

A person in a military uniform is seen from behind, holding a large American flag high against a dramatic, cloudy sky at sunset. The sun is low on the right, creating a warm, golden glow. The person is standing on a rocky, uneven terrain.

IMPACT REPORT

2021



Dedicated to serving elderly veterans, age 65 and older. We bridge our veterans to a better quality of life through our age specific and innovative programs. These services are available to our heroes wherever they call home, at no expense to them or their families.

Founded in 2016

www.herosbridge.org



CEO & FOUNDER LETTER



Dearest Friends,

I am pleased to share the Hero's Bridge 2021 Impact Report. Hero's Bridge was founded nearly six years ago to improve the quality of life of our region's most at-risk senior veterans. We provide direct care to reduce social isolation, improve substandard housing, and bridge them to vital long-term resources and benefits. In the following pages we describe and share specifics of each of our innovative programs.

At Hero's Bridge we focus on helping with the hard things. Advocacy, legislation, and referrals all have their place, but at some point, someone in the community must actually cross the threshold of our homebound veterans doors and help with the things that are not being done. This grassroots, street level assistance is challenging and we are so appreciative of everyone that has provided the support to make it all possible.

Social isolation is the number one problem we see, untenable living situations is number two. We can easily solve both of these problems with our vision of a village of tiny homes for our heroes. I'm happy to report that we have raised \$302,414 towards this goal. Another 1.5 million in support

has been expressed once the location is determined. These communities don't fit easily into current zoning and land use rules, and we continue to investigate different options. I do not yet know which one will pan out but God does. I look forward to sharing that news with you soon. Because of the overwhelming amount of support, we know the project will go fast once the site is chosen.

On behalf of the Hero's Bridge Board of Directors, our dedicated staff, and of course our grateful heroes, please accept our most sincere appreciation and thanks for your continued support!

Sincerely,

Molly Brooks RN-BC, CHPCA

Molly Brooks RN-BC, CHPCA
CEO & Founder

HISTORY & VISION



HISTORY. Molly Brooks is the proud daughter of a Vietnam veteran. Not long after his return from Vietnam, he presented with symptoms from Agent Orange exposure. He fell ill and died at a young age. Impressed by his service, dedication, and ultimate poor health as a result of service, Molly, who pursued a career in healthcare, realized that there were many aging veterans, like her father, who could use help.

VISION. Hero's Bridge specializes in services or aging veterans who are at a higher risk for experiencing various diseases and disorders as a result of their service. These are stoic, proud individuals who are naturally disinclined to ask for help. Hero's Bridge is there to offer help when it is needed.

Hero's Bridge was founded in 2016 by Molly and other concerned citizens who decided they could no longer stand by as our aging veterans suffered.

Our six programs were designed to help fill gaps in care by addressing social isolation, food insecurity, and substandard housing so frequently found with our aging heroes.



HERO'S BRIDGE VOLUNTEERS

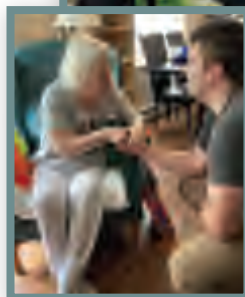
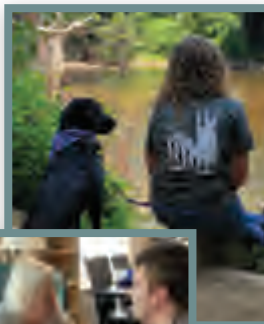


78 Volunteers and 20 Youth volunteers served 1,029 hours



Top Ten 2021 Hero Helpers

1. **Judy Shupp**- 126 hours
2. **Nick Travis**- 96 hours
3. **Kim Beahm and Family**- 91 hours
4. **Ed Benson**- 67 hours
5. **Mike Bongiovi**- 57 hours
6. **Greg Bertollini**- 42 hours
7. **Cindy Burbank**- 35 hours
8. **Holly Zuck**- 28 hours
9. **The Shaffer Family**- 21 Hours
10. **Boy Scout Troop 1187**- 19 hours

