



# IMPACT!

## newsletter



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How your investment is changing the future for individuals ... leading the way to life in recovery!



### STEP UP SUCCESS STORY: Preston W. Wilcox, Jr.

Preston W. Wilcox, Jr., never thought he would end up experiencing homelessness. Mr. Wilcox, a Vietnam Veteran who served in the Army as a communications specialist, had a 38-year career as a registered nurse.

Mr. Wilcox was in a motorcycle accident that damaged both of his knees. Then, his knees were shattered when a delivery truck crashed into him while driving. He was transported to the VA hospital for urgent care. Because Mr. Wilcox's leg was infected with MRSA he underwent a voluntary amputation rather than risk an embolism.

He moved in with his cousin. He paid his way financially by performing chores such as driving her kids to and from school, cooking and cleaning. He describes the situation as abusive, but he endured it until the day she came to him and told him he needed to move out.

Mr. Wilcox had nowhere to go. He ended up living at a transitional shelter for Veterans in South Los Angeles for seven months. Now in his own home at Building 209, Mr. Wilcox is working on his own recovery from being a co-dependent caregiver. He is taking better care of himself and can finally sleep peacefully, in his own home.

### PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

*The #1 requested supportive service...*



Michael's Village has a new mural. As part of the L.A. Street Art Initiative, a program of Arts Bridging the Gap, the street art piece is one of 150 murals in Los Angeles created

by the program members and LAPD. Artist Valerie Rose, with members of the Police Activities League Hollywood and LAPD Hollywood, collaborated on the design to send a loving message out to all. Tenants of Michael's Village were asked for feedback and the design amended per their suggestions. The mural represents community, compassion, and a bright future. Tenants from Michael's Village and volunteers from Arts Bridging the Gap painted for several hours to finish the project.

"We were excited to bring this mural to the Step Up Community, to share and spread that message of love," said Georgia Van Cuylenburg (pictured above left), Arts Bridging the Gap volunteer.

### A SENSE OF BELONGING

*Mutuality, safety, and respect...*



Pictured (L-R): Tod Lipka, Step Up, CEO; Howard Payne, Building 209 resident; Nancy Carter, Step Up Board Member; Carina Iniguez, Step Up VASH Service Coordinator; Pamela Yu, Spectrum, Senior Communications Manager; Stephen Sawyer, Spectrum, Director of Government Affairs; Andi Lovano, Step Up Board Member.

Step Up is a recipient of Spectrum's 2018 Digital Education Grant, receiving \$30,000 to build a new computer learning center and support digital literacy training for the veterans who live in Building 209 on the West L.A. Veterans Affairs Campus. The grant will provide laptops, printers, and basic computer classes taught by a member from the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Community Learning Center. Participants will learn how to navigate email, create resumes, and

bank online. Access to laptops will be provided to residents to make use of the equipment and software independently while reinforcing classroom skills.

"Step Up is grateful to partner with Spectrum on the new Computer Learning Center at Building 209. The computer equipment and printers provided by Spectrum will teach valuable life skills and enhance a sense of community for the 54 veterans who live on the property," said CEO Tod Lipka.

### VOCATIONAL TRAINING & PLACEMENT

*Productivity and social connectedness...*



Step Up on Vine was featured in LAfoods.com's *5 Urban Farms Making a Difference in Los Angeles*, written by Aira Pamintaun. With a solar-powered, LEED Platinum-certified building and its Urban Rooftop Garden (pictured above with SUOV resident Leon R.), Step Up on Vine is making strides towards true sustainable living. The aeroponic rooftop tower farm is one of the most resource-efficient ways to produce food, taking 90% less space and using 98% less water, nourishing plants with only a nutrient-laden mist. The Urban Rooftop Garden is part of Step Up's Vocational program and the produce is used in daily meal preparation in the kitchens of SUOV in Hollywood and Step Up on Second in Santa Monica. To read the article please visit: <https://lafood.com/5-urban-farms-making-a-difference-in-los-angeles/>



Pictured (L-R): Jay Reisbaum, Laemmle Theaters; Andi Lovano, Step Up Board Member; Nancy Carter, Step Up Board Member; Greg Laemmle, Laemmle Theaters; and Tod Lipka, Step Up, CEO.

Thanks to Greg Laemmle, President and Jay Reisbaum, Senior Vice-President of Laemmle Theaters for touring Building 209 with us and for their generous support!