

2019

Annual Report



ACCREDITED
CHARITY

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LETTER TO SUPPORTERS

"Can anybody remember," asked Ralph Waldo Emerson, "when the times were not hard and the money not scarce?" Last year was a tough one for the Coalition – as it was for most charitable organizations and especially for those like ours that serve military veterans. There is a common misperception that the global war on terror has subsided and that the need to support wounded veterans has dissipated. In reality, our military people are engaged against terrorists around the globe and the bombs continue to explode. Body bags continue to arrive as do injured warriors. Our phones continue to ring with heart-rending pleas for help from service-members dealing with injuries that range from PTSD and TBI's to missing limbs and severe burns. We continue to respond to those calls and will always do so for as long as our supporters are willing and able to keep our doors open.

Our primary focus continues to be the one thing that distinguishes us from other veterans' aid groups – providing direct financial aid to wounded veterans when they are discharged and discover they must wait weeks or months until their pension applications are adjudicated. In the meantime, they must pay the rent, put food on the table and gas in the car. We continue to write those checks in varying amounts depending on need. Usually it's just a few thousand dollars or so, but sometimes more, a lot more. Recently we learned of a wounded veteran who was about to lose his house. We put up \$9,500 to save his house for him and his family. That's a major outlay by our standards but the need was stark and clear. That is one wounded veteran's family that is glad we are still here – one among many.

We have recently launched something new – a Caregivers Alliance – to support the thousands of people, usually military wives, who devote their lives to taking care of our wounded heroes. It isn't just a matter of dealing with men who have lost arms, legs, and eyes, or been burned severely. The victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are often in even worse shape though they seem normal from the outside. We now know that many of these wounded warriors suffer from traumatic brain injury (TBI) that results

from proximity of battlefield explosions. President Trump seems to equate TBI with "headaches." As if that was the only issue. Some of these veterans hide out in their basements because they are unable to meet the civilian world on its own terms – much less hold down a job. Their spouses take care of them even as they take care of the kids and the house and work to pay the bills. Their service-members sacrificed a lot for our country, so do they. The caregivers are no less heroic.



It should come as no surprise that many of these marriages are under extraordinary stress. This past year we conducted our third annual marriage retreat – this time for 15 couples. We took them away to a nice place free of the rigors of home maintenance and child rearing where they could relax and discuss their issues with professional counselors. I can tell you that the beneficiaries of this program were unanimously effusive in their gratitude for the opportunity. When I speak of other services we provide, in addition to direct financial aid, this is the kind of thing I mean. We truly are doing the Lord's work here. Simply sharing experiences with others contending with the same challenges strengthened them immensely.

It is up to us – all of us – to keep the spotlight on these heroes who have made such profound sacrifices to preserve our freedoms, to continually let them know that their service is valued, and to make certain they have what they need to get on with their lives as best they can given the burdens they must bear. We take this responsibility seriously, as do you.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. W. Walker".

David W. Walker
President and Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors (* Independent Voting Board Member)

David W. Walker, President and CEO

CCM Stephen Page, USAF (Ret.), Chairman *

COL. Charles Bogle, U.S. Army (Ret.), Vice Chair *

Tom Sircher, Chairman Emeritus *

Bruce Kelly, Secretary and Treasurer *

Matthew Cary, Army Reserves veteran, Director *

David Wetherell, U.S. Army (Ret.), Director *

Honorable Fred Foreman, Special Counsel

www.saluteheroes.org

Coalition Veteran Leaders



★ ★ ★ ★

Coalition Spokespeople



★ ★ ★ ★

The Coalition has appealed to thousands of federal workers through CFC presentations and we are among an exclusive group that is represented globally in CFC Overseas.