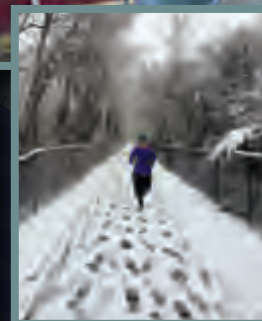
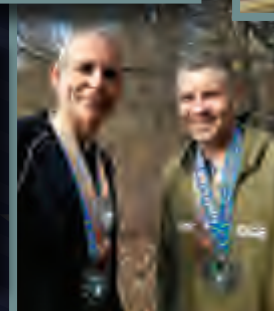
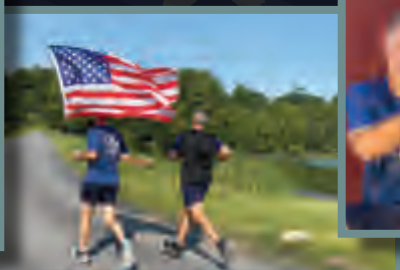
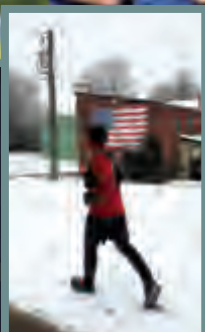
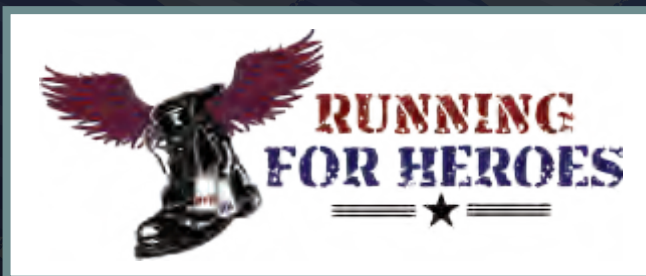
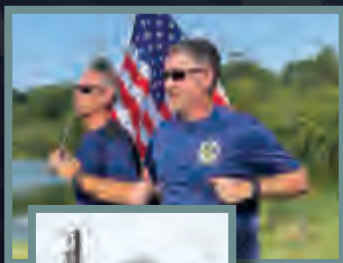


Hero's Bridge is grateful for the time and dedication of every one of its volunteers. We appreciate small gestures of kindness, such as phone calls and birthday cards to our veterans, as well as larger time commitment projects such as yard work and helping our veterans move.

RUNNING FOR HEROES



Running for Heroes includes two Fauquier County residents: Bobby Brooks, a Gulf War veteran, and Richard Heppard, an Afghanistan veteran. In 2021, they committed to running one marathon every month to raise money for the Hero's Bridge Veterans Village. They logged mile after mile and covered nearly 315 marathon miles and more than 2,400 training miles. By the end of the year, they had raised \$10,885.



HEROES SERVED



Battle Buddy

Bridging younger and older veterans in a special model of care that decreases social isolation and increases advocacy.

In 2021, the Battle Buddy program resulted on average in:

- ★ 348 annual visits by staff
- ★ 155 annual visits by volunteers



HomeFront

Bridging our older heroes to healthy and safe housing conditions.

In 2021, we performed 27 HomeFront interventions which include:

- ★ 6 electrical repairs
- ★ 3 home repairs
- ★ 2 drywall installations
- ★ 2 days of yard cleanup
- ★ 5 miscellaneous repairs



Honor Guard

Bridging our veterans to better mental health by facilitating a healthy processing of their time in service.

Honor Guard interventions in 2021:

- ★ 4 shadowboxes with 13 lost medals and awards replaced
- ★ 7 guardians of Freedom portraits made and 4 community exhibits
- ★ 4 stories preserved
- ★ 1 honor ceremony



