

Veterans Build Week of Service

Serving Those Who Served

Hector Rodriguez U. S. Army Veteran



Hector Rodriguez

On most days you will find Hector Rodriguez fishing in Tampa's beautiful waterways, preferring to spend his time in the outdoors. "Anything I can do to keep stress away is beneficial." Hector said. Stress has been an ongoing issue for him of late.

Hector's military career spanned over eight years starting in 1960 when he joined the National Guard in Puerto Rico, where he worked as Military Police. He then joined the Army in 1961, spending the remainder of his time there until he left the service in 1968. While in the Army, he spent 23 months in Germany. "I loved the time I was in," Hector remarks. "But I didn't want to stay." Although his experience was good, Hector never believed in having weapons or firearms and prides himself on that belief today.

Hector is one of the many Veterans, living in Hillsborough County who struggles with housing. This is not a need for new housing, which is what most people envision of Habitat, but the maintenance of the affordable home that he and his wife Gilda Sella share in Gibsonton, FL. Like many Veterans in our state Hector lives on a fixed income and has suffered age related issues that keep him from completing the necessary work needed to age safely in his home. One of his main needs is a new roof.

Hector was referred to Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County's Veterans Initiative in a way that many Veterans with housing needs are, through Hillsborough County Code Enforcement. HCCE has a special program referred to as Operation Code Vet. This program allows HCCE to partner with agencies such as Habitat Hillsborough to help provide volunteers, equipment, and resources needed to fix home and yard issues that can lead to fines.

On November 5, 2022, Habitat Hillsborough, in partnership with our Veterans Build Week of Service Honor Partner Sponsor CAE, will kick-off our Veteran Build Week of Service by completing much needed demolition and clean up service on Hector Rodriguez's home. This is another step in the process of completing his roof repair. CAE is not only funding this home repair but is also providing the volunteers to help complete the work. The Home Depot Foundation Critical Repair Program is funding the roof replacement work as well.

Habitat Hillsborough's Veterans Build Week of Service is an annual event where we partner with volunteers and corporate sponsors to help a Veteran, Veteran Family, or Veteran Organization through our Home Preservation program. If you would like information on how you or your organization can get involved, please visit our Veterans Initiative page <https://www.habitathillsborough.org/news-and-events/veterans-initiative/> or contact Melissa Crowther at MCrowther@habitathillsborough.org.