

# Lending a Hand

Imagine coming back from overseas, and being left with no home, food, or comfortability left in your life. You take all those years fighting to make it back, and then all your left with is a place on the streets. As a respect to our military services, we believe civilians should be lending their hearts more often. One donation of a few bottles of water, crackers and some gloves could make the world's difference. So why not start now?

In our home city of York, 324 people have been reported homeless. A quarter of that number comes from our veterans. In the entire state of PA, 1,108 veterans were homeless in 2008 (What Causes). And I wouldn't doubt those numbers haven't risen up since then. And it's simply because veterans don't hold the same luck. Honestly, our veterans can't catch a break. They must navigate the lack of affordability, and economic hardship that's brought on by everyday life. Plus, handle what extensions of deployment did to them. There isn't room for rest, or recovery from all the sacrifices they made. Therefore, that's why we need to put an effort to support the troops beyond just our words.

Our military veterans have an agenda to show their strength for our country, and to fight no matter the situations around them. They deal with death, injuries, and pain that soon their mental health becomes neglected. And it's not until they come back home when they first start seeing those signs. Around 30% of active duty and reserve military personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan have a mental health problem requiring treatment(Veterans 2014). Principal Ryan Cauffman of Central York HS has noticed such. In his words, "Most of it boils down to some type of mental illness or all the deployments. I know people in active duty getting deployed back to

back, that it takes a toll on their families. The divorce rate in our military is much higher than normal. Trying to serve your country and be there for your loved ones is extremely hard. It's a hard balance to handle. I just think the Veteran's Association should be supporting in the best way possible, especially in treating those with such illnesses beyond physical.”

In its entirety there will always be veterans left homeless. On any given day now, an estimated 40,056 veterans in America go abandoned. Of that estimated number, two-thirds are resided in shelters, while the other 15,366 are living in cars, encampments, or on the streets (Usich Gov). Every day there is something we are able to do to decrease those numbers. We need to share the love, respect and honor we preach in order to do so. Donating more, and giving back to the shelters are some of the first few vital steps. We may not know them all, but we most certainly owe them all (Admin 2019).

## WORKS CITED

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