

Rebuilding lives with homes and jobs since 1986 ■

Rebuilding lives with homes and jobs since 1986

Help Heroes...Stories of Lives Regained

HELP USA



Building Better Lives
www.helpusa.org

work

I think it is truly a blessing that in these times when so many people are homeless and hopeless, organizations like **HELP USA** offer programs to help people like myself get back into the mainstream of society.

James Clapso

Graduate, HELP Works Employment Program

**Now I can hold my head up and
look at myself in the mirror again.**

I just needed the chance to work.

Debra Lopez

Graduate, HELP WORKS Employment Program

**I've learned that I can hold a job and
take care of my family.**

I can be whatever I want to be.

**It doesn't take much; just a little will power
And someone standing behind me.**

Jennifer Ramos

Graduate, HELP Works Employment Program

Once I lost my job, and then my home, there was no way out. Thanks to the Computer Repair class, I now have a real skill and job interviews. Soon I will be able to afford rent.

Nico Carver

Graduate, HELP Works Employment Program

EMPOWER

HELP's Job training program gave me a sense of direction and put me on the right track.

I'm paving the way for my children and want them to know how to stand on their own two feet.

I never want to be on welfare again.

Stephanie Waters

Welfare-to-work program participant

dignity

In just over a year, I went from being a drug-addicted homeless person on the streets in the Bronx to the set of the Television Food Network as a clean and sober man bursting with confidence. By no means was the journey a simple one; in fact it was arduous, and it could not have been made without one key ingredient: support – the foundation for all of HELP USA's employment programs.

The Culinary Arts program gave me self-esteem. It made me realize that I could do something with my life. Before the program, I looked at things negatively. Now I look at them positively. The course gave me hope.

Under the tutelage of Culinary Arts Instructor, I learned the intangibles that I needed to improve. In the program, I learned about food protection and how to clean and

prepare food, which I didn't know beforehand, and which is crucial.

Today I work as a sous chef for Flick International – a corporate dining firm that has accounts with many of New York City's schools. And, I now have a two-bedroom apartment in Riverdale to call home.

My job is good for now, but I'd like to go further. Eventually, I'd like to be an executive chef at a restaurant like the Marriott in Manhattan. Culinary Arts. I've always wanted to cook.

Allen Cozuello

Sous Chef For Flick International
Graduate, HELP Works Culinary Arts Training Program
Former Resident, Wards Island Supportive Employment Center

Without a job, you have no home and without a home, you're not a person.

Lorraine Sacca

Graduate, HELP WORKS Safety Training Program

HELP USA

Gave

Me

a

New

Life

Carl, War Veteran

HELP Las Vegas

Permanent residence for war veterans

HELP

OPERATION HOME OPERATION HOME OPERATION HOME OPERATION HOME
P
E
R
A
T
I
O
N
H
O
M
E

I went through a tough divorce when I returned from duty. It was hard to find a job and deal with my medical problems at the same time. Everything fell apart for me.

When I arrived at HELP, the staff made me feel like I was really home. They helped me **believe in myself again.**

Yvonne

Veteran, Iraq
HELP Transitional Residence
Brooklyn, New York

When I first returned from a tour in Iraq, everything seemed strange.

Changed.

I no longer felt like I belonged in my own home.

The demons I thought I left on the front lines, were **everywhere I went. Waiting for me.**

Carter

Veteran, Iraq War
Resident, HELP Suffolk

HELP

HEROES

I started drinking at age twelve. Many people would have concluded that my life was doomed from the start. I have proven all pessimists, including myself, wrong with the support of **HELP USA**.

I moved to Las Vegas during my early childhood. Surrounded by horrible influences and lack of parental supervision, I had many drug related problems at a young age.

I joined the army in 1970. After being horribly injured and forced to continue my service for eight painful years, I finally returned home in 1978 and became a chef.

Las Vegas had changed dramatically upon my return from Vietnam. The lively city had become more energetic, popular, and expensive. Instead of saving my money from my cooking career and trying to resolve my past troubles, I retired from my career and allowed my issues to worsen. Moving in and out of rehab was not how I imagined my adult life. Right when I was about to lose all hope, a friend gave me the phone number to HELP USA. When I entered HELP USA's doors, I knew that this place was different. I saw **shelter, recovery, and hope for a new life- all in one place**.

