



# 2020

## Annual Report

**SERVING AMERICA'S COMBAT-WOUNDED VETERANS  
AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR OVER 16 YEARS**



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# LETTER TO SUPPORTERS

*"These are the times that try men's souls," wrote Thomas Paine in his famous Revolutionary War pamphlet "Common Sense." We are today deeply embedded in another time that tries all of our souls – a seemingly endless pandemic that has most of us under home confinement, a resulting recession that has thrown millions of people onto the unemployment rolls, a bitter political estrangement that has underscored sharp divisions in American society, destructive mobs assailing the citadel of our democracy, seemingly endless turmoil and hardship on every hand, the dreary prospect of another spring without baseball – it's enough to drive responsible citizens to despair.*

*And maybe – just maybe – the people we represent, wounded veterans and their families, are among the hardest hit. These were already people who had sacrificed greatly for our country, suffering physical and psychic wounds that impede their ability to hold down responsible positions in the private sector, in a time when entry level jobs are few and far between. One would think they already had more than enough stress without all this. Also, these are people who have given their all for our country. All of us are undergoing personal crises watching our nation struggle to find its soul, but for those who have put their lives and livelihoods on the line for our country, it is a time of especially keen anxiety. Is this chaos and sea of recriminations what they fought and bled for?*

*Over the years, we at the Coalition have come to realize that supporting wounded veterans entails a lot more than financial aid and counseling. Like all Americans, wounded veterans are part of families and communities. To strengthen and empower them, we must begin with their families. "No man is an island," wrote the poet John Donne. We are all part and parcel of a complex web of human relationships. Thus, we have within our limited resources developed a series of initiatives to help strengthen the family relationships of wounded warriors which is the ultimate source of their strength to overcome the obstacles they must contend with. For example, we host getaway weekends for the families of wounded warriors, for*

*just the married couples when possible. Experience has taught us that the most effective counselors for wounded warriors suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) are other wounded warriors who share their experience. With each other, they can truly open up.*



*Perhaps our most inspired idea is the Caregivers Alliance in which we provide counseling and support to those brave souls – usually wives – who stick with our wounded warriors through good times and bad. We have found to our lack of surprise that these heroes – who all too often must take care of their spouses as well as their children – also benefit from sharing with others in the same position. Over the years, I have come to see that some of the most stalwart heroes we serve are these brave, unselfish caregivers.*

*Let me conclude that in the mist of all this turmoil, we derive inspirational strength from you –our supporters. This is a most difficult time for donors to reach into their pockets and share your hard-earned dollars with groups like us. More than a few small charities like the Coalition have been obliged to shutter their doors. But thanks to you, we have a solid foundation. To be sure, we have been obliged to tighten our belts. But we are still doing what we do best – supporting the men and women who have borne the heat of the battle to defend our freedoms in this time of unprecedented stress. We are all part of one of those complex human relationships of which I spoke. We cannot thank you enough.*

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David W. Walker".

David W. Walker  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## Board of Directors (\* Independent Voting Board Member)

**David W. Walker, President and CEO**

**COL. Charles Bogle, U.S. Army (Ret.), Chairman \***

**Matthew Cary, Army Reserves veteran, Vice Chair \***

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

**Bruce Kelly, Secretary and Treasurer \***

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

**Honorable Fred Foreman, Special Counsel**



# YEAR IN REVIEW

The monumental year of uncertainty – 2020 was life-changing for everyone. Our disabled veteran community was hit especially hard by the global pandemic and fallout of the economy. Many lost jobs and faced a daily struggle just to keep a roof over their heads. The Coalition staff faced hardships as well, juggling our jobs, spouses and children along with the massive effects of COVID-19. The calls for help from desperate disabled veterans increased by 40% causing us to rearrange funds to try and help as many qualified applicants as possible. In fact, we dispersed nearly \$100,000 more dollars in direct emergency aid in 2020 vs. 2019. We did this by trimming other services, grants and salaries. But this was a crisis year and with the steadfast support from our donors, TOGETHER we managed to fulfill our mission of serving those combat-wounded veterans and their families in dire need.

