

HERO'S



BRIDGE

Volunteer Handbook

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

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Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to Hero's Bridge, we are so glad to have you join us on our mission to serve our veterans. Hero's Bridge is a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 organization founded in 2016. We are dedicated to serving older veterans. We serve, stand by, and honor our veterans, age 65 and older, anywhere they live and at no expense to our heroes or their families. Hero's Bridge was founded almost five 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.

Hero's Bridge knows aging veterans are at a higher risk for experiencing various diseases and disorders due to their service. Senior veterans are stoic, proud individuals who are unfamiliar with reaching out for assistance, so our mission is to serve them. We recognize the needs of those we serve are very different compared to those of their younger counterparts, and this is precisely why we specialize in providing services to this particular demographic.

Although there are many organizations which provide veterans assistance, we discovered most of these entities provide assistance to younger veterans. We identified needs very specific to veterans who served in World War II, Korea, and especially the Vietnam eras.

The framework for Hero's Bridge was developed by individuals who are experienced in professional healthcare services in a home setting as well as assisted living, nursing home, and hospital environment. Many of the individuals we serve are predisposed to poor social outcomes such as loneliness, poor nutrition, and lack of proper assistance with their personal and medical care; all due to their time spent in the military.

Research has shown this group of veterans are predisposed to higher rates of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease due to their military career and exposures they experienced during their service, such as Agent orange. Our founders, through their personal and professional experiences, witnessed how these unique challenges affect this population and created this organization to help the aging veterans.

Hero's Bridge offers distinct programs to assist with the most frequently found needs in this veteran population. We strive to improve outcomes in both elderly and younger veterans, simply by connecting younger veterans with older ones. This intergenerational approach yields an improved and more supportive existence for the volunteers and heroes we support. In essence we serve these veterans by creating a "bridge" to an improved quality of life.

We thank you for volunteering and helping us continue our mission.

Sincerely,

Molly Brooks- RN- BC, CHPN

Founder and CEO

Hero's Bridge Board Members

Molly Brooks- RN-BC, CHPN	CEO/President/Founder
Richard Heppard	Vice President
John Lesinski	Board Member
Eric Maybach	Treasurer
Stanley Parkes	Secretary

Hero's Bridge Staff

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Rachel Brown rbrown@herosbridge.org	Battle Buddy/Call Center Coordinator 540-914-7670

Hero's Bridge Phone Number: 540-341-5378

Hero's Bridge Mailing Address: 98 Alexandria Pike Suite 41
Warrenton, VA 20186

Hero's Bridge Website: www.herosbridge.org

Our Programs

Hero's Bridge serves elderly veterans aged 65 and older. As a nonprofit organization, we are proud to offer our programs at no cost to veterans and their families. We aim to serve, honor, and stand by our older heroes wherever they call home.

Battle Buddy Program/ Hero's Helpers: Bridging volunteers and older veterans in a special model of care that decreases social isolation and increases advocacy. In 2022 the Battle Buddy program resulted on average: 540 annual visits by staff and volunteers.

Home Front: Bridging our older heroes to healthy and safe housing conditions. In 2022 we performed 47 Home Front interventions: 8 visits for yard clean-up, 5 critical home repairs, 5 miscellaneous home repairs, and 4 electrical repairs.

Honor Guard: Bridging our veterans to better mental health by facilitating a healthy processing of their time in service. Honor Guard interventions in 2022: 19 stories and/or local media stories, 11 socials held, 4 shadow boxes made with lost medals and awards replaced, 2 Guardians of Freedom Portraits added to collection, 3 community exhibits of Guardians of Freedom portraits, and 3 honor ceremonies.

Resource Scouts: Addressing social determinants of health by bridging veterans to earned benefits and important community resources. In 2022 we provided 194 rides, 193 care packages, 503 home-delivered ready-to-eat meals, and multiple rapid relief interventions including assistance with gas cards, utilities, medical bills, motel stays, and groceries.

Paw Patrol: We use animals as healers for our veterans to significantly reduce pain, anxiety, depression, and a variety of other issues. In 2022 we connected animals and heroes through 69 Paw Patrol visits, 5 pet supply donations, and 7 birdhouses maintained.

Telehero: In 2022 we provided 60 weeks of tablets in homes: News, music from their era, connection to family and friends, and built-in Wifi to rural veterans.

Volunteer Descriptions

At Hero's Bridge there are many ways you can volunteer with our aging veterans through our programs.

Battle Buddy Volunteer/ Hero's Helper / Friendly Caller: "Buddy" with a veteran. Visit in person or make a friendly call. Be a friend and be there to help and guide them.

