



The Road to Recovery Report

An Update for Supporters of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

Volume 56 ★ February 2016

*Providing Emergency Aid
to Troops Severely Disabled
in the War on Terror*



The difference an Easter gift can make

“Winters are historically a tough time for us and money is always tight. Your gift really does brighten our day as it will help give my family a beautiful Easter Dinner.”

— Sgt. Curtis M.
U.S. Army (Ret.)

“Words cannot express the amount of joy and relief [your Easter gift] brought to my husband and my family. We truly were in need of this support ... To see the relief wash over my husband's face and know he was remembered ... this just touched me in so many ways.”

For the families of disabled heroes like Jamie W., spring can be a time of strain and anxiety instead of joyful rebirth. (You can just hear the stress dissolving in the grateful words above, written to us by Jamie's wife Della after they received a \$60 Easter meals check last year.)

That's why I'm so grateful that every

spring, faithful supporters like you go the extra mile to make sure our wounded warriors and their families can enjoy a special Easter meal just like the family of Juan and Christy Perez shown above.

So I'm hoping this Easter I can count on your generosity once again.

Inside your supporter-exclusive newsletter you'll find updates on exciting Coalition programs and events. I hope you're encouraged to see the good you're doing for disabled War on Terror veterans struggling to get through each day. They fought to protect us from Islamic extremists. Now they need our help.

Inside your Road to Recovery Report:

Easter Message from President David Walker
page 2

Your Coalition in Action: Recent News & Events
page 4

Salute to a Special Hero
page 5

Have You Joined Partners for Heroes Yet?
page 6

By the Numbers: How Every Dollar Helps
page 7

The Difference Your Thanksgiving and Christmas Gifts Made
page 8



Letter from President David Walker

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Dear friend of our disabled heroes,

As I prepare to spend Easter with my loved ones, my thoughts and my prayers are with the brave men and women who were disabled while fighting Islamic extremists and serving in the War on Terror.

It's heartbreaking for me to realize that while you and I celebrate Easter and enjoy the rebirth of spring in our beautiful country, many of these heroes may be going hungry or on the verge of losing their homes.

Their sacrifices, day in and day out, are the reason we live in safety and freedom today. So it's unthinkable that we could forget them this Easter as they struggle just to get through each day.

All our military veterans deserve our thanks and our gratitude.

But many of the heroes who were disabled while battling the terrorists overseas need more than just a heartfelt prayer for recovery or a word of thanks.

They need a helping hand from a grateful American as they struggle to get back on their feet after being paralyzed, losing a limb, or returning home from war with debilitating post-traumatic stress.

Time and time again you've shown yourself to be just such an American – a faithful friend who's willing to give generously to make sure our heroes don't go hungry, lose their homes, or face other frightening financial disasters.

I'm so grateful for your generosity, and I know the families you've helped are too. Thank you for making sure they have a roof over their heads and heat in their homes during the cold winter months – and hot food on their tables on Easter Sunday.

Happy Easter to you and your family from our family at the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

Gratefully yours,

David Walker
President & CEO





Here's how your gift changes lives

Your gift provides Easter & other holiday meals to veteran families

Coalition's Easter Meals Project and Thanksgiving and Christmas Meals Projects provide thousands of severely disabled troops with \$60 each so they can enjoy a special dinner during the holidays like you and I will.

As a faithful Coalition supporter, you know our disabled veterans wait an average of 10 months (and sometimes longer) for their first government disability check. Often

their injuries are so debilitating their spouses have to quit their jobs to take care of them – leaving their family with no income at all.

These families struggle to put *any* food on the table, let alone a special holiday dinner with all the trimmings. Meals projects are just another way Coalition donors' gifts show our severely disabled veterans that we remember them and appreciate their sacrifices.

We concluded another successful Thanksgiving Meals Project this past holiday season, thanks to the generous giving of Coalition donors like you. Look for some heartwarming thank-you letters on the back page of this newsletter!

