

SSI Ohio Project Success Story: Harvey Jackson



According to formerly homeless veteran, SSI Ohio Project is “a blessing”

The SSI Ohio Project provides a crucial service for individuals who are homeless and disabled- assistance with complex Social Security disability applications. Clients work with SSI Ohio Specialists who see them through the process from start to finish. Specialists work with a range of clients who have diverse life experiences, including military service.

For Air Force veteran *Harvey Jackson, working with Specialist Paula Cheeves in Toledo was both “enlightening and encouraging.” Jackson, who suffers from paralysis on the right side of his body, first applied for benefits in 1994 but was denied because his condition wasn’t severe enough to qualify. After that, he returned to work as a tailor for approximately 15 years until his condition worsened and he began to experience restricted movement in his upper body accompanied by excruciating pain.

No longer able to support himself, Jackson “was bouncing around from place to place for a year or so” and “had stayed at the Cherry St. Mission” for about one month before ending up at St. Paul’s Community Center. He credits food stamps as a tool that helped to keep him off the streets for that time. “With no income, I couldn’t pay. So at least whenever I ate, they could eat, too,” Jackson explains about how he financed his living arrangements.

Jackson began meeting with Cheeves at St. Paul’s and speaks positively about their encounters. “She’s a very joyous and outspoken woman. She knows exactly what she’s doing. ... Overall, I had a very good experience working with Paula.”

Working with an SSI Ohio Specialist proved beneficial, as Jackson was awarded SSI and SSDI within five months. As for finding a place to finally call home, he

says, “I got my voucher through MHA and will be moving to my own apartment soon.”

Jackson can now focus on maintaining his newfound stability and wellness. “There are a lot of resources with me being a vet. I’ve been using all the resources- I see my therapist. I had trouble sleeping, so they gave me some medication for that.”

Even for a veteran, homelessness can be a overwhelming experience. “I guess some people who are homeless, you can become immune to that type of living. I was not. ... Being homeless, that’s, ‘whoa,’” Jackson reflects.

Without the SSI Ohio Project and Specialist Paula Cheeves, Harvey Jackson might not have overcome homelessness. “Other vets, they hired an attorney and are still fighting. So I go to the VA and pass out her business cards. There’s no fee and she’ll work on your case. For me, that was a blessing.”

**Name has been changed to protect identity.*

- For more information on the SSI Ohio Project please visit:
<http://www.cohhio.org/SSI-2010.php>
- For information on services available for homeless veterans please visit:
<http://www.va.gov/homeless/>