I was able to change my life dramatically with the support of HELP USA. I have learned to put the past in the past and look toward the future: recovery and success through the extensive programs here at HELP.

Veteran

HELP Las Vegas

I loved nothing more than my independence and strength as a radar operator in the military. When I returned from services, it was hard to cope and I relied on my family until the death of my mother. With her passing, I was left to care for my siblings, emotionally and financially. It was just too much for me and **I fell into a downward spiral**.

I used drugs and alcohol to cope with my anger and sadness until HELP USA found me. I have been here at HELP Las Vegas with other veterans, for 10 years now, and I am not sure where I would be without these supportive services and fabulous staff members.

I have been able to put my life into perspective and back on track with the aid of HELP USA and its staff. I used to tell myself that I couldn't do the things that I used to do and there was no hope for improvement. Living here has proven just the opposite: **I am more independent and stronger than ever before**.

Veteran

HELP Las Vegas

SURVIVOR

SAFE SECURE SAFE SECURE SAFE SECURE

A
F
E
S
E
U
C
B
E
S
E
T
E
S
E
U
C
B
E
S
E
T
E
S
E
U
C
B
E

The nightmare comes again

trapped,
tortured and twisted,
with no breath
and no way out.

Then light came,
Like a sweet dream,
Safe,
Safe.

It was HELP.
The help I needed to be

Free.

SAFE SECURE SAFE SECURE SAFE SECURE

I was **19** and pregnant with my first child when I met him. He was very supportive of my pregnancy and we developed a great friendship, which quickly grew into a romance. Soon we moved in together. I thought this was the relationship I was waiting for, hoping for. We could be a family. Unfortunately, this fantasy lasted only six months.

At the time, I was working for Air Jamaica, trying hard to develop my career and save money for the care of my daughter. This created serious problems in our relationship. Every morning I prepared to leave for work, he would complain that I was away for too long, accusing me of flirtations with co-workers, he was obsessed with the idea that I would develop new relationships outside of our little world.

I would commute to Queens and my **boyfriend would wait for his next drug deal.** He was dealing, I was working. He was going nowhere fast, and I was developing a career. Soon his jealousy became uncontrollable.

He followed me to work regularly, torturing me with verbal abuse at home, accusations of infidelity, telling me I was useless—I would be nothing—threatening me with my safety if I continued to work. He sabotaged my job, some mornings I could not find my uniform and finally one morning he actually destroyed it. **After repeated incidents of stalking, threatening, and verbal and physical abuse at home, I finally quit my job.**

He had destroyed my confidence, my hopes, my dreams, I felt trapped. No family support, no education, no money. Nowhere to go. Things became much worse; the beatings were more regular. I was at my most desperate time of feeling hopeless—I believed I would die. I could not fight back.

One late night he entered the bathroom and smacked me hard across the face, pinning me to a wall, challenging to fight back. His hand around my neck forced me down to the floor where I lost consciousness.

The next morning he greeted me with a walking stick I had brought home from Jamaica. He repeatedly beat my arm until I was again unconscious. I remembered seeing only my pants on the floor—removed from my body and not remembering how they got there.

When he left the apartment, I somehow gathered strength to get up, get dressed, grab my kids and run. On the train late at night, crying, a woman helped me home to her house. She was my guardian angel. **She called the hot line for Domestic Violence. After two weeks a bed was found for my children and me. I was placed in HELP, which saved my life.**

At Haven, counselors and caring staff helped me rebuild my confidence, esteem and courage. I learned how to parent, how to handle my finances, how to plan a future for my children. I completed the Day Care Training Program and received my State Certification, and once again I believed in my potentials, something I thought I could never regain.

I also got the greatest satisfaction—my batterer was sent to jail. My wish is to see more media spot light on Domestic Violence. I wish for no victims to call the hot line and be told these words; “you have to call back, because we have no bed for you.” **I am so grateful For HELP USA and HELP Haven!**

Keisha Bardowell

Domestic Violence Survivor
Resident, Former Resident, HELP HAVEN

I prayed every night that we would find an apartment. How would I tell my kids we had to move to a shelter? But I did and it was the worst day of my life.

Luckily, the city sent us to HELP where I was able to work with a caseworker to help me find a job and apartment. My kids were watched in beautiful day care rooms while I went on interviews.

HELP saved my life.

Nina

Domestic Violence Survivor
HELP Suffolk

He was Mr. Wonderful for a year, and then things started happening.