And we've kicked off our [2016 Easter Meals Project](#). Read more about it on pages one and two of your newsletter, and look for important updates and opportunities to help – coming to your mailbox soon!

Your gift rescues disabled heroes from homelessness and hunger

The Emergency Financial Aid program is at the heart of our mission to provide direct assistance to our veterans severely wounded in the War on Terror – with your generous help.

As stated above, a sluggish bureaucracy has our disabled veterans waiting an average of 10 months (and often longer) for their first government disability check.

But for a disabled hero who is unable to work, that wait spells disaster for their family – especially when spouses often have to leave their jobs to become full-time caregivers for their disabled loved ones.

When you donate to the Emergency Financial Aid Program, your gift goes to work quickly to help a disabled veteran keep a roof

over his or her family's head and food on the table. Sometimes he will use it for medical bills; sometimes she will pay overdue utility bills.

But no matter what the emergency, you can rest assured that your gift is drastically changing the life of a wounded hero who might otherwise go homeless, hungry, or suffer some other frightening hardship.

Your holiday generosity gives Christmas presents to struggling veterans' families

The Coalition's Secret Santa Project provides \$500 Christmas gift checks so our troops who were maimed, burned, blinded, or suffered other severe injuries in the War on Terror can give their families a few Christmas presents.

The severely disabled troops and veterans your Coalition gifts reach are

in financially dire straits. Many are choosing between keeping their homes, paying the electric bill, and putting food on the table. They certainly don't have money for extras like Christmas gifts.

That's why we created the Secret Santa Project and the Christmas Angel Project. The Coalition – and

our generous donors, like you – couldn't stand the thought of children being heartbroken on Christmas morning, finding no toys "from Santa" under the tree because their disabled parent couldn't afford Christmas presents *and* groceries. In fact, we just concluded another successful Secret Santa and Christmas Angel Project!



Your Coalition is committed to doing all we can to change the lives of our nation’s severely disabled War on Terror veterans. To further that mission we’re constantly working to raise awareness about the issues they face and reaching out to help them in the community.

Coalition nominated at inaugural Veterans Awards

On Veterans Day Coalition President David Walker and Field Representative Jil Hinds represented the Coalition at the first ever Veterans Awards, where we were nominated in a category focusing on our support of female homeless veterans.



Coalition holds event at local veteran-managed brew pub



We love getting out into the community to meet other veterans and support our heroes. Recently our team was on hand at the incredible Mad Horse Brew Pub in Lovettsville, Virginia, whose managing partner, Michael Stephenson, is a U.S. Army veteran who cares deeply for the cause.

Coalition represents disabled veterans in Hollywood Christmas Parade

The Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes was proud to participate in the 84th Annual Hollywood Christmas Parade in Los Angeles, California on November 29. Here are just a few of the photos from that special event, including one of us wrangling with a spectacular “Grinch” balloon.





Coalition aid “a breath of fresh air” to disabled veteran struggling to feed his family

A tour in Iraq and three tours in Afghanistan took a psychological toll on disabled veteran Jay Knower, who suffers from survivor’s guilt, post-traumatic stress, and a traumatic brain injury after years of service.

When he returned home from war, Jay struggled to readapt to civilian life. “I have my good times and bad times,” he says. “I still feel like half of my soul’s in Afghanistan. I’m definitely not the same person [my wife] sent on the plane in 2012 but I’m trying really hard. I have my moments where I blow up, and it’s been a rough road but I do try.”

After leaving the Army it took three months for Jay’s disability payments to kick in. His wife had to leave her job to take care of their children and make up for the things Jay’s disabilities kept him from doing around the house. “We struggled,” he says. “We went through Coalition when we were struggling with waiting for money to kick in.”

