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# VETERAN'S DAY Special Edition



**Black Girl in  
Suburbia**  
*Screening with  
local filmmaker to  
spark a dialogue*  
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# The Portland Observer 45

'City of Roses'



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PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jerry Phillips (left) receives housing services as the Transition Projects in Old Town Portland with the help of fellow veteran turned mentor Kepha Israel.

# Veterans Helping Veterans

## Gains made in finding homes for those on the out

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A push to get all veterans in the Portland area housed by the end of the year is being felt across the city. With less than 50 days to reach the city's goal of getting every homeless veteran off the street and into housing, men and woman at the Transition Projects are spending this Veteran's Day following up with clients and counting heads.

Kepha Israel, a veteran who was once a Transition Projects client, is now a mentor for the non-profit organization. He spends a decent amount of time at the homeless provider's Old Town location, near the Bud Clark Commons apartments, where he leads support groups for many

returning soldiers and other people trying to rehabilitate and stabilize their lives.

Right now, a walk-in veteran can expect a 2 to 3 week wait for a bed at most. Alex Glover, the Transition Projects' director of veteran services and a 2009 Navy veteran himself, says the waits have gotten better and there are times where clients can get in more quickly.

There are certainly obstacles, however, to keeping veterans permanently housed, with the many health and economic issues that can face homeless veterans, like post traumatic stress disorders, physical disabilities, anxiety, depression, and gaps in employment history.

"They've got these challenges, it's true, but we've got to focus on how to resolve or deal with those challeng-

es," says Israel of the long-term goals in keeping veterans housed. "We teach them how to make reasonable accommodation requests, we give them renter's classes, we give them a chance to talk to each other about their feelings and experiences."

Glover and Israel explained how anyone can walk and make use of Transition Projects' Rent Well classes, which go for six weeks and give graduates a certificate that shows landlords they have spent time learning about the renting process. The program can guarantee a rental payment in case of an unexpected struggle during the early stages of tenancy.

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