



# Mather Veterans Village

Rancho Cordova, California

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME

*Veterans Find a Healing Home in the City of Rancho Cordova, CA*

Disabled and homeless veterans have a place to call home in the City of Rancho Cordova, CA. Welcome to Mather Veterans Village. Mather Veterans Village provides 100 permanent supportive homes and 47 units of transitional housing, as well as amenities, such as vehicle and bicycle parking, outdoor recreation facilities with a basketball court, a community garden, dog run, and outdoor dining. Perhaps most important are the wrap-around services provided to residents by Nation's Finest including free case management, counseling, resource navigation support and organized social opportunities. This village is dedicated to the care and housing of our nation's veterans.

### **Michael Harris, U.S. Army Reserve, Served 1982 – 92:**

Michael is a Sacramento-area native who was born at McClellan Air Force Base. Michael served in the U.S. Army Reserve as a Biomedical Equipment Repairman where he also received a Sharpshooter Badge. After his time in the military, he suffered severe injuries after being struck by a vehicle. Soon after, his eight-year relationship with his significant other ended, and the COVID-19 pandemic began, which all led to Michael becoming homeless. However, with the support services offered by Mercy Housing and Nation's Finest, Michael began the road to recovery. He has lived in Mather Veterans Village since March 2021, and he looks forward to working with other veterans like himself by founding a food and agriculture center for veterans. Michael said, "Mather Veterans Village saved my life, and gives veterans a place to get their lives together." Mather Veterans Village is Michael's place to call home.

### **William "Cowboy" Huneke Sr., U.S. Army, Served 1985-89:**

William Huneke Sr., better known as Cowboy, joined the U.S. Army as a mechanic when he was 21 years old. As a child, Cowboy was responsible for taking care of his two younger brothers after their father left, and while growing up, the three boys experienced abuse and neglect. As an adult, during and after his time in the military, Cowboy struggled with addiction to drugs and alcohol. In 2018, he suffered a major heart attack and had quadruple bypass surgery, which failed. Over the years, in between doctor's visits and various medical procedures, Cowboy stayed with his daughter, but never had a place to call his own. Nation's Finest (formally known as SVRC) helped Cowboy find transitional housing, where he had help to overcome his addiction to drugs and alcohol. After completing the transitional program, in February 2020, Cowboy became a resident at Mather Veterans Village and said, "Here, I feel like I've got a chance." Mather Veterans Village is Cowboy's place to call home.

### **Robert St. Clair, U.S. Army, Served 1980-83:**

Robert had struggled with a Methamphetamine addiction since he was 12 years old as a result of a difficult upbringing. He joined the military at 17 ½ years old and the structure provided the positive environment he needed. Robert felt like he fit in and enjoyed serving alongside his comrades. Yet he began to have problems with authority at the very end of his tour and decided not to re-enlist. When Robert returned home, the economy was in a downturn and his ongoing drug use precluded him from getting a job. In the one job he did hold for years, he worked alongside others with similar addictions, worsening his own. Robert was homeless for 18 years and called himself a professional squatter. He attended Stand Down Sacramento events to get help each year. It wasn't until 2014 when Robert sought support from the Mather VA Hospital and Veterans Resource Centers of America. He checked into rehab and got help for his mental health disorder, and it was then he learned about Mather Veterans Village. On June 1, 2016, Robert became the first resident to move into Mather Veterans Village and is now the honorary mayor there. He is now clean and sober, has regular mental health appointments, volunteers at Stand Down Sacramento events, and says he feels blessed by God. Robert now has his own family at the village and enjoys the comradery. Mather Veterans Village is Robert's place to call home.