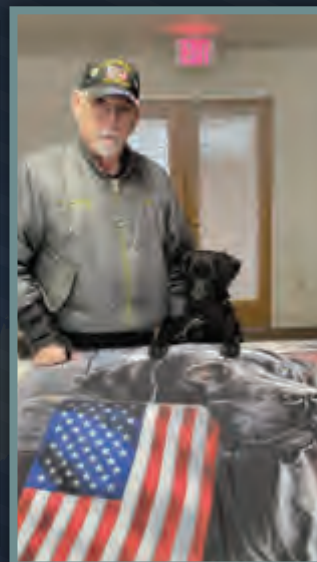
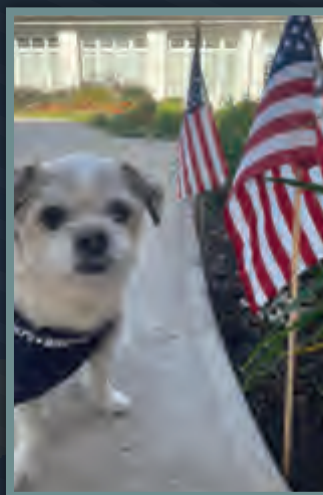
HEROES SERVED



Resource Scouts

Addressing social determinates of health by bridging veterans to earned benefits and important community resources.

- ★ 139 rides provided
- ★ 87 care packages delivered
- ★ 1,242 home-delivered and ready-to-eat meals arranged
- ★ Multiple rapid relief interventions including assistance with gas cards, moving expenses, and building materials.



Paw Patrol

We use animals as healers to significantly reduce pain, anxiety, depression, and a variety of other issues for our veterans.

In 2021, we helped veterans care for beloved pets.

- ★ 72 Paw Patrol visits
- ★ 11 cat supply donations
- ★ 10 birdhouses decorated and installed
- ★ Humane assistance with feral cat colony
- ★ Dog walks

TeleHero

- ★ Reaching our heroes faster, better, and smarter.
- ★ In 2021, we provided 70 weeks of tablets in homes



HEROES SERVED



TOP 2021 DONORS

FOUNDATIONS

- PATH Foundation
- Jesse and Rose Loeb Foundation
- Northern Piedmont Community Foundation
- Anonymous Foundation
- The Latham Foundation
- Fauquier Community Enrichment Alliance
- Miriam L. Halsey Foundation
- Community Awareness of Rappahannock Electric
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- NOVEC Helps

BUSINESSES

- Country Chevrolet
- Fun Run Racing
- VFW Post 9835
- Well Being Trust
- Facebook
- W&W Nursery and Landscaping
- Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission
- Marshall United Methodist Church
- Fund Raising Strategies
- Meridian Financial Partners

INDIVIDUALS

- James Nixdorff
- Kurt Zuch
- Cecile Frazier Skaggs
- Christopher Bailey
- Jennifer Bowman
- Frances Sammons
- Ed Benson
- Lt. Col. Jack Stewart
- Mary Lyons
- Keith Kettell

