

To whom it may concern:

On February 13th of 2009 I got my last paycheck and my walking papers from a job I loved going to. I am a single mom of a teenage son and was two weeks away from rent due with nothing in my bank account and a little food in my pantry. The Monday after I immediately started looking for a new job and signed up for DUA benefits. I had no idea how we were going to survive. About a month later I had to attend my first mandatory benefits meeting. I was scared, I had only been out of work once and that was after returning home from service with the US Navy/Desert Storm. After the meeting ended I stuck around to talk with Bryhn McLeod. He took my resume and began to immediately critique the work and assess my situation. It was like he knew instantly that I really needed more than just a check. His words were and I'll never forget them, " There is no way we are having a Vet on the street, especially a single mom". He then made a call to the Veterans Outreach facility in Haverhill and sent me over there, he told me they would have some food and some phone numbers to get in touch with the VASH program. He even told me had I been a resident of the Commonwealth I could have immediately gotten into housing in Salem Ma. I would have never known or found out about any of these opportunities' and, I'm going to call them opportunities because they are more than just social programs. If it wasn't for Bryhn and his knowledge and consideration and genuine care for not only myself but all Vets I can honestly say I have no idea how I would have overcome my circumstances and the situation my job loss put me in. There are so many Vets who are full of dignity and pride like myself who would never expect or even ask for help of any kind. Without people like Bryhn, the outreach centers, and the Vash program I fear too many Vets will go homeless and hungry. We who serve our country do so with pride, and that is something no one can ever mistake for anything less than belief in the United States of America and all she stands for. So let's make sure our Vets have a place to call home and more than just a meal at the soup kitchen.

Proud to Serve and call the USA my home,

Heather M. Lowe