YEAR IN REVIEW

As mentioned before, 2019 was a tough financial year for the Coalition. Having finished the year before about \$1.5 million in the red, we were starting at in a difficult position. This is a small charity and we cannot shrug off a reversal of that magnitude. We do of course have some reserves that we put aside for rainy days but not enough to cover a deluge of Biblical proportions – think 40 days and 40 nights -- like the one that hit us in 2018. We knew going into 2019 that we faced a Herculean challenge. Another year like 2018 and we would be in dire straits.

The dilemma we faced was not unique. Support for charities was down across the board, driven in part by the new tax law that limits the deduction of charitable contributions. Support for veterans' charities was down even more because of the misconception of declining need. I know of several veterans' charities that have been forced to shut their doors and cease operations entirely. **But we believe in the work we are doing and were determined to avoid that fate. There are too many people depending on us to permit that to happen.**

We undertook an organization-wide crusade to do everything in our power to reduce spending and increase revenues – much as any business would do under similar circumstances. We went backwards and forwards across our line budget items looking for items to delete and costs to reduce. In some instances we made difficult staff adjustments. We froze compensation (including a salary reduction for our CEO) and exhorted all employees to redouble their efforts to compensate for fewer hands. We called in our vendors responsible for direct mail appeals and worked with them to reduce the number of mailings, saving outlays, while focusing on messages with a higher impact. We placed more attention on our more reliable supporters who donated more than the average. It was understood throughout the ranks that our backs were against the wall and we had to learn to do more with less.



A key part of our quest for more efficiency and effectiveness, we have undertaken an exhaustive outreach effort – our **Advocacy Program** -- to identify other sources of aid to people in need – both governmental and private – in which we serve as broker between the veterans in need and the organizations that provide the largess. For example, we coordinate with the national non-profit, *Feed the Children*, to mobilize Food Trucks that distribute free meals to needy families – which includes many military families. **These are local efforts emanating from California to Virginia. A typical food truck event will provide food**

to 400 military families for two weeks. We made this happen eight times in 2019, despite our financial difficulties, which put a lot of food on many kitchen tables. The need is great; we could do this every week if we had the money.

We continue to work with a variety of private and public entities to help wounded warriors acquire the skills they need to find productive work in the private sector. For example, in partnership with **Purdue University** in West Lafayette, Indiana, we are helping train wounded veterans to pilot aircraft by providing scholarships (see below). We sponsored three such scholarships in 2019 and are on track to support seven more next year.



COALITION IN THE NEWS

A small charity with a limited budget like the Coalition must somehow find creative ways to gain attention. If potential donors do not know you exist, there is little chance of gaining their support. Ergo, we seize every potential opportunity to get attention. Our Food Truck program for example can almost always generate news coverage, especially by local TV outlets. We strive to bring communities together to



support the needs of our disabled veterans. Another partner is Fields 4 Valor a innovative non-profit farm founded to combat the often-unseen struggle of food insecurity among military and veteran families.

We have also had good luck – make that the result of hard work – soliciting prominent media personalities to make free public service announcements (PSAs) on our behalf.

We have been producing 4-6 PSAs every year and we get some high caliber celebs to appear in them. In 2019 we hosted the ever popular Ray Romano ("Everybody Loves Raymond"), Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints,

along with actors Mark Harmon and Michael Kelly Jr. Our accounting team has completed the professional assessment and we are gaining from \$4 million to \$17 million

in free public relations through these PSAs. The Coalition enjoys an excellent reputation and that has played a critical role in our ability to increase revenues in a down market when many other similar charities are going under.

Another item worth mentioning – in 2019 our President & CEO David Walker was awarded the coveted Cavanaugh Award by his alma mater Notre Dame University. This recognition given annually to a Notre Dame grad distinguished for public service, was totally with regard to his work with the Coalition -- so it is really a salute to the Coalition and our excellent, dedicated staff.



VETERAN'S CAREGIVER ALLIANCE



The Veteran's Caregiver Alliance (VCA) was built from the ground up "For Caregivers, By Caregivers." Thirteen representatives of the Coalition's Heroes Thanking

Heroes program – all caregivers themselves – designed the program to provide the support, respite and personal connections needed by this exclusive community.

