

From a Devastating Break-in to Building a Business

Housing, and donors like you, helped a mother and Veteran find a place to grow

Tea and her son spent years without permanent, stable housing. As a Veteran, Tea sustained a traumatic brain injury and lived with PTSD. When her son was just a year old, Tea lost her apartment in New Jersey. Not long later, she was robbed while attempting to move into a new place.

Today, thanks to your generosity, Tea has been in her HousingPlus apartment for eight years. It has given her a place to raise her son through his teenage years and into young adulthood. Now, at age 23, Tea's son has completed a training course to become a security guard and started a new job in late September.

Having a home helped Tea begin to think of her destiny differently. She and her wife, Mars, realized they were losing time with their kids due to their hectic schedules in the restaurant industry. Mars has a son who is four years younger than Tea's.

At HousingPlus, Tea received assistance that led to her and Mars opening their own business called "Tea on Mars." The two business owners have focused on selling handmade items by Indigenous and African creators, including products such as waistbeads, sage smudges, and crystals.

Tea on Mars started as a street vending business, but they plan to move to a primarily online shop. In the coming months, Tea and Mars also hope to be able to travel to meet some of the creators of the goods they are selling.

Tea recognizes that the help she found at HousingPlus influenced her life. "Everything you need help with, they have solutions to move forward. Not just for me as a Veteran, but as a woman...It's a safe space, everyone is here to genuinely help you."

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Tea (left) and wife Mars

Serving Veterans at HousingPlus

HousingPlus has been serving Veterans since 2011. We are now the largest provider of permanent supportive housing to female Veterans in New York City with 70 units. We will be dedicating additional units specifically for female Veterans in our new housing developments going forward.