



**The Philadelphia Veterans Multi - Service & Education Center, Inc.
(PVMSEC)**

**213-217 N. 4th Street - Philadelphia PA, 19106-1801
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“Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1980”

**July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010
Annual Report**



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Executive Overview

Veterans that once served our country so proudly are too often “forgotten”. PVMSEC provides a place where they are not “forgotten”, a place where veterans can obtain the help and care that they truly deserve. Many of the veterans that PVMSEC serves are disabled with PTSD, have behavioral health and medical problems, many are homeless, have substance abuse problems, and are unemployed. As we celebrate our 30th Anniversary of service to our region’s Veterans, we remain steadfast in our mission to continue “serving those who served.”

“The Center”, in an effort to stay abreast of the growing needs of Veterans, has continually strived to enhance our services to address the current needs of our returning Veterans. Our facility, located in Old City Philadelphia, provides effective services in the area of benefits counseling, training, job placement, and homeless services. In addition, we are now able to offer veterans assistance in obtaining permanent housing.

Many of the veterans that we serve have turned their lives around completely and Veterans Freedom Gate, our Shelter Plus Care permanent housing program, is a testament to that fact. Veterans Freedom Gate was designed to provide housing and supportive services on a long-term basis for those homeless veterans with disabilities who have proven they have the desire, the commitment, and the ability, both emotionally and financial, to live independently in a community setting. Since its beginning in April, 2006, we have helped hundreds homeless veterans live on their own.

The combination of our permanent housing program, transitional residence programs, our day long drop in center for homeless veterans, veteran’s benefits counseling, training, job placement, and the presence of the onsite VA Community Based Medical and Behavioral Health Clinic, offers the veterans the most comprehensive veterans services in Philadelphia and its surrounding areas.

In closing, hundreds of thousands of men and women currently serving in the military are protecting us at home and around the world from the threats of terrorism. We have already begun to see the effects of those military men and women coming back from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their needs, problems, concerns and disabilities are similar to those comrades from previous wars and campaigns; however, each era seems to create a unique set of disabilities, problems, and needs. The Center, with its wide-ranging services offered, is prepared to effectively address the multiple needs of our nation’s newest patriots as well as addressing the needs of Veterans from previous eras.

Yours in Veteran Services,

Marsha L. Four
Executive Director



Organizational History and Mission

The Center was founded in the fall of 1980 with a dual grant provided by the U.S. Department of Labor and the City of Philadelphia to address the multiple needs of all honorably discharged veterans experiencing difficulty transitioning back into the mainstream of society.

Our mission is to provide coordinated and comprehensive services to military veterans, by eliminating barriers for successful transition and addressing needs for independent reintegration into their community.

Our clients experience various problems such as homelessness, unemployment, need for training, substance abuse, PTSD, and behavioral health and medical problems.

For the past 30 years, the Center has worked tirelessly to address our veteran's needs and ultimately transition them back into the mainstream of society. We are prepared and stand ready to greet and assist America's best and give them the help that they truly deserve.

Below is an outline of our key achievements and growth from 1980 to present.

1980

The Center was founded by Edward J. Lowry, Executive Director (1980-2010) who realized at that time, many Vietnam Veterans were experiencing adjustment problems and needed assistance to access benefits from the VA. The Center was then established to "serve those who served".

1982 - 1987

The Center was the headquarters and resource center for fundraising and development for the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial located at Front and Spruce Streets. The memorial was dedicated in October of 1987, honoring the 646 Philadelphians who gave their lives for their country during the Vietnam War.

1985 - 1991

The Center was one of the first veteran service providers in the eastern region of The United States to receive funding to provide services to Vietnam Veterans and their families who were experiencing physical and related problems resulting from exposure to agent orange. Over 5,000 veterans and their families received critically needed services from the Center during this time.

1991

Our Nation's Persian Gulf Veterans begin visiting the Center requesting assistance.

1994

The Center was incorporated as a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization.



1997

Our transitional housing program, (LZ II) opened on the grounds of the Coatesville VA Medical Center to provide 50 beds for homeless male and female veterans.

1999

After years of renting and limited space, The Center purchased a six floor building in Old City Philadelphia to accommodate the growing needs of veterans and to expand our services.

2000

The Perimeter, our homeless veteran day center, was established to provide a full spectrum of services to our homeless veteran clients.

2001

The Center expands its transitional housing (LZ II) program to provide 95 beds to our homeless male and female veterans.

We began to provide a variety of services to our nation's newest veterans fighting in Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom.

2002

Recognized by Glaxo Smith Kline to receive the Glaxo Smith Kline International Impact Award for making a substantial contribution to the medical and mental health status, outcomes and improved general life situations of countless veterans in the Philadelphia and its surrounding communities.

The Center was also presented the US Department of Labor Exemplary Public Interest Award. Presented yearly to a community and constituent organization that exhibits outstanding accomplishments that support the office of federal contract compliance programs.

2005

The Center separates its transitional housing program in Coatesville, PA into gender specific housing. LZ II is now designated as an all male program.

The Mary E. Walker house, a separate transitional housing 30 Bed program, opens on the grounds of the Coatesville VA Medical Center for female veterans who have found themselves in difficult life situations and without a home. To date, the Walker House is the largest female veteran specific transitional housing program in the United States.

2007

The Center was named "Non Profit Organization of the Year" by the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.



