

Testimony to House Human Services Committee

Vermont Housing & Conservation Coalition Day, January 30, 2020

Chuck Frazier, Resident of Allard Square, South Burlington

Good morning, my name is Chuck Frazier, and I am a resident of Allard Square in South Burlington. I grew up in Milton. In 2007 my mother died, and her home, where I lived, was put into a trust. In 2013, the trust fund ran out and I had to leave my home. For the next 2 years I lived in my car. The Milton police knew me and would check on me from time to time to see if I was okay.

My sister helped me find a place to stay at a shelter in Barre, where I lived for a year. I had two heart attacks while I was living at the shelter.

I wanted to get closer to home, so the staff at the shelter helped me find a place at ANEW place in Burlington, where I lived for the next 1 ½ years. At ANEW place, I had help from a case manager. I took two classes before I moved out, one in housing responsibilities, and one in budgeting. I got a call from Eric at Cathedral Square, letting me know I was selected for an apartment at Allard Square, which was just opening. I moved in on October 29, 2018. I got to pick out my apartment.

I love my home. I love the apartment, and having my own place. I love the people. And I like the staff here. Kat, the SASH Coordinator, is helping me to quit smoking. I used to smoke 1 ½ packs per day, and I'm now down to 8 cigarettes per day. Kat works in the building, and runs a smoking cessation program, through SASH. I couldn't have quit smoking when I was homeless. It was too hard. I enjoy other SASH activities too, all of them happen in the building with the other residents. I also work with Anne, the Wellness Nurse, who works in the building.

At Allard Square, I like to volunteer. I helped build the garden planters that residents use. I also shovel the sidewalks when it snows.

Recently Kat asked me to be the building's on-call person, so I have a key and get a discount on my rent each month in exchange for my on-call responsibility.

I have a rental assistance voucher, so my rent is affordable. This is important because I am on disability.

I sleep and eat better now that I have a home of my own. I feel a lot better. When I lived in my car I smelled the gas fumes and it was hard to sleep or eat well.

The case manager that I have from ANEW Place will continue to work with me for 2 years after I left the shelter to move into my apartment. She helps me with budgeting and other things I need help with. When I moved into Allard Square, I was able to buy a new car. I will finish the ANEW program on October 29, 2021, which will be the two year anniversary of being in my new home. Then I will get some money back that they put into an account for me, from part of my rent when I lived at ANEW.

I hope you will support more housing like Allard Square, and services like SASH that are offered where people live. Housing with services help people like me who have had challenging times in their lives, to have better lives.

Thank you.