Paw Patrol Volunteer: Visits veterans in-home or in a facility with animals, walks veteran's dogs, helps veterans with their pets' care and trips to the veterinarian.

Home Front Volunteer: Includes any and all repairs, maintenance, projects, and/or chores in and around the veteran's home to create a safer and/or healthier environment (i.e., minor home repairs, home cleaning, yard work, snow removal, ramp building, etc.).

Honor Guard Volunteer: Includes, but not limited to, participation in Honor Guard Ceremonies for Hero's Bridge veterans, transporting veterans to and/or from outings, assisting with excursions and socials, care package prep/creation, care package pick-up and delivery, making shadow boxes for veteran medals, etc.

General / Office / Special Events Volunteer: Includes, but not limited to volunteer orientation, volunteer training, volunteer committees and/or focus groups, assisting veterans with transportation, Wreaths Across America, Veteran 5K, running errands, National Needs Coordinator, etc.

Volunteer Positions

All volunteer positions require:

- Completing a volunteer application;
- Completing a background check;
- Attending Orientation;
- Signing-up for and using Workplace to document each veteran visit, phone call, or interaction so that the rest of your Hero's Bridge Team is aware of the veteran's well-being/needs, and to also stay informed of other Hero's Bridge activities;
- Creating an account and documenting volunteer time each week/month in the PATH Foundation Volunteer Hub Website. Documenting and tracking volunteer activities and time is **essential** to funding Hero's Bridge and helping our veterans; and
- Reporting directly to the Hero's Bridge Volunteer Coordinator, unless otherwise stated.

Battle Buddy Volunteer/ Hero's Helper

Battle Buddy Volunteers and Hero's Helpers are volunteers that are paired with one of our senior veterans to provide friendship and become an advocate and navigator for them. This volunteer position visits veterans in person and makes friendly calls to check up on our veterans. After your volunteer interview and orientation, we will schedule a date and time for you to make your first visit with our Battle Buddy Program Staff to meet a veteran.

Paw Patrol Volunteer

Paw Patrol volunteers are volunteers that seek to improve the quality of each veteran's life through visits with their Furry Friends. These visits often promote healing, decrease loneliness, and bring incomparable joy to the hearts of many. Our animal companions break down barriers with their unconditional love which allows us to aid when needed. The Paw Patrol program also helps veterans by supplying much needed supplies for their pets, assisting with rides to Veterinarian appointments, costs associated with these visits, and animal care when needed. Many veterans in nursing homes and assisted living facilities love visits from our Furry Friends and their volunteers. Paw Patrol Furry Friends should maintain a current rabies vaccination and furnish a rabies certificate with their Volunteer Application and upon request.

Home Front Volunteer

Home Front volunteers are volunteers that help veterans to have healthy and safe housing conditions. Volunteers can help in a variety of ways: home repairs, cleaning, mowing, weed eating, and helping veterans to maintain their homes. This position involves physical labor many times completed outdoors, and you must be able to lift at least 50 pounds. Volunteers should be able to supply their own gloves, safety equipment, tools, and equipment unless stated by Hero's Bridge.

Honor Guard Volunteer

Honor Guard volunteers are volunteers that assist in honoring veterans through portraits, preserving their stories, creating shadow boxes with lost medals and replaced awards, assisting with care packages, award ceremonies, and outings. Honor Guard volunteers may also assist veterans in obtaining information about their service or helping them process their time in service.

General / Office/ Special Events Volunteer

General volunteers are volunteers who can assist veterans with transportation for appointments, grocery shopping, and errands. They also may be involved as a Gratitude Ambassador, helping with administrative duties, or serving on committees/focus groups. General volunteers may also assist with Hero's Bridge Special Events such as Wreaths Across America or Veteran 5K.

*****Please note any accidents or incidents that occur while volunteering for Hero's Bridge should be reported immediately to the proper authorities (police, fire, emergency- if needed), as well as your Hero's Bridge Volunteer Coordinator and Program Director!!**

Tips to be a Successful Volunteer:

