

Serving USA Partner Orange County Rescue Mission Works to Destigmatize Mental Health Disorders this Veterans Day

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Serving USA (SUSA) highlights their partner Orange County Rescue Mission to destigmatize mental health disorders this Veterans Day.

Studies have found that 37-50% of returning veterans have been diagnosed with a mental health or substance abuse disorder. Still, this number is likely higher as fewer than 50% of returning veterans seek mental health treatment (1).



Orange County Rescue Mission is a California-based organization with a drive to minister the love of Jesus Christ to “The Least, The Last, and The Lost.” Through their programs, they offer support to veterans with meals, clothing, shelter, spiritual guidance, medical treatment, legal counseling, life-skills training, education, financial literacy, and more.

There are barriers and stigmas associated with mental health disorders, and this month, Serving USA sat with Orange County Rescue Mission Outreach Care Coordinator Jesus LozaCruz to discuss these issues from his professional perspective and his experience as a veteran.

Many Veterans are at a standstill for help as their discharge status can disqualify them for treatment programs.

Unlike other organizations, OCRM accepts all veterans regardless of their discharge status. The issue is encouraging these individuals to want to seek care. Individuals have choices, and one cannot force someone else to want to help themselves.

“If you go to the right, there’s a bus station; that shows you’re coming with us. If you go to the left, there’s a liquor store; then we know you’re not coming; you are going to go back to your

habits.”

Because of the stigma surrounding mental health disorders, some veterans feel reluctant to seek treatment.

LozaCruz can personally attest to the benefits of mental health counseling.

“For almost 11 years, I dealt with guilt. I put myself down. I was depressed. I didn’t sleep. (The trauma from the war) keeps you in your head. Finally, I opened up to the classes and asked, ‘what is this ‘cognitive behavioral therapy?’ he shared. “At first I was negative...but then you deep dive into the issues, and then eventually, it took me three twelve-week courses until I opened up, and it took all of the burdens out of my soul.”

Destigmatizing mental health and normalizing treatment are crucial to supporting our veterans.

LozaCruz prides himself in his ability to empathize with program participants. Speaking about his own experience has empowered others to feel less alone, less stigmatized, and motivated to seek help.

“There are veterans that might be discriminated against because of their disabilities, their mental health issues- I understand it. A lot of our veterans have mental health issues. I deal with them myself, but you have a choice. There are therapy options. There are different things that people can follow and get better if they choose to. Some people are not fully there and might need that extra hand or person to guide them.”

Serving USA is proud to partner with organizations like Orange County Rescue Mission. When asked about our partnership, LozaCruz shared, “It’s about an average of \$16,800 per person per year to provide them clothing, meals, and medical assistance.... we can’t do it without Serving USA’s support. We have constant veterans leaving and coming back. It’s a lot of money, and it’s a big investment for our veteran population to get back on their feet. We ask nothing of them, and without (SUSA’s) support, we wouldn’t be able to make it.”

About Serving USA:

SUSA’s mission is to bring grace and redemption through Christ to incarcerated individuals, women in recovery, and military veterans through a supported network of exceptional partner organizations.

Our support for prisoners and ex-offenders includes restorative and redemptive pre-release programming and discipleship, addressing life skills and physical, spiritual, and vocational needs. We are making a difference to better prepare these men and women for release and walk with them when they get out by providing housing, transportation, job placement, legal aid, and other wrap-around services to reduce recidivism drastically.

Our commitment to women in recovery includes programs that walk alongside women, offering

shelter, compassion, counseling, life skills, job training, spiritual development, and encouragement as they recover from various forms of abuse and transition to healthy and productive lifestyles.

We provide an array of services and innovative programming to our wounded warriors, emphasizing PTS (Post Traumatic Stress) and combat trauma issues that lead to a suicide rate of 21 per day and contribute to violent crime and homelessness.□

For more information and to learn about all partners, please visit www.servingusa.org. Questions, comments, or concerns can be relayed to info@servingusa.org.

(1) Spotlight on Mental Health. (n.d.). US Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved September 2, 2022, from <https://www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/news/feature/mental-health.cfm>

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