**With restrictions on socialization and interaction many veteran caregivers are dealing with major "Caregiver Fatigue" and the overwhelming stress of not having outside support.** Whether or not their loved one's wounds are visible, spouses of veterans commit to a heroic undertaking when they move into the role of caregiver. This virus has tested marriages and pushed many wounded service members into mental health crises. Unfortunately, we lost some to suicide. One project that we diligently worked on to assist in this area is our partnership with "Give An Hour." We have many veterans that reach out to us on a monthly basis in need of mental health support. Once referred, veterans are able to receive free confidential counseling to address the challenges they are having due to PTSD and other mental health concerns. Together through our grant, we are providing veterans and their families with real help

and hope.

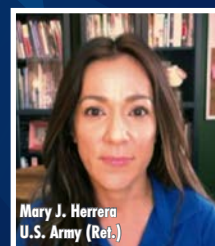
Our veteran staff along with CEO David Walker, rallied together to get the word out in every way possible to alert the public about the serious effects of isolation on our wounded veteran community. They took to the airwaves to let fellow veterans know **"You are not alone – we are here and it's okay to ask for help."** Our Ambassador, retired airman,

Daniel Acosta also created a public service announcement on his personal road to recovery to help raise awareness. Acosta was given just a 25% chance of survival after an IED blast in Iraq.

In recognition of the service of our outgoing board chairman, the Coalition established an endowed scholarship in the name of Chief Master Sergeant Stephen B. Page at McPherson College. Page's interest in antique automobiles lead to the selection of McPherson, renowned for its automotive restoration program. The scholarship will be awarded to a combat-wounded veteran who served in the War on Terror who is pursuing a degree in automobile restoration.



## 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.*



# COALITION IN THE NEWS

The Coalition is proud to participate and sponsor the annual TV program "The Wounded Warrior Experience," produced by the American Veterans Center.



The show originally aired on November 14th on the Fox Business Channel. The goal is to examine transitional issues confronted by combat-wounded veterans upon their return to civilian life. This year the program focused primarily on mental health and the negative effects of isolation due to the pandemic. A group of veterans participated in a candid panel discussion with Fox International Correspondent Jennifer Griffin. Our reps this year were Mary Jessie Herrera and Shilo Harris. In addition, our CEO David Walker was asked to open the program with a special welcome message.

Over the past 5 years we have coordinated with the national non-profit, Feed the Children, to mobilize Food Trucks that distribute free meals to needy military families. In 2020, we partnered with FTC and Blue Star Families for six food



distribution events across the nation. These are local efforts emanating from California to Washington, DC. A typical food truck event will provide food and urgent household supplies to 400 military families for two weeks. Thousands of disabled veterans are struggling to put food on the table since the pandemic started. **The need is still great; we would do this every week if we had the money.**



U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia recognized the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (Coalition) as one of the 675 recipients of the 2020 HIRE Vets Medallion Award during an award ceremony at the U.S. Department of Labor. The Coalition earned the Gold Award. The Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act (HIRE Vets Act) Medallion Program is the only federal award program that recognizes job creators that successfully recruit, hire, and retain veterans.



## Project Military Hunger Relief to help 400 local veterans and families with care packages

"We all know 2020 has been a pretty awful year for most people, and for our veterans especially," said retired Army sergeant Mary Herrera, Coalition to Salute America's Heroes national spokesperson. "We're proud to team up with these other outstanding groups to serve the brave men and women who defend our nation..."





