

Feb 19, 2013

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for holding this hearing today for Proposed Bill Number 648.

I am in support of Bill Number 648 to provide funding for case management services at Victory Gardens, a supportive project for homeless Veterans and families at the U.S.A. Department of Veterans Affairs Newington Campus.

My name is Michael Harris. I have lived in Rockville at the Carriage House in my own apartment successfully for three years. I came home from the Vietnam War in 1972 with many mental health and alcohol abuse problems. I was very sick and did not do very well at home with my family. I moved around and had no place to call home. I was in and out of alcohol treatment programs through the VA in West Haven. In 2007, while living at the Veteran's Home in Rocky Hill, a social worker told me about Chrysalis Center's Supportive Housing and Veterans' Support Services program, and helped me fill out the application to move into my own apartment through Chrysalis' program.

I was approved for their program, then I was assigned a case manager who helped me find everything I needed to live independently. They helped with furniture, transportation to and from the grocery store, Laundromat, to appointments to apply for food stamps and other important appointments until I was able to apply for the ADA-Dial-A-Ride. I could be more independent and schedule a ride for whenever I wanted to go anywhere and not need to rely on my case manager as much. However, I think it is important for me to have this person in my life, because she helps me to remember things that I might forget, like not eating too much sugar that makes my blood sugar high. She even made a chart for me to write my glucose readings down, so I can see my levels and keeps them under the number she wrote down for me. I have been doing much better since. I have a literacy problem and my caseworker is helping me to learn by giving me homework each week, and by connecting me to a program that will teach me how to read.

Because of my case manager, my awards and certificates I earned for the time I served in the U.S. Army, now hang proudly on my wall for everyone to see. I am most proud of the one signed by President Nixon in 1973, thanking me for my service to our country. I am telling you these personal things about my life, because I want you to know how important Chrysalis Center's case management services are to me and how valuable they will be for other veterans who move into the new Victory Gardens apartments. I am thankful that I have this support in my life, so I can continue to live in my own apartment instead of in an institution or a hospital.

Your support of Bill Number 648 will make sure the funding will be available for support services for the veterans at Victory Gardens.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael L. Harris
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