"Nobody understands the daily challenges of caring for a severely injured veteran better than a fellow caregiver," said Ashlee Williams, Director of the Veteran's Caregiver Alliance Program. "While we would never minimize the physical, psychological and emotional struggles of our loved ones, our burdens are real, too. The VCA is the only program of its kind focused on easing those burdens. We think it is going to change many lives for the better, and perhaps even save some."

"Caregiver Syndrome" and "Caregiver Burnout" are two conditions common in the caregiver community. Caregiver Syndrome strongly manifests exhaustion,

anger, rage or guilt resulting from unrelieved caring for a chronically ill patient. Typical symptoms of this syndrome include fatigue, insomnia, stomach complaints and depression. Caregiver Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that may be accompanied by a change in attitude – from positive and caring to negative and unconcerned.

The Veteran's Caregiver Alliance is a free program that meets its members where they are. Alliance representatives provide direct services – including mentoring support and camaraderie – as well as access to public and private services provided by like-minded VSOs, government agencies and community organizations. Members are invited to attend monthly caregiver meetings, apply for various scholarships, pursue Skillsoft online educational opportunities, receive free financial coaching and enjoy discounted benefits from participating retailers. A monthly newsletter informs members about the Alliance's constantly expanding roster of benefits.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT:

Cash Contributions	\$ 9,338,384
Gifts in Kind	\$ 20,075,967
Unrealized Gain on Investments	\$ 181,134
Realized Gain on Investments	\$ 6,370
Dividend and Interest Income	\$ 100,302
Other Income	\$ 187,803
Total Revenue, Gains and Other Support	<u>\$ 29,889,960</u>

EXPENSES:

Total Program Services	\$ 25,655,939
Fundraising	\$ 2,955,256
Management and General	\$ 1,104,621
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 29,715,816</u>

The Coalition 2019 Audited Financial Statement is available on request by contacting us at info@saluteheroes.org or writing to: Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

552 Fort Evans Road, Suite 300, Leesburg, VA 20176

A copy of the current Coalition IRS Form 990 can be viewed at www.saluteheroes.org

2019 Public Service Announcement Participants



Michael Kelly Jr.
Actor



Ray Romano
Actor



Mark Harmon
Actor



Drew Brees
Athlete

HEROES FREEDOM WEEKEND

We hosted our 3rd inaugural "Heroes Freedom Weekend." The group of fifteen veterans and their spouses embarked on a emotional journey to Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Guest speakers from the national PAIR's program led group seminars and interactive workshops focused on improving couples communication and strengthening marriages. The group bonded during patriotic tours and expanded their support network with other wounded and disabled veterans. Caregivers also got to connect, rest and rejuvenate.



THE COALITION IN ACTION

Together our team of staff, board members, ambassadors and supporters work day in and day out to fulfill the needs of our nations' disabled veterans. We strive to create life-changing bonds within our communities through our various programs designed to help veterans and their families. Our work is so rewarding because of the people we meet; those who have sacrificed so much for our country, the spouses and caregivers who work with them and the many donors and supporters who share their time and resources. We are thankful for the opportunity to change or even save a life and we can only do it by joining forces.



SURVIVE. RECOVER. REBUILD.

