



Testimonial of Stay at Cali Palms

[REDACTED]
To: Sebastian Rucci <sebastian@caliparc.com>

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a 28 year old decorated marine corps combat veteran who was injured in combat in Afghanistan. I have two years of college toward a degree in science.

Due to the traumas, both physical and mental, that occurred overseas, I was medically retired from the United States Marine Corps. While being treated by the military as well as Veterans Affairs, I was placed on opiates amongst other medications for pain management and mental management. After years of being placed on these medications, I became addicted to opiates. This addiction only became worse when the opioid epidemic arose and I, along with many other veterans, were taken abruptly off our pain medications as the VA was no longer going to treat chronic pain with opioids. Basically this left me to fend for myself in order to avoid being in pain all day every day. At that point I was forced to go to the streets in an attempt to find opioids. This began to ruin my wellbeing both physically and mentally even more so than it already was. It led to me doing whatever was necessary to stay out of pain which resulted in things such as the use of heroin, being that it was the cheaper alternative and I was unable to afford any other option. As you can imagine this only worsened my addiction and eventually led to overdose and trouble with the law. My life that I worked so hard to build correctly was crumbling all around me.

After trying on multiple occasions to fix this problem on my own, I finally decided it was time to reach out for help. I was introduced by my wounded warrior representative to Sebastian and his program at California Palms.

Sebastian and his staff welcomed me with open arms as I traveled all the way from North Carolina to Youngstown Ohio. I was approved by my insurance by the VA to stay for the full 90 day treatment that California Palms has to offer. When I arrived at the facility, it was not at all what I had built up in my head to be a negative experience. The environment was very relaxed and had many amazing options as far as treatment. There was nothing Mr. Rucci was not willing to try in an attempt to help further the treatment of the patients in the Palms. Things such as fitness classes, yoga, acupuncture, meditation, art therapy, tae kwon do, tai chi, boxing are examples of the extra curricular type treatments that were available to me on top of the more conventional therapies with trained, licensed therapists who ran group and one on one sessions.

These treatments and the environment in which they were applied led me from being a patient who walked in the door feeling hopeless and wanting to leave as soon as possible, to a patient who stayed almost 10 months and left a new man with a new lease on life. I now have a place of my own and have been clean going on 14 months. The friends made there, to include Mr. Rucci and colleagues like Elizabeth Beckly are people that I now consider family. Without the program created by Sebastian Rucci and the loyal members of his staff, I couldn't tell you where I would be in life except for that it wouldn't be doing as well as I am today. Programs like this should be given the full support of the state and any faction necessary to be built, granted licenses and expanded, as they will save an unimaginable amount of veteran lives that so desperately need to be saved. These are men and women who went to hell and back in support of this country and it would be nothing short of a travesty to take away that possibility. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Corporal USMC