

VA Secretary McDonald and Mayor Garcetti Call on Landlords to Join in Ending Veteran Homelessness at “Homes For Heroes” Breakfast

Homes For Heroes Links Vacant Units throughout LA County to Veterans Ready to be Housed

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – June 5, 2015 – Today, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles hosted the Homes For Heroes breakfast to kick off efforts to identify 1,000 new units in 2015 for veterans in need of housing. In support of the community’s broader efforts through United Way’s Home For Good initiative, Homes For Heroes commits to working with market rate landlords in Los Angeles in support of our community’s goal of ending veteran homelessness by the end of this year.

Since its launch in 2010, Home For Good partners throughout the region have housed over 12,800 homeless veterans. Despite our community’s progress and the immense federal investment in resources to support homeless veterans, today, over 500 veterans with vouchers-in-hand are unable to find apartments and landlords willing to accept them. A commitment from market rate landlords willing to accept veterans with vouchers is the critical last step needed to house the 4,344 currently homeless veterans and the increasing number falling into homelessness each day.

VA Secretary Robert McDonald, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, United Way’s President and CEO Elise Buik, and LA Area Chamber of Commerce President Gary Toebben, were all in attendance to publicly commit their tireless dedication to target and work with landlords throughout Los Angeles to find housing for homeless veterans. VA Secretary McDonald and Mayor Garcetti acknowledged and appreciated seven current veteran landlord champions, and were joined on stage by over 20 property owners and landlords who pledge their commitment through Homes For Heroes to end veteran homelessness.

"The community has come together here, and we know that's the secret sauce," said Robert McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "In places where we've been able to make progress, to get veterans under a roof, it's because of partnerships and collaborations like this. How do we open all doors for the men and women who have served our country to provide shelter for them in Los Angeles? That's the help we need. We will help provide the medical care they need, the treatments, the case management, the employment help that they need -- but first, they need a home."

"I am honored to join Home For Good in launching Homes For Heroes" said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. "This innovative program will help increase the affordable housing stock for our homeless veterans. I encourage our city's landlords to join Homes For Heroes to provide veterans with housing they need and deserve."

"Together with over 200 partners, our community has permanently housed nearly 13,000 homeless veterans," said Elise Buik, President and CEO of United Way of Greater Los Angeles.

“It will take our collective advocacy, collaborative investment, and the essential commitment of our landlord and developer champions to open their doors to veterans to accomplish the goal of ending veteran homelessness.”

The Homes For Heroes breakfast is part of the Home For Good Action Plan, a joint initiative of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce to end veteran homelessness in 2015 and chronic homelessness by 2016.

For more information on Home For Good's action plan, visit: <http://homeforgoodla.org/>.

For more information on Homes For Heroes, visit <http://www.unitedwayla.org/homes-for-heroes/>.

About United Way of Greater Los Angeles

United Way of Greater Los Angeles is a nonprofit organization that creates pathways out of poverty by helping people experiencing homelessness find a permanent place to call home, providing students with the support they need to graduate high school prepared for college and the workforce, and helping hard-working families become financially stable. United Way identifies the root causes of poverty and works strategically to solve them by building alliances across all sectors, funding targeted programs and advocating for change. For more information, visit www.unitedwayla.org.