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About Us

OUR MISSION

The primary mission of General Needs is to assist homeless veterans & veterans in need to live lives of dignity by providing NEW:

- **Daily-living clothing:** underwear, socks, tee-shirts, bras, towels
- **Cold weather items:** coats, jackets, hats, scarves, ski gloves, thermal underwear/socks, sweatshirts, sweatpants, blankets
- **Warm weather items:** graphic tee-shirts, shorts
- **Footwear:** winter waterproof boots, sneakers, summer sandals, shower flip flops
- **Toiletries:** soap, shampoo, toothbrushes/toothpaste, deodorant, razors, powder, sunscreen
- **Gear:** large duffel for relocation, backpack, small duffel bag, string bag, personal toiletry bag

A secondary mission is to aid homeless veterans, veterans in need as well as their families by providing:

- **New beds and other household items** to veterans moving into housing based on a veteran agency referral.

Having the basic household items (bed frame/mattress/box spring, bedding, towels, small kitchen appliances such as microwave, coffee maker, can opener as well as dishes, glasses, flatware, pots/pans and other kitchenware) would grant a formerly homeless veteran a fresh start & empower successful independent living.

OUR STORY

In 2008, General Needs founder Lonnie Sherman volunteered at a monthly "hot meal" service at the Northport VA Medical Center in a veteran's emergency homeless shelter. Lonnie noticed during the November-December some civic groups and individuals came in to offer clothing and coats to the residents in the shelter.

These veterans are housed for up to 90 days while undergoing treatment for PTSD, Substance Abuse, Mental and Physical therapies as well as Medical Procedures.

However, in January, and the rest of the year, little was offered by to assist the veterans. In conversations with the veterans and the social work staff it became obvious that the residents needed simple, everyday items such as underwear, socks and t-shirts; stuff that was rarely donated to the shelter.

In soliciting family, friends and business associates for support, Lonnie would ask "doesn't everybody like to open a fresh, new bag of underwear?" He would pool donations of these basic undergarments and money (including from his own pocket) until he had accumulated and purchased enough items to service 40-45 veterans. He would pack the clothing in reusable shopping bags and thus provide a "Distribution with Dignity" by handing out new, much-needed, appropriately sized goods for the veterans. Lonnie always included a smile and a look in the eye while providing a heartfelt "thank you for your service" handshake. Lonnie became known as "the underwear man."

Distributions went from sporadic to quarterly to monthly with the assistance of family and friends' participation in this cause. In time Lonnie came to understand these veterans lacked many other basic necessities such as toiletries, seasonally appropriate clothing, footwear, etc. Lonnie's solicitations for support led to increased donations the eventual result of which became better service to our veterans by Lonnie's organization, General Needs!

In May 2015, General Needs Ltd. became a federal 501(C)(3) Non-Profit Charitable organization. In addition, General Needs Ltd. applied and was granted the Certificate for Not-for-Profit Registration from Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency and is registered with the New York State office of the Attorney General. General Needs now services "monthly" Veterans housed at Emergency Shelters for Homeless Veterans from Brooklyn/Queens to Riverhead.

General Needs draws its support from Long Islanders who are compassionate and concerned about those who have served our country. We draw no salaries nor take any goods or money collected for personal benefit.

CONTACT

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