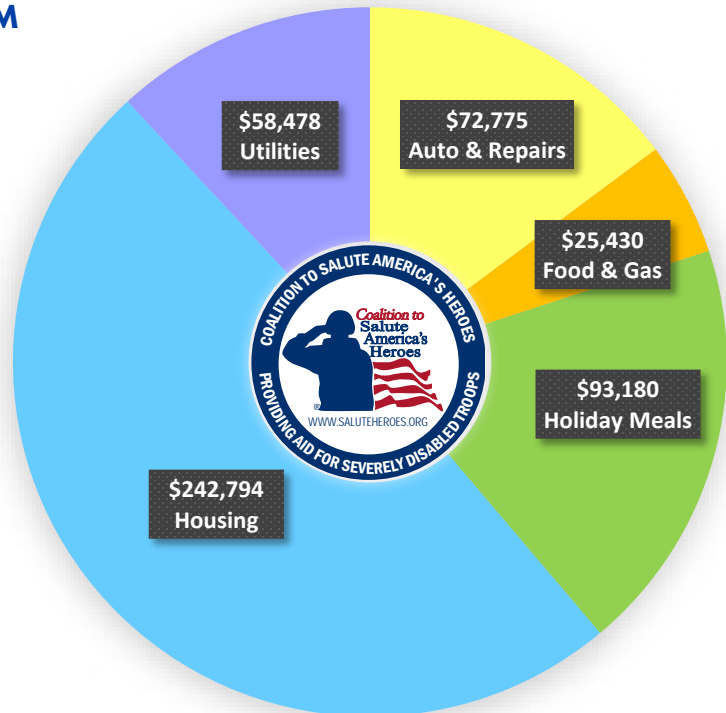
2019 DONATIONS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The mission of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes is to help severely-wounded veterans and families of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn and Operation Inherent Resolve recover from their injuries and illnesses, and to inspire other organizations and the general public to participate in this effort.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM

We help severely wounded veterans and their families meet a wide range of day-to-day urgent financial needs – particularly if they are waiting for their disability benefits to begin (average wait time of 10 months) or have lost income because their spouse or parent had to quit working to become their caregiver. This direct financial aid is used to cover pressing basic expenses such as:

- ★ Utility bills
- ★ Mortgage and rent
- ★ Food and necessities
- ★ Car payments/repairs
- ★ Medical bills
- ★ Home maintenance



Snapshot of Financial Aid Disbursed in 2019 ▲
(Note: Only a partial sample)

CHANGING VETERANS' LIVES

We verify applications and process payments quickly. (For the sake of their privacy, we do not give their full names.) Some examples of aid requested and fulfilled in 2019:

- ★ Army Staff Sergeant Dustin P. from Fort Worth, Texas, suffers from PTSD after serving in Afghanistan. Dustin, who has three young sons, desperately needed just \$179.00 to pay his electric bill and keep the lights on in his home.
- ★ Army Specialist Cedric A. from Cincinnati, Ohio, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. Cedric, who has a six year-old daughter, asked for \$500 to buy food and gas.
- ★ Paralyzed Marine veteran Paul M. from San Diego, California served in Iraq. He needed \$2,500.00 to cover the mortgage on his home.
- ★ Army Sergeant Latasha C. from Ridgeland, Missouri, suffers from PTSD after serving in the global War on Terror. Latasha, who has three young children, called us urgently asking for \$1,800.00 to pay her rent and buy food for her family.

COALITION PROGRAMS

VETERAN CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP

A free membership designed to provide a network for America's combat-wounded troops. Qualified members receive numerous benefits including: being eligible for holiday meal and gift checks, receiving updates of events and employment options across the nation, special discounts, scholarship opportunities and the ability to communicate with other disabled veterans in a private environment.



PUBLIC AWARENESS

A major thrust of the Coalition's work is raising awareness of the critical needs faced by many wounded veterans who often must wait months or even years to receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Therefore we engage in a variety of events such as parades, festivals, community events and assorted media appearances described in this publication. We also enlist celebrities who share public service messages for the Coalition.

CONFERENCES & RETREATS

A core part of our mission is to encourage hope, healing and re-connecting. We strive to create life-changing experiences for our severely wounded veterans and their families from all across the U.S. as they continue on their road to recovery. Heroes Freedom Weekend is an all-expenses-paid retreat that presents an extraordinary opportunity for veterans to develop stronger bonds with their spouse, build camaraderie and tour some of America's most sacred and historic landmarks. The Road to Recovery (R2R) Conference and Tribute is a multi-day all expenses paid educational and motivational event for wounded veterans and their families to enable them to approach the future with hope and to be better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. It features seminars, workshops and panel discussions where attendees learn about resources and services available. Experts from government, private sector and other veteran-focused non-profit groups and corporations offer advice and guidance on: career counseling and transition, caregiver support, family counseling and enhancing personal relationships.



