

HOMELESS VETERANS: Why Deskan Restoring Hope Through Compassion, Inc, is addressing the call to help Homeless Veterans.

This is a success story of one of the many homeless female veterans. Shortly after separating from the military, U.S. Army Veteran Antheia Evelyn moved to New York City with her husband and three children to pursue a bachelor's degree in health care management. Although Mrs. Evelyn's education was paid for by the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the associated housing allowance was delayed. The couple struggled to find affordable housing for their family, and for a time lived in cramped quarters with Mr. Evelyn's parents. Lacking a steady income and experiencing an unstable housing situation, Mrs. Evelyn's—and her children's—grades suffered. The family faced homelessness.



The Fix

For help, Mrs. Evelyn turned to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [New York Regional Office](#), where she met with a Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment counselor. Given the family's housing instability, the counselor recommended she stop by the office of Sandy Browning, the homeless Veterans outreach coordinator whose job it is to serve Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. With her three children in tow, she did just that and had what turned out to be a life-changing meeting.

Ms. Browning, also a Veteran and a longtime social worker, knew she needed to connect the clearly upset Mrs. Evelyn with the right services and support—and do it fast. After giving the kids some fun activities to keep them occupied, Ms. Browning phoned Ruth Batista, LCSW, contract housing coordinator at [VA's Harlem Community Resource and Referral Center](#). Ms. Batista said Mrs. Evelyn qualified for a Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive

Housing (HUD-VASH) voucher, and in short, order located an apartment that would accept it. To provide the family the means to move in, Ms. Batista arranged to have the apartment security deposit covered by a New York-based service provider funded by [VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#) grant program.

The Result

Thanks to the VA counselors' swift action to secure services and support from VA and its partners, the Evelyn family moved into a home of its own. Mrs. Evelyn and her children are both performing better in school. What's more, she is now preparing to become a Veteran liaison at her college, where she'll help Veteran students advance their education. Among her duties will be educating Veterans in accessing available VA benefits and other resources, services and support.

To prepare for her new role, Mrs. Evelyn turned to Ms. Browning for guidance. "The best advice I can offer is simply to listen," Ms. Browning responded. "I am so happy to see Mrs. Evelyn thriving, and I am glad that she's taking the opportunity to pay it forward by listening to and helping other Veterans."

"I'll forever be thankful to Ms. Browning for her patience and empathy that day," Mrs. Evelyn said, "and most importantly, for helping our family secure a home. As a follow-up for this printing, the family is enjoying their new life. Please visit www.va.gov for more information and success stories.

Reference: The US Department of Veterans Administration Affairs.