



# PRINCE HOME

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## My Experience *By: Jeff Gouin*



My name is Jeffrey, and I'm an alcoholic. I need to remind myself that every day so I don't forget. I've gone from the penthouse to the outhouse, Park Avenue to park benches. In case you haven't figured it out I struggle with alcohol, and drinking is my down fall.

I've been in and out of a bunch of halfway houses over the past 20 yrs. About 5 year ago I heard of this place called Prince Homeless and Disabled Program. Prince Home is a program for homeless and disabled veterans; so I decided to check it out. Being at Prince was a nice vacation from the city and the bottle. Prince Home is nestled within a quiet community which allowed me the opportunity to clear my head. Initially, I struggled with the concept of working on me. The Prince Home staff has a motto – 'if you're always doing what's comfortable; then you'll always get the same results.' I'm no exception. In 2013, I moved out prematurely and was quickly drunk and homeless again. In 2014, after only being gone less than two years I returned to Prince Home and repeated this cycle again with the same results. Fast forward to November 2016, I called Prince Home again and I talked to Mr. Lewis the Program Supervisor and was told that there was an opening; but I would have to go into a 30 day treatment program first. So November 15, 2016, I checked myself into Jesse Brown VA for detox and treatment. On December 22, 2016, I reentered the Prince Home and have been clean and sober since. I should probably take time to mention the staff, since I don't do anything at Prince without their help. The staff at the Prince Home are as professional as you can get and totally dedicated to the mission statement of Prince Home. The staff will do whatever it takes

to help the veterans as long as the staff isn't working harder than the veteran.

I attend several different groups every week, and I have learned much about myself and how I can cope with life on life's terms. Since being vested in my treatment this time; I've recognized I have anger issues. I've started utilizing strategies such as: breathing techniques, stopping and taking time to assess situations. Being opened minded to looking at the situation differently to identify what role I might play in the situation. I also attend another group that gives me the opportunity to express traumatic events that have occurred in my life without being judged. One of the things I have learned during this group is I'm not the only person that these things have happened to. It's great to know there is a support system of other veterans that have endured hardships and we can provide encouraging and positive feedback to each other.

Here I am, at the age of 55 and I'm finally starting to grow up. I can only be angry with myself for allowing my addiction to control my life. I have made a commitment to myself not to leave the Prince Home until I have worked on my demons that have caused so much turmoil in my life. This time, I have set some realistic goals for myself and have been moving in the right direction to accomplish my goals. I have no intentions on leaving the Prince Home until I see my dreams coming to fruition.

I recently applied and have interviewed for employment with the State of Illinois and I'm hopeful that I will be gainfully employed soon. So as I continue my life's journey I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Prince Home staff for always being there to help me find hope and faith again. The Prince Home and its staff has really been a blessing for me.

*For each newsletter, we ask a resident to write about their personal story. This is one veteran's story and how the Prince Home staff and program assisted them. We thank you for sharing your success story!*

*If you would like to find out more about Prince contact the home at (815) 468-6581 Extension 213 and ask for Mr. Wali Lewis.*

## Veterans Attend White Sox Game

Compliments of the Chicago White Sox the veterans and staff of the Prince Home attended a Chicago White Sox game this past April. The White Sox played the Kansas City Royals. One of the highlights of the day was when TSGT Donnie Novotny of the US Air Force was honored during the 7th inning. To top it off, the Sox won!



## Student Veteran Center Donates Gift Cards to Residents



On April 13, 2017 the members of the Student Veteran Center at Prairie State College visited with the residents at our Prince Home. The student veterans fellowshipped with the veterans and had a great time. In addition to the visit each resident was personally thanked for their service and presented with a \$15 gift card. Our veterans were very appreciative of their kind gesture.

