

Horses help veterans see 'your yesterday is not your tomorrow'

As a combat medic in Iraq and Afghanistan, Donnie Gist saw the horrors of war firsthand. Back in the States after deployment, Donnie's two sisters died a day apart.

The trauma was almost too much to bear.

"I was very depressed and had no way to channel my emotions," he says, "but I had heard you could work through issues by learning to care for big animals." A rodeo cowboy helped him discover a healing love for horses.

Next, Donnie helped veterans in MUST supportive housing to overcome issues that prevent them from living successfully. On a recent outing to an equestrian therapy center, Donnie saw new light in the eyes of several veterans as they overcame fears and made friends with the horses.

"They were clearly nervous," Donnie says. "At the end, they were smiling and dismounted like cowboys, without any help. The look on their faces said a million words."

Through MUST's veterans services, donors and corporate sponsors help traumatized veterans understand that "your yesterday is not your tomorrow," Donnie says. "The support of partners like The Home Depot Foundation lets veterans know somebody appreciates them. It helps veterans learn that they can grow and change."

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YOUR IMPACT

by the numbers

74,641



MEALS SERVED IN THE
LOAVES AND FISHES
COMMUNITY KITCHEN

84,224



SAFE NIGHTS OF REST
IN MUST HOUSING

CHILDREN RECEIVED NEW
UNDERWEAR, SOCKS, BLANKETS
SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND TOYS AT
THE MUST CHRISTMAS TOY SHOPS



4,164

From \$1 million in
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operating 82 trucks. He lived in South Georgia, raised three children and later followed them to Cobb County when they attended Kennesaw State University.

Marty Wilkes spent most of his career as a pastor and owner of a successful freight logistics company

assets and tools you need. They provide a bed, meals and volunteers even wash your clothes for you. To be honest, I kind of hated to leave when my time was up," he smiled.

His life sounds ideal until he begins to share the rest of his story. After three neck fusions paired with a continuing battle with neuropathy, the beleaguered 61-yr.-old began showing signs of mood swings and an altered personality because of his medication. Last Memorial Day, he was out on the street with no home, no family and no hope. His only companion was deep depression.

Marty explained that many people he met at the shelter were in similar situations. MUST clients just need some help getting stabilized. "MUST couldn't have done a better job of working with so many people. They took everyone's situation into account," he said.

After losing his apartment, his former landlord suggested he go to MUST Ministries' Elizabeth Inn and get help. He did, and a shift began to happen.

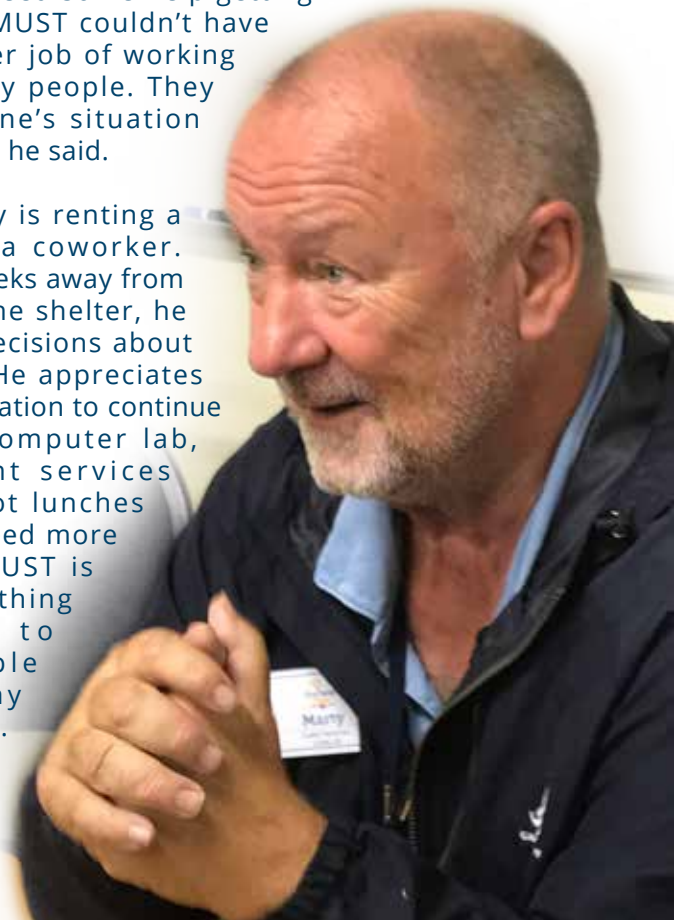
Today, Marty is renting a room from a coworker. Just a few weeks away from his stay at the shelter, he is making decisions about next steps. He appreciates his open invitation to continue using the computer lab, employment services and even hot lunches should he need more support. "MUST is doing everything they can to move people in a healthy direction.

