**God Shed His Grace on Thee!**

By Collin Day, VOASE Communications Intern

Even the toughest of men need a helping hand sometimes. This was the case with Ruben Johnson, an entrepreneur and veteran of the United States Navy. After the death of a loved one, Mr. Johnson found himself depressed, abusing drugs and alcohol, and eventually becoming homeless. At the urging of his daughter, Mr. Johnson sought assistance and entered the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program.

SSVF is a program of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, formed to prevent homelessness and transition struggling veterans and their families to long-term housing. Since 2012, it has granted funds to various organizations that are able to provide services to those warriors who need it most. “We provide case management and financial resources to assist veterans to become stably housed in our communities.” said Chad Chesire, SSVF Program Director. “Through a partnership with the Houston County Human Needs Coalition and the Macon Bibb Homeless Coalition, it is our mission to help homeless veterans find homes and to allow them to become self-sufficient.”

Since 2014, Volunteers of America Southeast, has operated the SSVF program in Georgia, providing services to approximately 250 veterans and their families each year.

However, this program is not only about material comforts. According to a 2016 report prepared by VOA, the majority of veterans who participated in the SSVF program reported a positive increase in quality of life. Chasire confirmed the study’s results, stating that, in addition to the housing and employment benefits, many veterans like Ruben Johnson reconnect with family and recommit themselves to their faith.

Today, Mr. Johnson has conquered his addiction and is no longer homeless. With the help of his family, he is looking forward to what his future has in store. If you would like to assist in the journey of veterans like Ruben Johnson, please visit voase.org.

