



EXCHANGE

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The Exchange Club of Findlay, serving Findlay and Hancock County since 1930

To: Findlay New Car Dealers

From: The Exchange Club of Findlay

Date: October 1, 2018

Re: "Help House Our Heroes" program

The Exchange Club of Findlay is excited to announce a new program for our area. In partnership with Veterans Matter, a Toledo based organization, we are looking to help them provide deposits for housing for our bravest heroes. During the month of November, which includes Veterans Day on November 11th, we are looking to our local new car dealers to help us raise these much needed funds to allow our homeless vets to get a place they can call home. The homeless vets need the deposit in order to secure housing. Once housed, the V.A. helps with the rent.

As of today, Veterans Matter has helped house 2508 Veterans, 3720 Veterans + Families, and 884 Veterans' children. In Ohio alone, with the help of Veterans Matter, 541 veterans have been housed to date. Once housed, the men and women are being helped by the V.A. not just with rent, but with their mental, physical, emotional and economic needs. On average, it takes around \$750 for the deposit. Enclosed is some additional information on Veterans Matter. Founder Ken Leslie will also be speaking to our club on Tuesday, November 6th and you are welcome to attend.

Here is where you come in. We are looking for car dealers who would like to help. We are looking for donations of just \$10 per vehicle sold in the Month of November. It would be great to generate the funds to help provide housing for 4-5 of our homeless Vets, maybe more. Veterans Matter works with local agencies for help needed for the brave men and women from Hancock County, as well as those throughout NW Ohio.

Can we count on your help? If you have any questions, please give me call at (419) 788-9512 or email at JFetters1@aol.com.

Thank you,

John Fetters, President

Additional Information on Veterans Matter, and its Advocate-in-Chief, Ken Leslie.

As a formerly homeless alcoholic and addict, founder Ken Leslie lived on the streets. In 1990 he turned his life around, founding a successful executive search firm which over the next two decades allowed him to become a philanthropist and create and fund programs to help the homeless in his hometown of Toledo, Ohio.

On February 6, 2012 during street outreach, Shawn Dowling, coordinator with the local Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program, told Ken that a deposit was all that was preventing two local chronically homeless veterans he knew from getting into the ready HUD-VASH housing, with 33 more vouchers for veterans in the pipeline.

He asked what the veterans did when they did not have the deposits and she said some of the veterans went to the churches and VFW's and begged for it.

That broke Ken's heart so that night he created Veterans Matter to simply eliminate that last barrier and push these veterans over the threshold into ready housing by covering that deposit paid straight to the landlord.

The next morning Ken called Barb Petee, an executive at Promedica Health System, to find the \$26,250 pilot funding to cover the vouchers from the Toledo Community Foundation's Promedica Advocacy Fund. With veterans waiting in the shelter, he also asked her to operate at the speed one would for a soldier needing rescue from behind enemy lines – black ops speed.

So seven days later, on Valentines Day, 5:36 p.m., Barb called with full pilot funding. Three days later, the first waiting veteran family was housed out of a family shelter.

11 days from idea, to funding, to execution. Ken then went back to his executive search practice, writing checks to landlords as needed.

During the taping of a public service announcement, Dusty Hill of ZZ Top asked Ken to expand the program to Houston, Texas – which Dusty would help fund.

Ken provided some start up funding and created an online cloud-based system to allow veterans in Houston or any funded area of operation to be housed.

To date that Texas group has raised over \$325,000 and housed nearly 700 Texas veterans.

John Mellencamp did the same for Indiana. Mitch Albom, along with Katy Perry, Kid Rock, and First Nation Jordan Reses, made housing Michigan veterans possible, with continuing support. The Veterans Matter pilot program then grew and has been well-documented in the press.

At the end of 2015, Ken stepped away from the corporate world and his position as CEO, and closed the search firm he founded in 1997 in order to work full-time to get veterans the home they deserve.

