



# VETERANS TRANSITION CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

June 2024

Empowering Veterans to move from crises to self-sufficiency



## TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

This quarter, we're honored to introduce Quen, a Case Manager with Transformative Reentry. She is a military wife and comes from a military family—her grandfather earned a Purple Heart for his service in the 101st Airborne Division. Quen holds the title of Ms. Armed Forces All American 2018, focusing on mental health awareness for military spouses.

Quen's diverse background includes roles as an art teacher, math interventionist, theatre teacher, certified nursing assistant in long-term care facilities, and a child abuse neglect worker committed to reunification efforts. She is a trained death doula and a member of Initiate Justice Action, the Humane Hospice Prison Project, and Kiwanis. Quen will start her Master of Public Leadership program in June.

Recently, Quen went above and beyond for one of our residents who was passing away. She sat vigil with him during his final moments, reading aloud and completing a word puzzle—something he loved. Her dedication in his last hours inspired us all.

Quen feels that she has come full circle. Her time working in social services and education has made her poignantly aware of the importance of public policies and reform. Her focus on growth and professional experiences has shaped her advocacy for positive change.

As this community knows, military life comes with unexpected changes, and Quen is unfortunately leaving VTC as she departs to join her husband in Washington, DC. Though her time with us has been short, Quen has made a lasting impact on the VTC family. We are profoundly grateful for her contributions and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

## JOIN US ON JULY 4TH

Join us as we proudly present "A Celebration of Freedom" on Thursday, July 4th, at the Ranch Cielo Youth Campus in Salinas. Prepare for a day filled with music, laughter, and delicious food and drinks.

Thanks to the generosity of our partners at Rancho Cielo, we'll also be treated to an exclusive flyover by Sean Tucker, an esteemed American World Champion Aerobatic Pilot. Tucker's mastery of rolling and tumbling through the skies remains unmatched by any other pilot. Thrilling audiences for over 40 years with his unmatched skill and passion. From his humble beginnings as a crop-duster pilot, he rose to become the Advanced National Aerobatic Champion in 1988 and earned induction into prestigious aviation halls of fame. His aerobatic biplane, the Challenger III, built to withstand his incredible maneuvers, is a testament to his expertise. Beyond the cockpit, Tucker's commitment to sharing his love for flight is evident in his founding of aerobatic flight schools and youth aviation programs.

What better way to commemorate our nation's birthday than by coming together for a cause close to our hearts? Your attendance will not only make the day memorable but also contribute to the Veterans Transition Center of California. Let's unite in honoring those who have bravely served our country as we celebrate the spirit of America.

**EST 2024**

**July 4th - Rancho Cielo - Salinas**

Live Musical Performances by:  
Casey Frazier  
Wild at Heart  
The Carolyn Sills Combo

**BBQ, Beer, Wine, Music  
Special Guest Fly Over**

All Proceeds Benefit the  
Veterans Transition Center of California

**1:00 pm to 8:00 pm - Rancho Cielo Youth Campus  
Salinas, CA**

Experience an afternoon and evening brimming with live music, mouthwatering BBQ, and an array of delightful beer and wine. Get into the groove with performances by:

**CASEY FRAZIER  
WILD AT HEART**

**&**

**THE CAROLYN SILLS COMBO**



For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit,  
[www.vtcofcalifornia.org/4thofJuly](http://www.vtcofcalifornia.org/4thofJuly).



# LIGHTFIGHTER VILLAGE UPDATE

The Lightfighter Village housing project is steadily progressing toward our goal of offering 70 units of Permanent Supportive Housing for low-income Veterans and their families by the beginning of 2025. With exterior construction nearing completion, our focus now shifts to the interior construction of each unit.

Earlier this year, VTC staff had the privilege of touring Lightfighter Village, where we caught our first glimpse of the housing complex's interior. A standout feature that filled us with anticipation for the future was the inclusion of balconies for every unit. Some fortunate residents will have the pleasure of breathtaking ocean views right from their new homes. This design element aims to offer more than just physical shelter; it strives to imbue a sense of tranquility and a deep connection to our stunning natural surroundings for those who have selflessly served our nation.