Employment and Training Services

The Employment and Training Program at The Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service & Education Center offers veterans the opportunity to gain the necessary skills to compete for demanding positions and to earn a livable wage. Each Veteran enrolled in the employment and training program is assigned a job developer/case manager, assisting the veterans with the ultimate goal, gaining employment.



Employment and Training Services Available:

- Computer Applications Training
- Computer Repair Training
- Advanced Computer Repair Training
- Resume Writing Techniques
- Interview Techniques
- Financial and Household Budgeting Skills
- Job Search/Placement and Referral
- Life Skills Workshops



Homeless Veteran Services

Since its beginning in 1980, PVMSEC has provided assistance to homeless veterans and veterans in danger of this life situation. Recognizing the shortfall in dedicated homeless veteran services, in 1993, the Center invested as a primary provider to Philadelphia Stand Down, a three day annual encampment where homeless veterans received services and information. Motivated by the enormous need of these veterans, PVMSEC dedicated its energy to the establishment of specific programs for homeless veterans in order to recreate the Stand Down concept on an daily basis while also creating transitional housing and permanent housing for those veterans with a commitment to life change.



Homeless Veteran Services Available:

- The Perimeter – A day service center for homeless veterans providing meals, showers, laundry, haircuts, etcetera.
- LZII – 95 Bed Male Transitional Housing (located on the grounds of the Coatesville VA Medical Center)
- Mary E. Walker House – 30 Bed Female Transitional Housing (located on the grounds of the Coatesville VA Medical Center)
- Shelter Plus Care – A permanent housing program providing 40 Units of subsidized HUD / OSH housing
- Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program
- Case Management
- Emergency Shelter Referrals



Additional On-Site Services

The Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service & Education Center partners with many organizations, such as the Philadelphia VA Medical Center, to provide veterans with a comprehensive list of services at our location in downtown Philadelphia.



Additional On-Site Services Available:

- Veterans Benefits Counseling
- VA Regional Office Representative
- Emergency Food
- Disability Compensation Claims Assistance
- Pennsylvania Career Link DVOP Representative
- Shuttle Service to VA medical treatments and appointments
- Legal Counseling
- Drug / Alcohol Rehabilitation Assistance

**All Services Provided FREE
to all Honorable Discharged United States Veterans**



David Keyser - A Forgotten Hero



David Keyser, from the Frankford neighborhood is one of the many veterans who returned to our City of Brotherly Love to live out the “American Dream.”

During his service in Vietnam he volunteered to serve as a “tunnel rat,” which was classified as “exceptionally hazardous” and was most often a single-person assignment.

The extensive network of underground tunnels he navigated was booby-trapped and well defended, resulting in frequent encounters with the enemy.

Although he earned many medals, including the Purple Heart, two Bronze Stars with Valor Device and the Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device, his experience as a “tunnel rat” left a devastating effect as he was exposed to Agent Orange, a powerful herbicide and defoliant, on a daily basis. As a result, Keyser developed severe medical conditions that caused him excruciating pain and eventually led to a drug dependency one year after returning home.

When he returned home in February 1969, no one cared. Keyser had numerous medical problems as a result of his service to his country. He could not hold a job, and he eventually lost his family. Living with the untreated mental and physical pain, he turned to illegal drugs for self-medication and soon found himself in jail with a five-year sentence that turned into twenty five years, as no one spoke up for him.

In 2007, Keyser decided to seek help from the Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service & Education Center. At that time David was still in a prison pre-release program and was living on \$108 a month from the Veterans Administration. To make matters worse, he had no family to live with and was trying unsuccessfully to maneuver in a world that had changed greatly since February 1969.

After spending eight months at the Center, life is looking brighter for our forgotten war hero. Keyser is now being treated by the VA Medical Team for his post traumatic stress disorder and other medical conditions as a result of the Center’s partnership with the Veterans Administration. The Center provided him with transportation to and from the VA so he could get to his appointments. His disability checks have increased as a result of working with the Center’s Veterans Benefits counselor. Additionally, the Center was able to find him an apartment and



provide his security deposit and first months rent. We are happy for report that David Keyser is finally able to live on his own.

Year End Client Activity Report
Fiscal Year (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

Philadelphia area Veterans have received the following services at the Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service & Education Center, Inc.

Total Client Visits	23,592
Total Veterans Served	3,418
G.I Bill Counseling (Home Loan / Pension / Compensation / Educational Counseling	658
Claims Filed With VA Regional Officers	397
The Perimeter- Homeless Veteran Day Service Center	
Individual Homeless Veterans Clients	941
Homeless Veteran Encounters.	17,630
Veteran Client Service Hours	80,622
Van Transportation for Clients to Hospital Appointments & Treatments	1,040
LZII- Transitional Residence	
Male Veteran Residents	175
Average length of stay in program facility (days).	351
Walker House - Transitional Residence	
Female Veteran Residents	52
Average length of stay in program facility (days).	305
Veterans placed into permanent housing	172
Total Veterans who received utility assistance	157
Total Veterans who received moving assistance.	103
Total Veterans Enrolled under D.O.L. Contracts	498
Total Veterans Placed in employment under D.O.L Contracts	279
Meals provided in 3 Homeless Programs	173,395



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John Gonnella -Treasurer

Joseph O’Hara - Secretary

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John Kane – Business Manager, Local 690, Plumbers Union



IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTER AND ITS PROGRAMS
OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE CENTER'S EFFORTS IN ASSISTING VETERANS
PLEASE CONTACT US AT:

213-217 N. 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA 10106

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Combined Federal Campaign: #48126

United Way Donor Choice: #04308