# HEROES FREEDOM WEEKEND 2.0

We hosted our 4th annual "Heroes Freedom Weekend" marriage enrichment event. The group of eleven veterans and their spouses gathered virtually for an evening of laughter and marital motivation. Mark Gungor is one of the most sought-after speakers on marriage and relationships



in the world. Mark's candid and comedic approach uses unforgettable illustrations and the power of laughter to teach proven principles that are guaranteed to strengthen any relationship. For over a decade, Mark's materials have been the #1 resources for improving relationships used by the US Military. The interactive workshop focused on improving couple's communication and strengthening marriages. The group bonded virtually and expanded their support network with other wounded and disabled veteran couples.



## VETERAN'S CAREGIVER ALLIANCE

The Veteran's Caregiver Alliance (VCA) was built from the ground up "For Caregivers, By Caregivers." 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.

**"Being a caregiver can be very lonely at times,"** said Megan Zimmerman, (shown above).

"While we would never minimize the physical, psychological and emotional struggles of our loved ones, our burdens are real, too. The VCA program ensures caregivers have a knowledgeable support system to better understand the challenges that could occur in the home front. A strong family unit ensures the veteran can thrive despite their injuries."

"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.

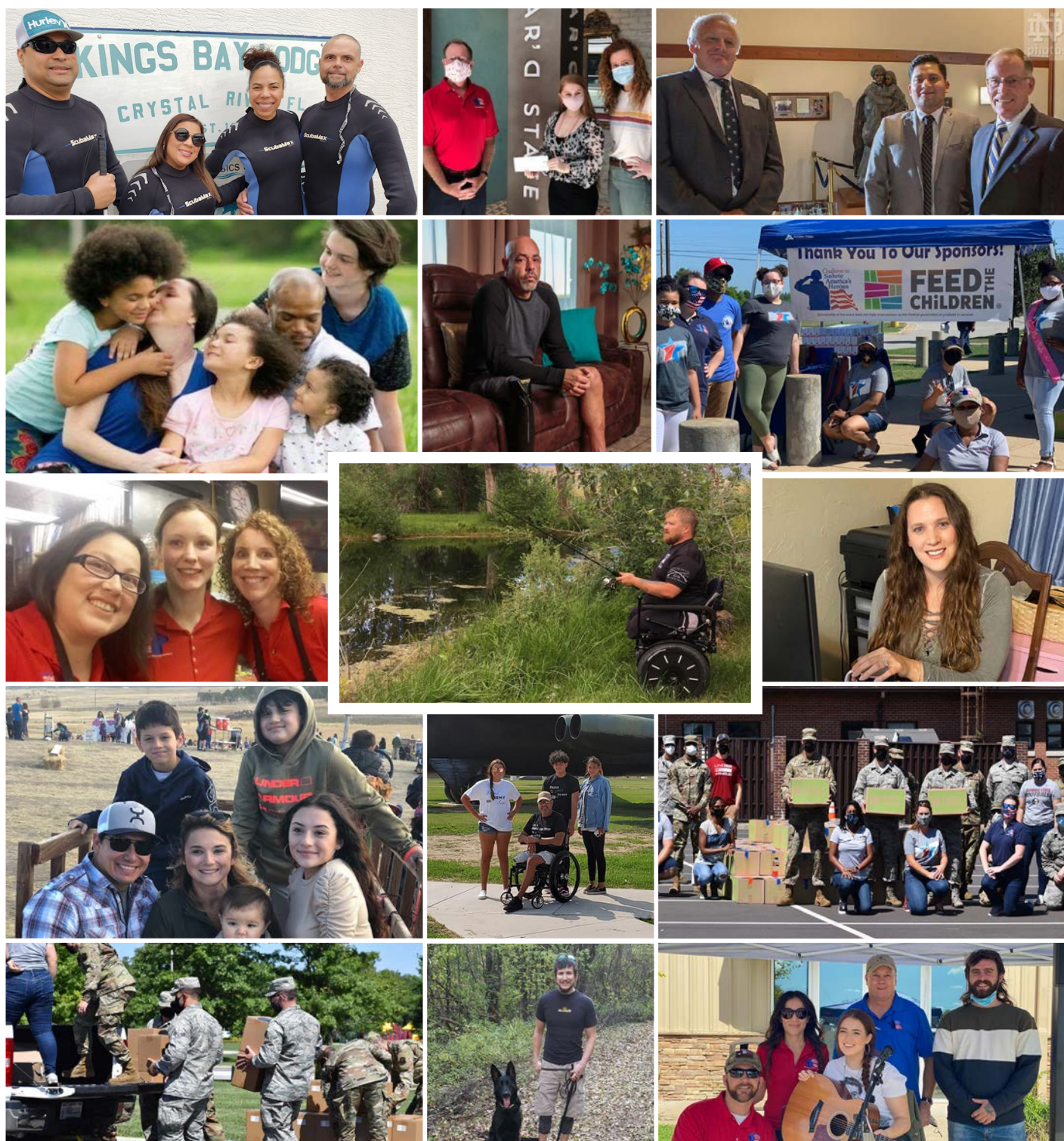
The Veteran's Caregiver Alliance is a free program that meets its members where they are. Alliance representatives provide direct services – including mentoring support and camaraderie – as well as access to public and private services provided by like-minded VSOs, government agencies and community organizations.





