

Dexter Daniel, Vietnam Veteran

Unites States Senate  
Committee on Veterans Affairs  
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My name is Dexter Daniel and I am a U.S. Army veteran. I was honorably discharged in October 1976 after a 5 year tour of duty in West Germany. My primary MOS was 73C20, finance payroll specialist. Upon my release, I looked forward to returning home even though I knew in My heart I had multiple apprehensions. On the outer appearance, I looked Great to immediate family members who had not seen me for some time and Even though I had left the military, a “war” was still raging inside of me. Throughout my tenure in Germany, I actively became involved with alcohol and drugs during social times. Initially, I never addressed my addiction when I returned home due to a lack of knowledge regarding addictive Behavior. When applying for employment, I had no real difficulty getting a job, however, keeping a job and being responsible eventually lead to My demise. As my addiction progressed, my self esteem and sense of worth plummeted and I eventually became alienated, homeless and destitute. Throughout these times, suicidal thoughts visited me far too often and I was engulfed at the core of my being with anger, resentment and fear. A culmination of 26 years of incarceration, 17 years of homelessness and 18 years being unemployed along with family alienation and society withdrawal were the consequences of my choices, ignorance and rebellion.

In 1999, while facing multiple drug related criminal charges, I completely surrendered to the reality of my condition and circumstances. I needed help and appealed to the Circuit Court Judge that would preside over my case. If convicted, my sentence would be 120 yrs. Life!

By the divine grace and mercy of God and through fervent prayer and the intervention of Drug Court and inclusion of acceptance into the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training Center, I was given an alternative to prison and a renewed opportunity to restore my life. Reintegration into society would take time so I became fully engaged in the Structure of the program which included the following;

1. Foundational concepts, steps and applications of Recovery.
2. Mental and Physical stabilization.
3. Educational Assistance
4. Job readiness, training and placement assistance.
5. Financial Management
6. Housing referral Assistance
7. Family Reconciliation Assistance
8. Primary and General Aftercare

Today, I humbly and honestly confess that my heart is filled with hope, My life is filled with love and my soul has a focused renewed strength. I have remained “drug free” since 1999, completed all requirements stipulated by the Circuit

Courts and remain an Alumnus of the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training Center. In addition, I'm so blessed to be employed as a Sr. Event Services Supervisor within the Hospitality Industry since March 2001 with a Fortune 500 global Hotel Corporation. I have been empowered and have accomplished numerous renewed personal, professional and social goals.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that current and future Veterans seize their opportunity to integrate into society as acceptable, responsible and productive citizens. I am eternally grateful to God for touching the hearts of those who were and still are willing to support Veterans with compassion, constructive dialogue and goodwill. I also believe that the economy and integrity of the United States of America can and will "recover" through Dedication, Teamwork and Personalized effort.