

February 19, 2013

Members of the Veterans Affairs Committee:

My name is Maryellen Shuckerow and I am the Chief Development Officer for Chrysalis Center, Inc. I am here before you today with many supporters who are in favor of Bill Number 648, An Act Concerning a General Fund Appropriation of \$230,000 to support Case Management at Victory Gardens -a new supportive housing project opening in May, 2013 to serve homeless Veterans on the Newington VA Campus.

Victory Gardens will be a model for the Nation as a way to address homeless Veterans who have served our Country honorably. Victory Gardens will provide permanent apartments and townhouses for Veterans and their families. Case management services, vital to the supportive housing model, will assist Veterans regain stability in their community through support in accessing mental healthcare, funding a job, and re-patterning family connections.

In 2012 the Connecticut Point in Time Homeless Count found 330 homeless Veterans on one night in January. Nationally, most homeless Veterans suffer from PTSD, depression and substance abuse. These issues untreated leave our Veterans struggling to survive in our own Country.

Our Veterans deserve to come home and find their place in their community- they deserve a decent place to live and the support necessary for them to make the transition from soldier to citizen.

Having worked in the field of supportive housing for 19 years, I firmly believe supportive housing works to end homelessness. The Victory Gardens project will end homelessness for many Connecticut Veterans. They will hold a key to their own front door and leave an uncertain future behind.

I thank you for your efforts in supporting our Veterans and urge you to move forward Bill Number 648 for Victory Gardens.

Maryellen M. Shuckerow  
Chief Development Officer  
Chrysalis Center, Inc.