

## **Paying it Forward | Veterans in the Community**

**Robert:** I know my purpose today. The therapy through the VA has allowed me to reach down and help somebody and pull somebody back up. I want to help a veteran.

**Tim:** Being an activist has really helped. I was a Congressional staffer for two years and I helped veterans and my problems pale in comparison to some of these other people. So I find strength in the success of their stories too.

**Randy:** My counselor, one day around Thanksgiving I asked her, "Do you know any place that I can volunteer at?" Her boss came out and talked to me. He said, "Yeah, you can volunteer." One day the CEO came up and after seeing me, he said, "I'm going to give you a job." I have people coming from MVAA, all these other veteran organizations, coming to ask me for once.

**La Wanda:** I'm on the drug court team for the city of Middletown. The drug court is a alternative to incarceration. We can identify with them on a level that the judge can't, that the lawyer can't. We let them know, "Hey, I did it. You can do it too."

**Robert:** And the way it helps me is like those endorphins, like it's a natural high I say, "Yes."

**Tim:** That energy I used to put into running away and drinking, doing drugs, I've put into keep organizing veterans, keep bringing attention, to lobby for veterans. We have to keep serving. It's just in a different way.

**Randy:** I love veterans. I never appreciated what I was and what these people were doing, how they gave up their lives. I try my very hardest to help them because I was in the same shoes.

**La Wanda:** The highest aspiration that one can do is be of service to somebody else.



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