When Jay, his wife, and their children attended a recent Coalition Road to Recovery Conference, they received a \$500 Christmas gift check. “I wanted to cry,” Jay says. “We’ve been struggling. We don’t have enough money for food and bills. Right now we’re currently about \$400 behind on our cell phone bill and we still are behind on my car payment. That \$500 is going to have to go towards my bills. It’s been a breath of fresh air.”

Jay’s personal road to recovery has been a difficult and rocky one, emotionally *and* financially. He struggles to pay his bills, from cell phones to utility payments, each month. “We barely made it past last month,” he said. “Luckily we had some macaroni and cheese in the cupboards because we didn’t have any food.”

Jay is so grateful to the donors like you who made sure the Coalition could provide emergency financial aid to his family. And he wanted to share this message with those who have given generously to help his family survive. “I would honestly just shake their hand and say that you have no idea all the lives that you’ve touched and that no matter what I’ve done for my country, that the things that they do for us mean just so much more to me.

“We were willing to give our lives for the country but to me what [the donors] do means so much more. It’s great to give everything you have for somebody and come back and know that they appreciate it and that they support us and that they’re helping us get back to that person that we were before.”



Army veteran Jay Knower and his service dog, Tango.

You Tube [YouTube.com/user/SaluteHeroes:](https://www.youtube.com/user/SaluteHeroes)

Tune into our YouTube channel to watch emotional and inspirational firsthand accounts from veterans, their wives, and their children. They want you to know how your generosity changed their lives. Stories like these are what keep us working day in and day out to support America’s disabled heroes.



Have you joined Partners for Heroes yet?

Have you joined the Coalition’s **Partners for Heroes** program yet? It’s a simple way you can make an *even bigger* difference in the lives of suffering severely disabled veterans across our great nation.

Partners for Heroes is our safe and secure monthly giving program – and it has some great benefits that make it as easy as possible to continue your faithful, selfless support for America’s wounded heroes.

- ★ Your monthly donation is conveniently debited from your checking account or charged to your credit card each month, so you don’t have to spend time writing checks or searching for stamps.
- ★ Your monthly giving is tracked, and at the end of the year you will receive a statement of your donations for tax purposes.
- ★ You’ll receive less mail from us – and the money we

save on postage and printing means your gift will go farther each month. (We’ll continue sharing exciting program updates and newsletters like this one.)

- ★ You’re free to cancel your **Partners for Heroes** membership at any time.

Your monthly gift is important in any amount. Because when you’ve lost your legs and can’t work, or your wife quit her job to care for you as you battle post-traumatic stress, every dollar matters. And every moment counts when you’re facing homelessness or your child is going hungry.

So I hope you’ll become a **Partners for Heroes** member today – to help ensure we have the funds we need to provide emergency aid to wounded heroes and their families right away, when they need it most. For more information on how to enroll, please see your enclosed reply form.



Leave a legacy of love for our disabled heroes

“*What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.*”

— Pericles, Greek Orator

By remembering the Coalition in your will or insurance policy, you continue your legacy of service and sacrifice for America’s severely disabled War on Terror troops and veterans for years to come.

For a private and confidential discussion of how to leave the Coalition a charitable bequest, contact:

Mary Price, Donor Relations Manager

Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes

Direct line: (703) 348-9914

Toll Free: (888) 447-2588, Ext. 103

info@saluteheroes.org

The Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes does not provide legal or financial advice to prospective or current donors. Always consult your attorney and financial advisor before making any important decisions regarding your estate.



By the numbers: Your generosity at work

When the Coalition sends you a letter or an email asking for your help, it's often with a sense of urgency – “Won't you give today?” You should know that we employ that same urgency when it comes to helping our heroes. Because when a disabled War on Terror veteran contacts us pleading for help, they're usually in dire straits – just days away from losing their home, or already staring at empty cupboards.

When you send the Coalition a gift, it goes to work right away to help a disabled hero facing disaster. The list below highlights a handful of severely disabled veterans who recently asked us for help – and whose lives you and I changed together.