# THE COALITION IN ACTION

TOGETHER our Coalition of staff, board members, ambassadors and supporters work day in and day out to fulfill the needs of our nations' combat-wounded veterans. We strive to create life-changing bonds within our communities through various programs designed to help disabled veterans and their families. Our work is truly unique 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 TOGETHER.





# CHANGING LIVES



We verify applications and process payments quickly. (For the sake of privacy, we do not share their names.) Some examples of EMERGENCY aid requested and fulfilled in 2020:

- ★ Retired Army Major from Louisiana, was paralyzed while serving in Afghanistan. In dire financial straits, he desperately needed \$1,000 to buy food and gas.
- ★ Army Staff Sergeant from North Carolina, was medically retired after suffering a traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Afghanistan. He desperately needed \$795.24 to pay his car insurance and keep the electricity on in his home.
- ★ Army SFC from Utah, was medically retired after suffering a traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Iraq. He called asking for \$1,970 to keep his car from being repossessed.
- ★ Retired Air Force Staff Sergeant from Michigan, needed \$1,942.35 to avoid being evicted from his home. He suffered a severe leg injury serving in Iraq and was desperate for emergency assistance.

You can view a special message from Daniel Acosta, USAF (Ret.) at [www.saluteheroes.org](http://www.saluteheroes.org)



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.

**SURVIVE. RECOVER. REBUILD.**



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT:

Cash Contributions	\$8,196,312
Gifts in Kind	\$55,520,190
Unrealized Gain on Investments	\$93,776
Realized Gain on Investments	\$2,504
Dividend and Interest Income	\$55,787
Other Income	\$197,219
Total Revenue, Gains and Other Support	\$64,065,788

## EXPENSES:

Total Program Services	\$60,288,226
Fundraising	\$2,650,772
Management and General	\$931,613
Total Expenses	\$63,870,611

