



PRESS RELEASE

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Coalition to Salute America's Heroes Awards \$5,000 Grant for Commissioning of Wounded Warrior Sculpture

"Heroic Challenges" to serve as inspiration for wounded veterans undergoing rehab

PRESCOTT, AZ (July 8, 2013) – The [Coalition to Salute America's Heroes](#) (Coalition), a leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to rebuilding the lives of severely wounded veterans of the War on Terror, today awarded a \$5,000 grant to fund the design and construction of a bronze sculpture to be placed in an outdoor recreation facility at the Prescott VA hospital.

The larger-than-life sculpture, "Heroic Challenges," by renowned artist Clyde "Ross" Morgan, will depict a runner crossing the finish line with a look of determination and exaltation on his face. The winner of this race, however, is distinguished by a prosthetic leg, a tracheotomy scar on his neck, several shrapnel wounds and burn scars on one arm.

"Sometimes the easiest challenge for a wounded veteran is doing without a part of their physical body, although those of us who have not gone through this will ever understand just how difficult this can be," said Morgan, while discussing his vision for the artwork. "What's not immediately realized, even by the veteran, is the amount of psychological and physical damage one suffers due to the concussions involved in the wounding to begin with. As the NFL is finally identifying in its veteran players, concussions can cause all kinds of brain impairments, from dizziness, to depression, to an inability to cope with life at all."

This is the second round of funding the Coalition has made to the VA hospital in Prescott. The organization previously awarded a \$10,000 grant toward the construction of the \$125,000 multi-purpose recreational facility, which is designed to benefit long-term patients undergoing rehabilitation and other medical care at the hospital. The latest \$5,000 donation will offset some of the estimated initial costs of the sculpture project, which is being organized by the Arizona Military Order of Devil Dogs Charities, a part of the Marine Corps League. Morgan is providing his services for the project, which will have an estimated value of nearly \$200,000 upon completion. He will use the sale of the small maquettes to help fund the large sculpture.

"The Prescott VA provides life-enriching care to thousands of combat-wounded veterans, and we are proud to have supported the construction of its sports park," said David Walker, President & CEO of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. "The sculpture project, while not a conventional type of activity we fund, is uniquely worthy both for its

inspirational message and the overwhelming benevolence of the artist. We believe this is an outstanding investment that will be enthusiastically embraced by the brave men and women served by the hospital.”

The model for this sculpture, Alex Minsky, was chosen for the way he has chosen to deal with his severe injuries. Alex lost his right leg to an IED while serving in the Marine Corps in Afghanistan. He spent 47 days in a coma before emerging with a traumatic brain injury. Then he was faced with the challenge of relearning how to talk, think and function. He also had to learn to live life without his right leg and spent months in healing, rehab and eventual use of a prosthetic.

In his efforts to rebuild his body, Alex began exercising and working out in the gym. He also suffered from depression and, like so many, tried to cover it up with alcohol. With the help of AA, he was able to overcome that challenge. Despite having a 100% disability, Alex knew there was more he could accomplish. At the suggestion of some fellow gym rats, he began pursuing work as a model. Specifically, underwear modeling. His success in that endeavor has generated significant media attention, including a recent appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Alex’s hope is that his story can serve as inspiration for others facing similar challenges.

“Alex has already been an inspiration to countless wounded veterans and others that have been encouraged by his refusal to be defeated by his injuries,” said Walker. “We can’t think of a better model for this sculpture, which will enable Alex to motivate millions more people for generations to come.”

Morgan’s goal is to have a miniature version of “Heroic Challenges,” if not the full-size bronze, complete in time for the dedication ceremonies for the sports facility at the Prescott VA scheduled for August 17, 2013.

About the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes

The Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes, based in Leesburg, VA, has provided an invaluable lifeline to thousands of America’s wounded veterans since its establishment in 2004. The Coalition is distinguished from other veteran-focused organizations by its direct financial assistance to America’s wounded heroes. Its Emergency Financial Aid program has stopped foreclosure proceedings on veterans’ homes and kept their vehicles from being repossessed. The organization regularly provides gift checks to cover meals, medical and utility bills, clothing, car repairs and even baby diapers.

For more information on the Coalition, and to learn how you can support its mission, visit www.saluteheroes.org.

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