**STEP UP SUCCESS STORY:** Preston W. Wilcox, Jr.

Preston W. Wilcox, Jr., never thought he would end up experiencing homelessness. Mr. Wilcox, a Vietnam Veteran who served in the Army as a communications specialist, had a 38-year career as a registered nurse.

Mr. Wilcox had nowhere to go. He ended up living at a transitional shelter for Veterans in South Los Angeles for seven months. Now in his own home at Building 209, Mr. Wilcox is working on his own recovery from being a co-dependent caregiver. He is taking better care of himself and can finally sleep peacefully, in his own home.

He moved in with his cousin. He paid his way financially by performing chores such as driving her kids to and from school, cooking and cleaning. He describes the situation as abusive, but he endured it until the day she came to him and told him he needed to move out.

**PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

The #1 requested supportive service...

by the program members and LAPD. Artist Valerie Rose, with members of the Police Activities League Hollywood and LAPD Hollywood, collaborated on the design to send a loving message out to all. Tenants of Michael’s Village were asked for feedback and the design amended per their suggestions. The mural represents community, compassion, and a bright future. Tenants from Michael’s Village and volunteers from Arts Bridging the Gap painted for several hours to finish the project.

“We were excited to bring this mural to the Step Up Community, to share and spread that message of love,” said Georgia Van Cuylenburg (pictured above left), Arts Bridging the Gap volunteer.

**A SENSE OF BELONGING**

Mutuality, safety, and respect...

Mr. Wilcox was in a motorcycle accident that damaged both of his knees. Then, his knees were shattered when a delivery truck crashed into him while driving. He was transported to the VA hospital for urgent care. Because Mr. Wilcox's leg was infected with MRSA he underwent a voluntary amputation rather than risk an embolism.

Step Up on Vine was featured in LAfoods.com’s 5 Urban Farms Making a Difference in Los Angeles, written by Aira Pamintaun. With a solar-powered, LEED Platinum-certified building and its Urban Rooftop Garden (pictured above with SUOV resident Leon R.), Step Up on Vine is making strides towards true sustainable living. The aeroponic rooftop tower farm is one of the most resource-efficient ways to produce food, taking 90% less space and using 98% less water, nourishing plants with only a nutrient-laden mist. The Urban Rooftop Garden is part of Step Up’s Vocational program and the produce is used in daily meal preparation in the kitchen of SUOV in Hollywood and Step Up on Second in Santa Monica. To read the article please visit: https://lafood.com/5-urban-farms-making-a-difference-in-los-angeles/