## COMPLETION IN EARLY 2025



Applications for Lightfighter will open in the fall - keep an eye out for updates as they come available! Low-income Veterans and their families will be able to apply for residency and gain access to the services offered here at the Veterans Transition Center. This initiative underscores our steadfast commitment to offering housing and ensuring long-term stability for those who so courageously served our country. The goal remains to support our Veterans aging in place, encircled by community.

As ever, we are grateful for the partnership with EAH Housing, Huff Construction, and you - our generous community - for your continued dedication to making this exciting project a reality. We are steadily moving closer to achieving "Functional Zero" for Veteran homelessness in Monterey County, a reflection of the power of collective action and compassion.



## DONATE YOUR CAR

Are you ready to make a meaningful impact while parting ways with your vehicle? Look no further than Cars2Charities, where donating your car can be a powerful act of giving back to your community and beyond.

When you choose to donate your car to us through Cars2Charities, you're not just getting rid of an old vehicle - you're fueling positive change. The process is hassle-free; they handle everything from towing to selling your car, and the proceeds directly support our cause here at the Veterans Transition Center of California, directly benefiting our Veterans.

To learn more or begin the process, scan this QR code or visit [www.cars2charities.org/donation?charity=1773](http://www.cars2charities.org/donation?charity=1773)



Your donation will create new opportunities and have a lasting impact on our Veterans' lives.



Stay up to date on everything VTC, and see firsthand how your support makes a difference by following us on social media.

## FOLLOW US!



@VTCofCalifornia



# 2024 HOPE FOR HEROES GALA

VTC's inaugural Hope for Heroes Gala on May 11, 2024, was a fantastic evening with a blend of music, art, auctions, food, and fun! A huge thank you to everyone who attended and made it an evening to remember.

Our Deepest Gratitude to Our 2024 Gala Sponsors

## Gold

Monterey Peninsula Engineering – Jim & Michelle Bruno  
 Gene's Import Auto Body – Brad & Stephanie Smith  
 Don and Carol Hilburn

## Silver

Carmel Realty Foundation – Bill & Vicki Mitchell  
 The Boggiatto Family  
 The Heinrich Team – Ben, Carole, Zach, & Isabel  
 Stan & Sharon Meresman  
 Naval Postgraduate School Foundation

## Bronze

Phil Deppert  
 Bill & Priscilla Eckert  
 Mary Roberts & Stephen Palumbi  
 Ted & Cindy Walter  
 Sidney & Marilyn Williams



Thank you to each and every guest, for a memorable evening!



Hope for Heroes Gala



Hope for Heroes Gala





## THANK YOU!

A huge shout-out to these individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the Veterans Transition Center of California. You make this work possible.

### INDIVIDUALS

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Lucia Boggiatto  | Frank Gregory   |
| Stan Meresman    | Dwight Shimoda  |
| Carol Hilburn    | Ronald F.       |
| Lonna L. Sherwin | Alan Perlmutter |
| Myron Seres      | Arthur Cook     |
| Scott Donaldson  | James Turner    |
| Jon H.           | Douglas J.      |
| Tony Conrad      |                 |

### ORGANIZATIONS

- Boyd's Asphalt Services
- Monterey County Chapter of the Military
- Colonial Dames of America Monterey Chapter
- Marina Foundation
- Cannery Row Company

### VOLUNTEERS

Thank you Kappa Sigma Fraternity for your help with our beautification project on Hayes Circle!



## VETERAN TESTIMONY

My name is Roy McKinley. Upon my suitability, I had already spoken with a past resident at VTC who recommended this program to me, and VTC came all the way down to Chuckwalla Valley Prison to pick me up. They took me to get steak and eggs, which was my first meal after so many years. You really need a support network after such a long time, and VTC was more than that; they were like family. They never let me become overwhelmed. There are people who have graduated from the same program who help us along. It's a wonderful community.

I'm moving into my own place now; I have a two-bedroom apartment. After 21 years, being able to take a bath was wonderful. As a former Lifer, I have parole plans and goals that I've set. I'm doing life coaching, and my goal is to start school again next fall. There's a beach down the street where I can go and just get some peace of mind and look at nature.



## DONATE NOW

If you found this information valuable, please consider donating. Your generosity is vital to the success of our mission.

