

HOME FOR EVERY AMERICAN

INNOVATOR OF SPECIAL MERIT - EMPLOYMENT AWARD:

The Doe Fund Founder and President George McDonald

“Work works.” This simple motto is the core of the Ready, Willing, & Able employment, housing, and recovery program which reaches single men in New York City who have long histories of homelessness, addiction, and incarceration. As described by Founder and President George McDonald, candidates for RWA have to be ready to change their lives, willing to follow rules, and able to work. The "men in blue," as program enrollees are called for their blue uniforms, work hard in a program of employment, counseling, recovery, and community.

Mr. McDonald first began to develop the idea for Ready, Willing & Able more than fifteen years ago, setting out to prove that a formerly homeless person could create a viable existence if he were able to obtain even a minimum wage low skill job, rent an affordable room, and stay off drugs. The Doe Fund takes as its mission to develop and implement cost-effective, holistic programs that meet the needs of a diverse population working to break the cycles of homelessness, addiction, and criminal recidivism. All of The Doe Fund's programs and innovative business ventures ultimately strive to help homeless and formerly incarcerated individuals achieve permanent self-sufficiency.

The results are quantifiable. RWA has successfully graduated over 3,180 individuals to date with key metrics of success measured as housing stability, employment, and sobriety. In 2007, RWA's graduation rate in its residential programs was over 60%, and the 6-month success rate was 65%. For those coming out of jail or prison in a residential facility or the day program, the graduation rate was over 70%, and the 6-month success rate is over 60%.

RWA's "men in blue" operate its community maintenance and cleaning services through the work of more than 265 trainees who take on the daily challenge of improving more than 160 miles of New York City's streets. More than 200 participants have completed vocational training in areas including culinary arts, computer skills, and an in-house extermination service that is one of several revenue generating micro-businesses which help raise funds for the operation of programs and provide valuable vocational training opportunities. Average wages for graduates are \$9.94 hourly. Top employment partners include such major businesses as Aramark.