



# Volunteer of the Month

## September 2016

*Richie Roberts*



Richie Roberts is the Buddy-to-Buddy Program's September 2016 Volunteer of the Month! Since he trained into the program in December of 2015, he has been a dedicated and reliable at-large volunteer who goes above and beyond to help veterans and doesn't shy away from dealing with some very tough, complex issues.

Richie served in the Michigan Army National Guard from 2005-2007 and then in the Marines from 2007-2013. He was a driver who hauled heavy equipment in the MIARNG's 1461<sup>st</sup> and a supply clerk for Marine Aviation Logistics Support. Richie was drawn to volunteering for Buddy-to-Buddy because he wants to help others who are dealing with the same issues he

struggled with. He has gone through the VA's Homeless Veterans Program, and the experience has made him particularly knowledgeable when it comes to assisting homeless veterans. It is not uncommon for program staff to seek out his expertise when working to assist service members and veterans experiencing homelessness or at risk of it.

He is currently working on an Associate's degree at Washtenaw in Human Services/Social Work and a post-certificate in Addiction Studies. After completing the program at WCC, Richie plans to transfer to Eastern Michigan University to earn a Bachelor of Social Work and Psychology. After that, he would like to attend graduate school to study the psychology of addiction, with the ultimate goal of working in mental health for the VA. Richie embodies the spirit of Buddy-to-Buddy, giving back to others and using his knowledge and connections to get veterans connected to care. Of the program, he says, "I love teaching and helping people, and I cannot ever see myself not being a part of Buddy-to-Buddy."

When he's not in class, studying, or assisting other veterans, Richie enjoys riding around in his Jeep, visiting his young nieces and family in Jackson, spending time with friends, and learning American Sign Language.

**Thank you for tireless commitment to helping other veterans, Richie!**