- 1. DON'T JUDGE.** Be open minded and please do not judge the veterans. Whether it is how/where they live, what they eat, how they dress or what they did while in the military. If a veteran trusts you enough to make statements about their time in combat and/or service, understand this can be a difficult subject for them to talk about, please be understanding, be free of judgment and listen. Remember, you never know what they saw or experienced during their service.
- 2. UNDERSTAND.** Understand that many of the veterans that Hero's Bridge serves live in homes that are subpar housing and under conditions that are not the best at times. But remember, to them it is still their home and for some it may be the best it has ever been.
- 3. LISTEN.** Be willing to just listen to the veteran, do not try to "solve" their problems. Many veterans know what they need to do, but they need someone willing to just listen. Listen without judgment.
- 4. ENCOURAGE.** Be encouraging! Verbally tell the veterans that they are doing a good job, no matter how small. Every step forward counts! For many of the veterans who deal with PTSD, it is those very small things that are a big feat for them.
- 5. BE PRESENT.** When visiting with the veteran, be present in the moment! Give them your undivided attention while you are together. Remember some of our veterans do not have visitors very often, so it means the world to them to see your smiling face.
- 6. TALK.** Talk with the veteran and tell them a little about you. Maybe discuss what you have done since you last saw or spoke with them. Try not to burden the veteran with any personal problems or negativity. Be Positive and let this be their time.
- 7. FRIENDSHIP.** Always be the veteran's friend. This can happen after a few visits or sometimes months later. Give them a chance to open up to you, be patient with them, this doesn't always happen right away.
- 8. CONSISTENCY.** Visit the veteran once a month and call the veteran once a month! When you are consistent in your visits and calls each month, the veteran knows you are there for them. Calling and visiting monthly gives you two contact opportunities each month to get to know the veteran. Please feel free to visit and/or call more often if the veteran agrees.
- 9. COMMUNICATE.** Please remember to always communicate with your Volunteer Coordinator. Communicate if there are any questions, issues, concerns, or needs. This can be done via text, email, phone call, or through Workplace. The Volunteer Coordinator is here to guide and support you.
- 10. EDUCATE.** Please take the time to read the *Hero's Bridge Annual Report*, look at our Website, take your Psych Armor Classes, and read the History of Vietnam. Educate yourself so that you can better help our veterans.
- 11. DOCUMENT.** Communicate your veteran visits & calls, as well as all other volunteer provided services, to the rest of your Hero's Bridge Team by using Workplace. Separately document and track all of your volunteer time each week/month using the PATH Foundation Volunteer Hub Website. Documenting and tracking volunteer activities and time is **essential** to funding Hero's Bridge and helping our veterans

Volunteer Onboarding and Orientation

Application

To become a volunteer with Hero's Bridge you must complete a Volunteer Application and email it to Hero's Bridge Volunteer Coordinator Valerie Fraedrich at vfraedrich@herosbridge.org. If you have any questions you can email or call at 540-807-2232. After Hero's Bridge has reviewed your application and contacted your personal references, you will be contacted by our Volunteer Coordinator to schedule an interview and orientation. Your interview and orientation may be virtually via Google meet or in person at one of our New Volunteer Orientations in the Hero's Bridge Warrenton, VA office.

Interview

During your interview, we will review your application and get to know you a little. During this time, please ask any questions you may have regarding volunteering with Hero's Bridge.

Orientation

During Orientation, you will learn about Hero's Bridge, our history, and review our Annual Report.

- A PowerPoint presentation about Hero's Bridge will be given to help you better understand the veterans for whom you will be volunteering.
- You will be provided with self-study materials containing information about the Vietnam War, War Periods, and how to access online classes from Psych Armor that will help you to communicate with your veterans.
- We will review a few important safety items.
- Lastly, we will go over documenting:
 - Signing-up for and using **Workplace** to document each veteran visit, phone call, or interaction so that the rest of your Hero's Bridge Team is aware of the veteran's well-being/needs, and to also stay informed of other Hero's Bridge activities
 - Creating an account and documenting volunteer time each week/month in the **PATH Foundation Volunteer Hub Website**.

Documenting and tracking volunteer activities and time is essential to funding Hero's Bridge and helping our veterans.

Next Steps

- After completing your volunteer interview and orientation, we will schedule a date and time for you to make a joint visit with one of our Battle Buddy Program Staff and one of our veterans.
- After this joint visit, if you decide you would like to continue volunteering with Hero's Bridge, you will receive an email from Sterling Volunteers to complete a Background Check.
- After we receive a satisfactory Background Check Report:
 - You will receive access to use Workplace to document each veteran visit, phone call, or interaction so that the rest of your Hero's Bridge Team is aware of the veteran's well-being/needs, and to also stay informed of other Hero's Bridge activities;
 - You will create an account in the PATH Foundation Volunteer Hub to document volunteer time given each week/month.

[If you have difficulty signing-up for Workplace or the PATH Foundation Volunteer Hub, or you do not have access to a device for communicating in these ways, please contact the Hero's Bridge Volunteer Coordinator for assistance.]

