of a serious case of gangrene, which then led to a staph infection. Upon his release, Ed returned to the streets and picked up right where he left off, continuing his drug and alcohol use without any concern for his health, his family, or his future.

As his health continued to decline, Ed found himself once again in the hospital for another lengthy stay. Ed admits he would sneak out of the hospital with the help of friends to drink and use drugs.

As the years went by, Ed grew tired of the life he was living and the toll it was taking on his health. He was literally sick and tired of it. The life he was living was full of chaos and uncertainty. One day, Ed decided he had enough. "I just couldn't do it anymore."

One courageous day, Ed picked up the phone and asked for help. Soon after, Ed entered Volunteers of America's Housing program where he learned how to manage his sobriety, navigate his new normal, and even how to get and keep a job. "Volunteers of America taught me that there can be life after alcohol and drugs," says Ed. "They taught me how to stay sober, how to live again, how to talk to people, and how to be productive in society."

Ed proudly completed the program in 2014. "From where I was then to where I am now – it's like night and day," Ed recalls with tears in his eyes. "I have a union job now; I could have never imagined that before." Ed cites the support he received at Volunteers of America as the reason he is still alive today. "I never would've had the life I have now without getting sober and getting into a program that helped me up."



"Your kindness means everything to me. If it wasn't for you I wouldn't be here."

Scan the QR code with your phone to hear Ed's story in his own words.



Your gift of \$225 can provide substance abuse recovery services and job training to someone like Ed as he embraces the life God had planned for him .



You DID make a difference in 2019

At the end of the year, do you wonder if you've made a positive impact on the lives of others? Yes, you did! Your support of Volunteers of America led to many amazing things. Here are just a few of the life-changing gifts you helped provide in 2019:

505,385 meals were fed to people facing hunger.

2,397 people living on the streets found shelter.

7,812 students began the school year with brand new backpacks, fully equipped to learn.

3,800 hats, socks, gloves, and scarves warmed our neighbors this winter.

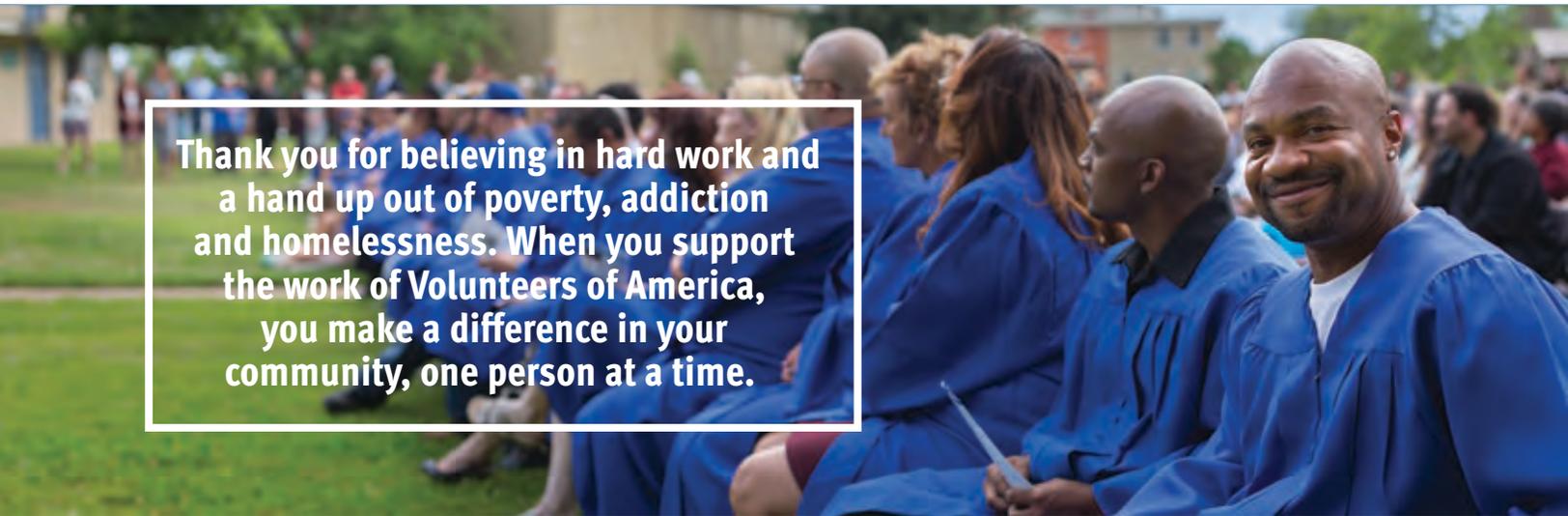
16,449 people found sobriety, comfort, and peace.

Most importantly, they all found hope.

Take pride in how your gift has changed lives for the better in 2019.

On behalf of all those you've helped, thank you for your selfless support.

Our success depends on you!



Thank you for believing in hard work and a hand up out of poverty, addiction and homelessness. When you support the work of Volunteers of America, you make a difference in your community, one person at a time.

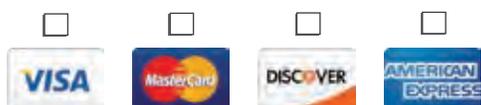


YES!

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

- \$84** will pay for parenting skills classes for new mothers.
- \$225** can provide job training for those recovering from addiction.
- \$518** will provide shelter, case management, and support for a veteran.
- \$1,000** will cover tuition, books, & housing for former foster youth in college.
- \$ _____ to fund VOA's most urgent needs.

I prefer to charge my gift to:



CARD # _____

EXPIRATION DATE _____

CVV _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

MAIL TO:

Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada | 3434 Marconi Ave. | Sacramento, CA 95821