He isolated me...

He didn't want me to have friends.

What I needed was a safe environment for myself and for my kids and the potential to grow again..to get out into the world...into society, to work, to gain independence so I could care for my kids.

Domestic Violence survivor and former HELP Resident

Building Better Lives

**I was looking for an
apartment and I found a life.**

Stan Tarnaki

Genesis Apartments, Union Square

REBUILDING LIVES REBUILDING LIVES REBUILDING LIVES REBUILDING LIVES

REBUILDING LIVES

My wife tried to be a good mother, working two jobs to help our kids. I never expected to receive a telephone call informing me that my children were removed from my wife's care and impending entry into foster care and that I had to retrieve them immediately.

Unfortunately, she became out of control both physically and mentally. After one dangerous episode of violence when she hurt our son badly (hitting him repeatedly with an electrical wire) he turned to his mentor for support. The mentor reported his mother to the authorities.

I know this act of abuse is horrible and completely unacceptable. However, I believe my ex-wife was a good mother and will be again.

She just couldn't deal with the stress- of working so hard and caring for three kids. The children are 15,12,11 and a lot to handle- although they are good, smart kids.

But more tough times came ahead.

Just like the children, I moved in with my mom who had a larger apartment and began to get settled. My company downsized and I was fired. I immediately started looking for work and at the same time the building we lived in was sold. Now I had three kids, was suffering emotionally through difficult transition, had no job and no place to live. I was just glad I still had my mother.

Reporting for emergency housing was, next to my children's abuse, the lowest experience in my life. The emergency assistance office in the Bronx was inhumane.

Finally, and luckily, we were sent to HELP Bronx. After what we had experienced, it was a dream. Caring staff helped my children deal with their psychological and emotional trauma through counseling, I aspired to enroll in HELP's Engineering Building Management Training Program to find a better paying job.

I also have a new aspiration, which is to help other people who are going through what I have experienced. I see how effective we are on HELP's Resident Council, (which I am a part of)—supporting each other and advocating in Albany and Washington. We actually just traveled to Albany and met with legislators. I have learned that we are agents of change- that we can shape our own futures. HELP Crotona gave me my life back!

Floyd Smalls

**Graduate of HELP's Engineering Building Management Training Program
Former Resident of HELP Crotona**

June 1, 2003 will make eleven years that my family has resided at **Genesis Homes** in East New York Brooklyn. Being a tenant of Genesis Homes has **been a great experience** in my life. There are so many things that I accomplished while residing at Genesis.

For instance, when I moved into Genesis I was twenty-four with four children and a drop out of high school. Through the support of friends and the many services that were offered on site I was able to return to school to secure my GED. One of the childcare providers at Genesis Homes took care of my children while I attended school. When I wasn't in school I Participated in TEPP (Tenant Equity Participation Plan). TEPP was an on site program that allowed the tenants to come together and help maintain the up keeping of the building, for which they received a stipend. TEPP provided work experience for those who never worked and added experience to those who were working.

Now eleven years later, I secured my GED, Associates Degree, and I am scheduled to graduate from The College of New Rochelle with my Bachelor Degree. I have been an employee of HELP USA for five years. I started as a Safety Monitor; I'm now a housing Specialist, and looking forward to becoming a Supervisor someday.

Selena McAllister-Williams

**Mother, Student, College of New Rochelle
Housing Specialist Tenant, Genesis Homes**

Me and my sister had to change schools all the time. When we saw the clean nice apartment with two bedrooms at HELP Bronx we were like, YEAH! Now we have a real HOME!

Latesha, age 12

HELP BRONX

This key is to my home. But it represents so much more. This key opened up opportunities for me and thousands more like me. My 18 year old daughter Lori and I call Genesis Kennedy Apartments home. I would like to share with you my life as it was, and as it is now because of this key that was given to me by HELP USA 15 years ago.

The story of my road back is a **story of hope and HELP USA.** After my release I was assigned to a facility designed for women involved in the criminal justice system. I was able to regain custody of my daughter and commuted to my job earning \$7/hour as a prep cook by bus. I saw a sign for low income housing. I went to the housing coordinator in my shelter and said I want to live there. She said, "I don't think they will interview our people."

In my world, "NO" means, let's negotiate. She arranged interviews for four families and told us not to mention the history. I was there for about 2 hours. I told the truth. I asked him for the opportunity to raise my daughter in a safe place, and wanted to give her an opportunity for a good life and future. I would make a good neighbor, if someone would just give me the opportunity.

