

Stand Down San Diego

Giving a Hand Up to Our Homeless Veterans

Healing Touch Program Offered Team Healing

July 2011

Balboa Park



In 1981, a few Viet Nam veterans in San Diego decided it was time to support veterans who were homeless; who were often shunned by society and finding services that were often unavailable to them. Those few veterans created what is known today as the “Stand-Down”.

In July of each year, three days are set aside in the Balboa Park region to offer a **hand up** not a **hand out**. A bivouac tent city was setup to house 2000 homeless veterans from previous wars. For those three days veterans are able to sleep on a cot, receive a bath, a haircut, clean clothes, 3 meals a day, counseling, job search advice, legal assistance, dental and medical services and C.A.M. (Complimentary Alternative Medicine). Over the past two years, the C.A.M. tent has become larger than the medical tent. The C.A.M. tent offered: Chiropractic services, acupuncture, Reiki, massage therapy and Healing Touch.

Healing Touch was provided through a partnership with LightBridge Hospice and Palliative Care, Kennon S Shea and Associates, San Diego Health Care Association and the Healing Touch Program™.

Tauna Austin, MS, CRC, Program Manager Integrative Therapies with LightBridge Hospice and Palliative Care did a fantastic job coordinating the event. Several LightBridge staff members and hospice volunteers, including Steve Anderson, HTCP, RN, offered their time and energy to make the event a memorable experience for the homeless veterans on Friday and Saturday. People who represented other organizations: Kathy Allan, RN HTCP/I with the Healing Touch Program™ and her recent Level 3 graduates, Gwenmarie Hilleary NHA, R.N. HT Level 1 student represented the San Diego Health Care Association and Ed Long, Culture Change Liaison, HT Level 3 student represented Kennon S Shea and Associates and the San Diego Health Care Association.

There was an expectation that we would encounter some challenging behaviors based on the losses incurred by the men and women who have fought in our wars and subsequently became homeless. As it turned out, this was not the case. In almost every instance, appreciation, praise and thankfulness was extended to the Healing Touch volunteers. Those of us who participated in this year’s “Stand Down” will not soon forget how gratifying and rewarding the experience was for each of us.