GIFT IN KIND

Our relationship with other non-profit organizations allows us to be the key factor in facilitating the disbursement of donated goods. In 2017, we partnered with Feed the Children and successfully distributed thousands of books and food items to military bases across the nation.

HEROES THANKING HEROES

The Heroes Thanking Heroes program (HTH) is a short-term internal employment program that offers severely wounded veterans (who meet certain eligibility requirements), their spouses or caregivers the opportunity to work at home on a part-time basis. The participants have flexible hours and learn valuable skills by working in a virtual call center. More than 230 members of the veteran community have participated in HTH since inception. Many in the program have found improved motivation and self-esteem as they contribute to the household finances, gain a sense of purpose and develop a supportive peer network.



GRANT PROGRAM

The Coalition provides direct funding to thousands of wounded veterans in need, and also offers grants to other organizations that support disabled veterans and their families in a variety of ways. For example, in 2017, we provided a grant to Beds for the Brave to supply bed frames and bedding for 50 homeless veterans (shown above). We also proudly provided grants to the Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence, Veterans Court Fund and to Veterans on the Rise for their outstanding support for veterans.

VETERAN'S CAREGIVER ALLIANCE

The mission of the Veteran's Caregiver Alliance is to improve the quality of life for the caregivers of our nation's combat-wounded veterans. We will guide caregivers through all services available while identifying and filling gaps in those services. We will work with like-minded veterans service organizations (VSOs), government agencies and community initiatives to assure that the needs of caregivers are being met, both privately and publicly. A key to our success must be strengthening the care and compassion that caregivers share with each other, and to do all we can to support them.

Visit www.Saluteheroes.org to learn more about all of our programs.



Celebrity Friends

TRACE ADKINS
JASON ALEXANDER
SCOTT BAKULA
DESHAUNA BARBER
ASHLEY BELL
JACK BLACK
DREW BRES
LYNDA CARTER
TIM CONWAY
LARRY CSONKA
CHARLIE DANIELS
TONY DANZA
JAMIE FARR
BRETT FARVE
JEFF FOXWORTHY
LEE GREENWOOD
WAYNE GRETZKY
CHARLES GRODIN

JIMMY GUNN
MARK HARMON
MICHAEL KELLY
TOMMY LASORDA
KATHARINE MCPHEE
WILLIAM H. MACY
BEBE NEUWIRTH
JACK NICKLAUS
OAK RIDGE BOYS
ROBERT PATRICK
RICHARD PETTY
CAL RIPKEN
RAY ROMANO
JACK SCALIA
JEFF SENOUR
J.K. SIMMONS
RICKY SKAGGS
RUSTY WALLACE

*"So proud to see an organization
GIVING BACK to OUR TRUE
HEROES! These veterans give so
much to ensure our safety and
freedom. Let's now show them our
appreciation and support! Some
gave ALL!" ~ Billy Ray Cyrus*



RECORDING ARTISTS



**TOM
DIXON**

Our Nashville friends Tom
& Cassidy each wrote
and recorded songs for
the Coalition - and shared
the proceeds to help our
nation's wounded heroes
and their families!



Cassidy Daniels

And Many More!



Coalition Ambassadors

Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Senior Airman Daniel Acosta, USAF (Ret.)
Sgt. First Class Dana Bowman U.S. Army (Ret.)
Master Sergeant Leroy Petry. (Ret.) U.S. Army
SSG JD Williams U.S. Army (Ret.)
SPC Jack Zimmerman U.S. Army (Ret.)

Pamela Jones
Jack Scalia
Jeff Senour
Bonnie S. Tyrrell



Coalition to Salute America's Heroes - CFC#12523

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