On Saturday, April 15, 1995 Lori and I moved into our home with two beds, a kitchen table, and a dream opportunity to start fresh. At the age of thirty four this was the first time I had a piece of paper that said this was my home. On Monday I went to work and Lori went to the onsite daycare.

So I want to take this opportunity to say a personal, yet very public thank you. **Thank you HELP USA** for all of the opportunities you have given me, for giving me a home, a job, for giving me a safe, supportive place to raise my daughter, and now helping me to fulfill my dream: to give back to a world that has given me so much. It is I that am honored to be the voice and the face of the thousands who have come through HELP USA doors in the last 23 years.

Cheryl Moran

Mother of Lori Moran
16 year resident of Genesis Apartments,
Founder, Executive Director, Start Fresh, New York

I moved into **GENESIS** at the age of three with my Mom who had been Homeless for 17 years.

There was someone from HELP to take me home from school to the after school program at HELP. There I received help with my homework and they watched me until my Mom got home.

HELP arranged for a school in the building for two years to help the kids that were transitioning from whatever situation had brought them to HELP USA's doors allowing us catch up. It played a very important role towards where I am today in my education.

I grew up with all with the culture and exposure that a child from a family of monetary means would. Summer Camp, trips to Great Adventure, Ballet, Music, Yoga, Dance, Theatre and the Mentoring Program. I can remember Easter egg hunts and holidays with Santa right here in our own community. All facilitated by HELP USA. They offered so many opportunities for my mom and me to help us get to where we are today. **HELP has been my virtual other parent.**

I never for one moment in my life felt that I was by society's standards poor. Actually it is quite the opposite. I am rich in many ways because of the opportunities HELP USA has given us. The self confidence I have comes from all the support HELP USA has provided for me.

My Mom's main dream was to raise me in a decent place and give me all of the opportunities that she did not have. One of those dreams was the opportunity to go to college. I will now go on to attend a top SUNY school in New York. I will be the first in my biological family to obtain a 4 year college degree and go on to Law School. I say biological family because HELP and my Mom they have been my family that has gotten me here.

I know that I can be anyone. I can accomplish anything I set my mind to because I have a very big family who always supports me. This family is my mom and HELP USA.

I would like thank you, my HELP USA family, for yesterday, today, and the endless possibilities of my bright tomorrow.

Lori Moran

Daughter of Cheryl Moran, **Child of HELP USA**

HOME



Greenburgh Cottage



St. Vincent Apartments
Las Vegas, NV



West HELP, Mt. Vernon, NY



HELP Suffolk

HELP USA Residences

Bronx, NY • Brooklyn, NY • Buffalo, NY • Houston, TX • Las Vegas, NV • Nassau County, NY
Newark, NJ • New York, NY • Philadelphia, PA • Suffolk County, NY • Westchester County, NY

HELP USA Programs and Services

Support Services

Client Case Management Services
Employment Services
HIV/AIDS Support Services
Housing Assistance
Mental Health Services
Veteran Services

Housing Programs

Bridges to Permanent Housing
Rental Subsidy Program
HELP HomeBase Aftercare Program
HELP HomeBase Prevention Program
Domestic Violence Housing
Veterans' Housing
Workforce Housing
Emergency Housing
Service-Enriched Affordable Housing
Scattered Site Housing

Domestic Violence Services

Fresh Start for Families
HELP R.O.A.D.S Program for DV Survivors

Youth Services

Mentoring USA
After School Programs
Early Childhood Education/Daycare
Vocational Programs for Youth

Employment Services

Employment Readiness/Life Skills Training
Job/Vocational Training
Job Placement Services
Job Retention Aftercare Services

Founded in 1986, HELP USA has grown to become one of the largest builders and operators of service-enriched, transitional and low-income permanent housing in the nation. With programs in Philadelphia, Houston, Buffalo, the New York Metropolitan area, and Las Vegas, HELP USA has developed more than 2,100 units of housing across the country with 30 residential projects across the nation. For the past 25 years HELP USA has provided homes, jobs and social services for more than 250,000 men, women and children and continues to pursue opportunities to help those in need. For more information on HELP USA, please visit www.helpusa.org.

HELP USA



Building Better Lives

www.helpusa.org