## Red Cross Donates New T-Shirts to Prince Home

Thank you Red Cross! The Red Cross donated a brand new t-shirt to each veteran at Prince Home. Each veteran was presented with the shirt and they were grateful for the kind gesture. The Red Cross has provided training and held groups on Anger Management, Trauma, and Money Management in the past for our residents.



## Prince Home's First Annual Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament



The Prince Home held its 1st annual Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament. It was a great peer bonding event! It was highly competitive and in the end Jeff Gouin was the last man standing! **Congratulations Mr. Gouin on your win!**

## Adopt-A-Soldier Does Italian Dinner at Prince



Adopt A Soldier prepared and served an Italian dinner for the veterans at Prince Home on April 18, 2017. The residents enjoyed the homemade mostaccioli and garlic bread. A big thanks goes out to Sue Wackerlin and everyone over at Adopt-A-Soldier! They are always doing something positive for the veterans at Prince Home.

## Illinois State Representatives Lindsey Parkhurst and Margo McDermed visits the Prince Home



On February 7, 2017 Illinois State Representatives Lindsay Parkhurst (R-79th) and Margo McDermed (R-37th) and members of their staffs stopped by the Prince Home for a visit and a tour. They met with the veterans and staff, discussed issues and answered all questions. Both were pleased with the services that are provided at the Prince Home and vowed to lend their continued support to the program. The Prince Home is always excited and honored when any of our legislators take time out of their busy schedule to visit and show their support.

*(L-R) Danel Peters (Administrative Assistant), Wali Lewis (Program Supervisor), Representative Parkhurst, Rosemary Irons-Lewis (Rehab Counselor), Representative McDermed, and Lester Robertson (Program Director)*

## VFW Post #311 makes a Splash With Donation

The VFW Post #311 donated 45 cases of water to the Prince Home on April 13, 2017. Post #311 has been a great supporter of Prince Home since 2008 when the program took in its first resident. The Post has also donated baked goods and toiletries to the home. It is because of organizations like this Post that allows us to help so many veterans.

*L-R: Rosemary Irons-Lewis (Counselor), Walter Sanders (VFW #311), and Wali Lewis (Program Supervisor)*



# Prince Home Wish list

The Prince Home attempts to provide an array of personal care items as a means for our veterans to regain and maintain dignity, and as a necessity for those who, in finding their way to an independent and productive life, are employed or are seeking employment.

Your gifts bring added relief from the struggles and social indignities that many who come to our door must struggle with on a daily basis.

- Coffee
- Powder coffee creamer
- Body wash
- Electric can opener
- Set of Pots and pans
- Exercise bands
- Hand held vacuum
- Air fresheners (solid) 50
- Microwave
- 15- gift card (any domination)
- Wii games
- New coffee/end tables
- New art work
- Floor mats for kitchen
- Lamps (large or medium)
- 2 Area rugs 7x10
- New living Room furniture (durable, sofa, love seat, chair)
- 15 chair cushions
- Forever stamps
- Light bulbs
- AA/AAA batteries
- Comforters (twin size)
- Sheet sets (twin size)

**Thank you for your consideration of these items.**

**We will be happy to provide you with a tax-deductible receipt for your donation.**

**Please call with any questions or to schedule a delivery 815-468-6581 x214**

## Thank you!

*Prince Home's residents and staff would like to thank all of the countless community organizations that continue to show their support of Prince through their food, clothing, and monetary donations. It is greatly appreciated!*

The Prince Home at Manteno is a program for homeless and disabled veterans co-located with the Veterans' Home in Manteno, Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Prince Home at Manteno is a residential program for homeless and disabled Veterans. The facility is wheelchair assessable, and provides residential housing for eligible male and female Veterans.. Our Staff is proficient in addressing a multitude of challenges including but not limited to, homelessness, PTSD, sobriety, self-esteem, and hopelessness.

The Prince Home is located in rural Manteno, Illinois, just 40 miles south of Chicago.

It shares grounds with the Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno.



Illinois Department of  
**Veterans' Affairs**

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