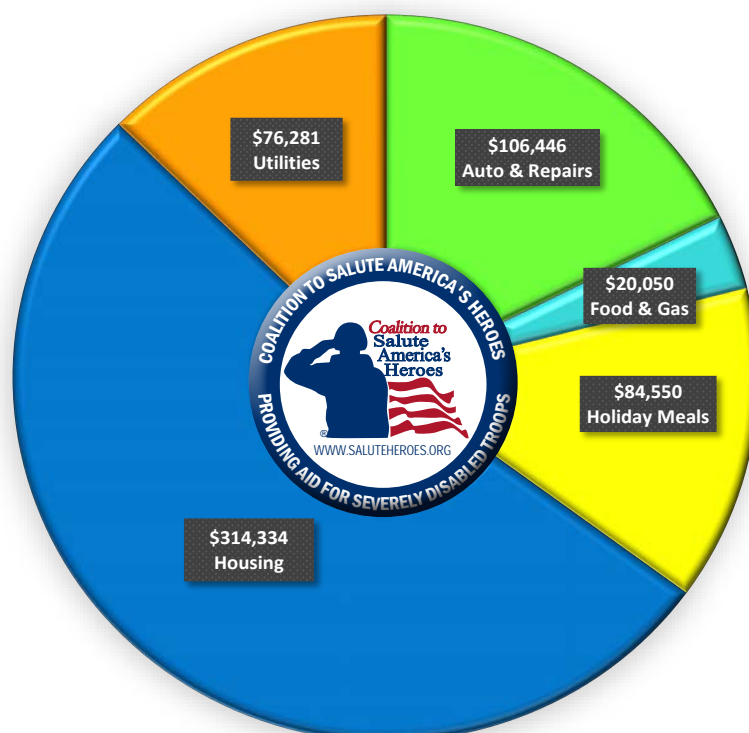
The Coalition 2020 Audited Financial Statement is available on request by contacting us at [info@saluteheroes.org](mailto:info@saluteheroes.org) or writing to: Coalition to Salute America's Heroes  
552 Fort Evans Road, Suite 300, Leesburg, VA 20176  
A copy of the current Coalition IRS Form 990 can be viewed at [www.saluteheroes.org](http://www.saluteheroes.org)

## 2020 YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

### EMERGENCY FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM

For over 16 years we have helped 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
- ★ Home maintenance



▲ Snapshot of Financial Aid Disbursed in 2020  
(Note: Only a partial sample)

**SURVIVE. RECOVER. REBUILD.**



# COALITION PROGRAMS

## VETERAN CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP

A free membership program designed to provide a network for America's combat-wounded troops. Qualified disabled service 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. In 2020, we were honored to have Kathy Ireland's support.



## 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 personal road to recovery. *Heroes Freedom Weekend* is an all-expenses-paid retreat that presents an extraordinary opportunity for veterans to improve communication and strengthen marriages with their spouse, build camaraderie with other veterans 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. 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 2020, we partnered with Feed the Children and Blue Star Families and successfully distributed thousands of books along with critical food and household items to veterans in need 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 332 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. In 2020, we provided grants for housing, employment, mental health and education through North Carolina Warriors, Building Veterans, Fields 4 Valor Farm, Habitat for Humanity, and Give an Hour. Together we strive to provide solutions to issues faced by the disabled veteran community.

## 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](http://www.SaluteHeroes.org) to learn more about all of our programs and resources.**





# PATRIOTIC FRIENDS

TRACE ADKINS  
JASON ALEXANDER  
SCOTT BAKULA  
DESHAUNA BARBER  
ASHLEY BELL  
JACK BLACK  
DREW BREES  
LYNDA CARTER  
TONY DANZA  
JAMIE FARR  
BRETT FARVE

JEFF FOXWORTHY  
LEE GREENWOOD  
WAYNE GRETZKY  
CHARLES GRODIN  
JIMMY GUNN  
MARK HARMON  
KATHY IRELAND  
MICHAEL KELLY  
TOMMY LASORDA  
KATHARINE MCPHEE  
WILLIAM H. MACY

BEBE NEUWIRTH  
JACK NICKLAUS  
OAK RIDGE BOYS  
ROBERT PATRICK  
RICHARD PETTY  
CAL RIPKEN  
RAY ROMANO  
J.K. SIMMONS  
RICKY SKAGGS  
RUSTY WALLACE  
And Many More!



**"PTSD is a medical condition... and should be handled with compassion...Our nations veterans served to protect us -- they are our heroes."**

**~ Drew Brees, NFL Quarterback**



**TOM DIXON**

## RECORDING ARTISTS

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**



## 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.)

Rob Jones  
Jack Scalia  
Jeff Senour  
Bonnie S. Tyrrell



**Coalition to Salute America's Heroes - CFC#12523**  
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