Gilberto R. from Chino, California suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,500 to buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,500.00

Joe K. of Roscoe, Illinois suffered an arm injury in Afghanistan. He asked for \$1,227.31 to avoid eviction and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,227.31

Nicholas A. from Phoenix, Arizona experienced a traumatic brain injury while serving in Iraq – and needed \$2,734.10 to pay his rent and avert eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,734.10

Keith H. from Fort Campbell, Kentucky suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$611.44 for critical auto expenses.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$611.44

Shakita C. from Chesapeake, Virginia was medically retired after serving in Afghanistan. Her situation was so dire, she called asking for just \$205.23 to pay her overdue electric bill.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$205.23

Michael G. from Las Vegas, Nevada served his country in Iraq – and returned home with PTS. He needed \$2,427.34 to pay desperately overdue utility bills and make car repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,427.34

Gentry R. from Plano, Texas was disabled while serving in Afghanistan. He needed \$1,000 to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,000.00

David A. from Clarksville, Tennessee suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He called in urgent need of \$347.33 to keep his electricity from being shut off.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$347.33

See page 6 of your newsletter to learn more about an easy way you can help make sure we always have the funds on hand to help our desperate heroes right away, when they need it most ... not in days or weeks, when it may be too late.

Reminder: Coalition is a CFC charity!

If you're a federal employee, we'd like to remind you that the Coalition is on the National/International 2016 Combined Federal Campaign Charity List. Selecting the Coalition as your CFC charity is an easy and exciting way to support our disabled heroes!



#12523



Heroes thank YOU for sending Thanksgiving and Christmas meals

This past holiday season, your faithful generosity allowed us to send \$60 gift cards for Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to disabled veterans around the country. And the grateful “thank yous” have been pouring in from heroes whose lives you touched. I hope your heart is warmed as you read these notes from struggling heroes whose holidays you brightened.

“It is difficult to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to YOU for this invaluable gift, but I will do my best. My husband suffers from [PTS] and a TBI and the holidays are always difficult for us. It is difficult for him to be around loud noises and large crowds so we usually spend Thanksgiving at home by ourselves. Because he is rated at 100% disabled and unable to work, finances are tight especially around this time of year and the gift card that your organization sends helps buy our Thanksgiving meal without worry. This year for Thanksgiving, we will be sharing our turkey dinner with two other homeless Veterans that my husband has befriended. While you may have sent us the gift card to feed our family this Thanksgiving, you will also be feeding two other Veterans that would not have had a meal otherwise and you have helped my husband find his calling to help others in need as well. God bless you all for all that you do and have done to help service members and their families.”

— Jake (USMC veteran) & Anna L.

“Your gift to my family could not come in a better time. We are almost out of food and I do not get more money until the first when I get my VA [check]. This gift will help us in getting food for Thanksgiving. I love the military and if I had to do it all over, I would. I love my country. May God bless you.”

— Disabled veteran Fernando R.

“I am a combat veteran, shot at, mortared, rocked, RPG, the enemy threw everything at me but God took care of me so I could defend America. If I had to do it all over again I would because I don’t want the citizens of America in the same situation as the people in Syria. My family and I are very grateful for the Thanksgiving Dinner check you sent us. This is the first time anyone has given us anything for Thanksgiving so thanks from the bottom of our hearts.”

— SFC Sylvester C., U.S. Army

“I just wanted to thank you for the generous gift for my family’s Thanksgiving meal. I was truly worried this year ... that I wouldn’t be able to get much for Thanksgiving, but because of this generous and thoughtful gift I am relieved and so happy that I will be able to get food for the holiday. Getting this in the mail today brought so much relief and happiness. I can’t put into words how much this means to me and my family.”

— Jessica B.

Please consider sharing your e-mail address

By providing your e-mail address on your enclosed newsletter reply form you’ll start receiving thank you notes, photos and updates about how your continued generosity is improving the lives of our disabled heroes and their families.