"Every person at MUST is absolutely fantastic," he said, remembering his 42-day stay at the shelter. "The volunteer who greeted me made me feel great about being at Elizabeth Inn, and I spent a lot of time talking with my caseworker."

I feel like there is hope again".

Marty came to MUST with employment, working in Guest Services at the Infinity Club for the Atlanta Braves. "Working for the Braves is a dream come true and I've never missed a game," he said. "MUST allowed me to work the night schedule and sleep in the mornings so I could continue my job"

He said when he first realized he was homeless, he looked in the mirror "and saw an old man". He felt little hope, but "MUST gives you all of the



A UNIQUE BUSINESS PLAN TO *help hungry children*



Colleen Magel didn't realize so many children suffered from chronic hunger – in her own neighborhood – until she helped deliver MUST Summer Lunches. Now she's found a way to combat hunger through her daily work as a restaurant manager.

Serving as a Summer Lunch volunteer, Colleen delivered healthy bagged meals to children who receive free or reduced-price lunches during the school year, but often go hungry when school is out. In 2017, supporters donated food, assembled lunch bags and delivered more than 275,830 meals to children in six counties of northwest metro Atlanta.

"I saw the kids running out to get their lunches. I saw their living conditions, and I realized they're in our neighborhood," Colleen says. "It tugged at me, and I realized I needed to do something."

Colleen prayed intently, then drew up a business plan and talked with her boss, Paul Dalrymple, at Buffalo's Café on Highway 41 in Kennesaw. He agreed to begin opening the restaurant for brunch on Saturdays and Sundays. Colleen calls the initiative "Arise Kitchen," and half the gross food sales are donated to hunger causes – divided between MUST Ministries and an organization she chose that serves in West Africa.

"This makes good sense for us locally because we're a community. It fits with our mission as a business," Colleen says. "Hunger is dear to God's heart. I drive in these neighborhoods all the time, but now I see the area differently. When you know the children, it changes everything."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Companies that want to help people in poverty: Contact Don Crampton, dcrampton@mustministries.org

NEW SPACE TO SERVE MORE

MUST clients, volunteers and employees will all benefit from the new Donation Center opening Nov. 7 at 1280 Field Parkway. The 28,000sf building will be the combination of the former MUST Donation Center and the MUST Save It Forward school food pantry storage, allowing for greater capacity, more volunteers and an improved flow of donated items. Conveniently located and more accessible, the remodeled building features a Volunteer Engagement Center, outdoor drop-off bays, temperature controlled building and other benefits to help MUST serve more clients, more effectively.



Learn more about Arise Kitchen at facebook.com/AriseKitchenATL



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 P.O. Box 1717
 Marietta, GA 30061
 770-427-9862

For more information,
 volunteer application
 and a lists of needs:

www.mustministries.org

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3,147

MUST has put 3,147 people back to work since 2012, equalling \$47,327,202 returned to the economy.

A FEW OF JASMINA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Initiated, designed, directed and launched Wamsutta's first "bed-in-a-bag"

Prepared and launched Springmaid brand as Wal-Mart's first national brand for soft home department

Forecasted Home Fashion Furniture Trends

A CREATIVE DIRECTOR GAVE UP...

but MUST didn't

Jasmina Jovic thought she had gone from fashion to failure. With a master's in textiles, an impressive career and success managing fashion design, she never dreamed she would be jobless, depressed and barely hanging on. But she was.

While attending a support group, someone suggested she try MUST Ministries for employment services. After two and a half years of being out of work, she had little hope anyone could help, but she reluctantly showed up at MUST where she met Nate Marsh and Jeff Edwards. That meeting changed everything.



The MUST Employment Services team helped Jasmina land a job that feeds her creativity and connected her with other women who have struggled financially. The Yugoslavia native has lived in the States for 30 years with an illustrious career, but today, she says she is finally "home".

Working in the Glory Haus Repurposed on Purpose workshop, she is thrilled to be part of a group that makes creative items for celebrities, companies and other organizations. She is in a nurturing and caring environment and she laughs easily now, knowing she is moving forward.

"MUST helped me put together my resume and cover letter, rehearsed job interview skills and helped me land in this wonderful place," she said. "I have come so far. I had little hope. Now I am enjoying work every day, eating meals here with my co-workers and creating products people love to buy. This is wonderful."

Volunteer to help, or send job seekers to any MUST location, M - F, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.