HERO'S BRIDGE HAS SERVED 385 VETERANS, INCLUDING 111 NEW VETERANS IN 2021

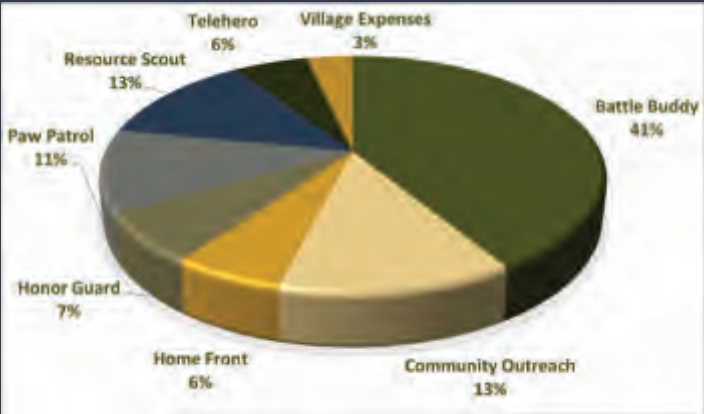
BRANCHES

Army	56%
Navy	19%
Marine Corps	13%
Air Force	10%
Guard	2%

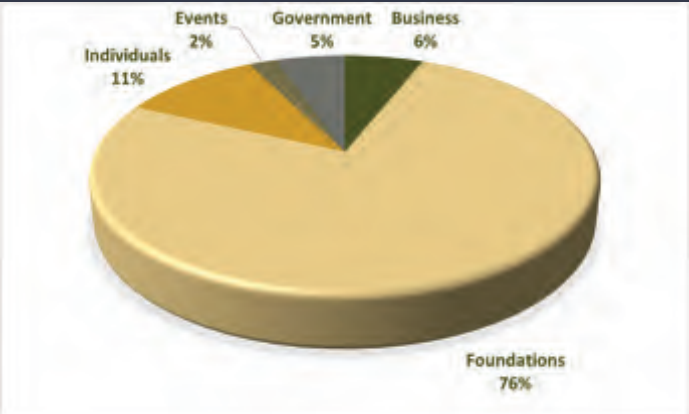
WAR ERAS

Vietnam	65%
Korean	23%
WW II	8%
Cold War	2%
Others	3%

EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM



SOURCES OF SUPPORT



"I'M SORRY BUT WE'VE LOST CHARLIE."



A small bottle of Evan Williams bourbon and a pumpkin pie sit on the table; a gift waiting to be given to an aging veteran. Hero's Bridge volunteers don't usually bring alcohol to veterans but in Charlie's case it kept him from paying an unscrupulous "friend" \$50 to bring him a bottle. Sadly, after decades of using alcohol as a coping mechanism, nothing was going to save Charlie from this particular demon. Bobby, Charlie's Battle Buddy, tried to reach him for several weeks to arrange a visit.

It wasn't uncommon for Charlie to miss a call or take a few days to get back to Bobby, but the silence grew too long. Bobby planned to stop by Charlie's apartment after work one day to check on him and bring him the small gift, but Bobby's wife had a sense of foreboding. His wife's suspicion was confirmed by an online search of the obituaries. She called him and said, "I'm sorry, but we've lost Charlie."

This burden of regret is one that our Battle Buddies have come to accept. For all the days, weeks, months, and even years that he met with Charlie to brighten an otherwise gloomy existence, without the Village no one can ever be there every day. Another Battle Buddy lost a veteran under similar circumstances earlier last year. He passed alone in his trailer that was crumbling around him.

Charlie was introduced to Hero's Bridge in 2017 when a representative from the organization, just one year old at the time, received a call from a VA case worker with the referral for care for a veteran with limited mobility and overall weakness.

They wanted to know if Hero's Bridge could help. While Charlie's geographic location was far from the footprint of Hero's Bridge, it was just a few miles from where Bobby, a fellow Army veteran, worked, and his situation was so lonely and sad, that Hero's Bridge couldn't say no.

Over the past four years, Charlie became close to Bobby. The 75-year-old Vietnam Veteran had a fondness for pumpkin pie, and Bobby made sure to bring it to him during the holidays. Over the years, Bobby would help Charlie with his television and phone that were more complicated to use than they used to be.

Charlie was always happy to see Bobby, who was the only company he ever had. He received special gifts one Valentine's Day: some chocolate and a



plant. The plant was so Charlie had something to take care of. When his beloved Washington Nationals finally won the World Series, Bobby quickly took him a World Champions hat and hoodie.

Charlie was also a source of inspiration for Hero's Bridge Veterans Village. While his apartment building showed well from the exterior, once inside a different story unfolded. Charlie's apartment was unfit for occupation, but he had nowhere else to go and no one to help him clean. Charlie agreed to have his apartment featured in the Hero's Bridge documentary to advocate for the need for a Veteran's Village. With each visit he would always ask, "When is that Village going to be ready?"

While Charlie's final moments were not what anyone wanted for him, Hero's Bridge is comforted by the fact that Charlie never stopped serving his country. Even though he may never have realized it, Charlie is still helping to shape a better future for aging veterans. He and all our other veterans in need of better housing and support keep us moving forward on the project even on the hard days.



Search Hero's Bridge on YouTube to see Charlie's living conditions.

Visit <https://herosbridge.org/village/> to make a donation in Charlie's honor.

The Hero's Bridge Village will radically change the lives of these veterans as well as the culture of our community. We will prioritize socialization and wellness, not profit. It will be a place of peace and healing, not maximum square footage. Our veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam have already given so much, the least we can do for them is provide affordable and supportive housing. We hope you will join us in our mission to make sure No Vet Is Left Behind!

