

FATHER JOE'S VILLAGES

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Father Joe's Villages/St. Vincent de Paul Village Honors its 1,300 Military Veterans

St. Vincent de Paul Village will host a Veterans Day Picnic at Jinny Jo's Playground on Thursday, November 10, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The picnic will honor the more than 1,300 veterans that Father Joe's Villages/St. Vincent de Paul Village serves each day, the veteran graduates of its programs, and the dedicated staff who serve them. The picnic will feature a barbeque lunch served by active duty service members, raffle prizes from local vendors, and recognition presentations.

Father Joe's Villages/St. Vincent de Paul Village has long been a pioneer in the effort to serve America's military veterans in need. "Nearly a quarter of our residents at St. Vincent de Paul Village are veterans," says Sister Tricia Cruise, Father Joe's Villages/St. Vincent de Paul Village President and CEO. "These are men and women who deserve our help. Veterans Day is a reminder to give back to those who have given so much to this country."

In 2010, the number of homeless veterans in America was more than 144,000. Veterans account for 13 percent of all homeless adults in shelters, but represent just 9 percent of adults in this country. Veterans under 30 are more than twice as likely to be homeless as non-veterans in that same age group.

Lawrence R., an Army veteran and current St. Vincent's resident, is a single dad with two children who will be attending the picnic on November 10. "The stereotype that a lot of people have is that when veterans came home they were either mentally challenged or drug addicted," he says. "I'm none of those things. I'm a regular family guy. I raise my kids, I had a good job. I just never factored in getting injured. I'm trying to erase the stereotype. St. Vincent's has really helped me a lot. It has housed my children and allowed me to heal from surgery so that I can find a job."

More than 200 veterans live in Transitional and Permanent Housing at Father Joe's Villages/St. Vincent de Paul Village on any given day, with another 1,100 accessing services such as the daily public meal and medical clinic. Veterans who enter St. Vincent de Paul Village have access to comprehensive supportive services, including medical and mental health services, career and education programs, and chaplaincy. A veteran's support group is held weekly, and an onsite VA Tele-health machine allows veterans to remotely connect with doctors. A Veterans Benefits Administration Representative is onsite bi-weekly to assist in the processing of VA benefits applications, and St. Vincent's staff work closely with Veterans Village of San Diego and the VA through the Veterans Homeless Prevention Demonstration Project, a program that provides case management and financial assistance to prevent veteran homelessness.

Jinny Jo's Playground is located on the corner of 17th Street and Commercial in San Diego's East Village neighborhood.

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Father Joe's Villages® is a San Diego-based nonprofit that helps homeless neighbors in need regain their lives through a unique life-changing program that is nationally recognized and modeled for its effectiveness. Our groundbreaking approach to rehabilitation, known as the "University of the Human Spirit," addresses the underlying causes of homelessness to break the cycle and help thousands of people become responsible, self-sufficient, productive citizens and pass their newfound independence and life skills on to their children and families. When we help one person, we help generations of families and communities.