- Volunteers who wish to drive Hero's Bridge Vans are required to complete additional orientation steps, as follows:
 - Provide a copy of a valid Driver's License
 - Complete a Background Check with DMV Driving Record
 - Complete a Volunteer Driver self-study course (unless you hold a current CDL license)
 - Sign the Vehicle Use Policy
 - Reviewed accident procedures
 - Complete a test drive
- Volunteers who wish to drive wheelchair vans made available to Hero's Bridge through the RTC (Regional Transportation Coalition) to transport our veterans must undergo additional specialized training.



Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

This acknowledges that I have received a copy of the Hero's Bridge Volunteer Handbook and understand that it contains important information regarding Hero's Bridge general volunteer policies and my privileges and obligations as a volunteer.

I acknowledge that I am expected to read, understand, and adhere to Hero's Bridge policies and I will familiarize myself with the material in the handbook. I understand that Hero's Bridge may rescind or add to any policies or practices described in the handbook, from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion with or without prior notice.

Hero's Bridge will advise volunteers of material changes within a reasonable time. I understand that if I have any questions regarding the contents of this handbook, I should ask my volunteer coordinator for clarification.

Date

Volunteer Signature

Printed Name



VOLUNTEER WAIVER, RELEASE, AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

Between
Hero's Bridge
and

(hereinafter "the volunteer")

This document sets forth the responsibilities and understandings of the volunteer and of Hero's Bridge regarding volunteer's participation in volunteer programs coordinated by Hero's Bridge.

The volunteer and Hero's Bridge agree as follows:

1. The volunteer performs the service of the volunteer's own free will, without promise, expectation, or receipt of remuneration. The volunteer is not an employee or agent of Hero's Bridge for any purpose and the volunteer's services are not controlled nor mandated by Hero's Bridge.
2. If the volunteer is under the age of 18, the volunteer may only participate in volunteer service with the express written consent of the volunteer's parent or guardian.
3. The volunteer understands and agrees that it is possible that the volunteer may be injured or otherwise harmed during volunteer service due to accidents, acts of nature, the volunteer's negligent or intentional acts, or the negligent or intentional acts of others; that while Hero's Bridge has taken some steps to reduce the chances of injuries or harm to the volunteer, that Hero's Bridge has no control over most risks, and, thus, cannot and does not guarantee nor take any responsibility for the safety of the volunteer or the volunteer's property while the volunteer is engaged in volunteer service; and that the volunteer must take full responsibility for himself or herself and assume the risk of harm or damage while serving by taking all necessary and reasonable precautions and acting in a manner that will help protect himself or herself and his or her property.
4. The volunteer agrees to waive and release Hero's Bridge from any and all potential claims for injury, illness, damage, or death which the volunteer may have against Hero's Bridge that might arise out of the volunteer's service and to hold Hero's Bridge harmless there from.
5. The volunteer agrees and understands that injuries or losses to others, such as co-workers or the person(s) being helped, may occur as a result of the volunteer's negligent or intentional acts during volunteer service, and that to avoid such harm, the volunteer must exercise care and act responsibly in serving others.
6. If any injury or loss to another does occur due to the volunteer's intentional actions or due to the volunteer's negligent actions arising outside of the scope of the volunteer's activities, the volunteer must accept the liability for and repair, or make reparations for, the harm done.
7. Hero's Bridge is not providing the volunteer with insurance coverage for any injuries, conditions, or losses to the volunteer arising out of volunteer activities, except that Hero's Bridge does provide liability insurance coverage on all Hero's Bridge vehicles used during service projects.

8. The volunteer must maintain his or her own primary medical insurance and the volunteer's own automobile liability insurance when driving a non-Hero's Bridge vehicle to cover potential medical and other costs related to the volunteer service; and the volunteer is also encouraged to maintain property and life insurance coverage while serving as a volunteer.
9. All costs for injury or loss above the coverage provided by the volunteer's insurance are the volunteer's personal responsibility.
10. In projects where the volunteer will be transporting others in a non-Hero's Bridge owned vehicle, the volunteer may be required to provide proof of automobile insurance to participate.
11. Since volunteers are not Hero's Bridge employees, Hero's Bridge does not provide worker's compensation coverage for injuries or illnesses to the volunteer arising out of volunteer activities.
12. Hero's Bridge will provide you with a legal defense, upon your request, in response to any claim or action brought against you, arising out of your volunteer service in a program that Hero's Bridge helps coordinate, where you were acting in good faith and reasonably believed you were acting within the scope of the volunteer activity, and the act in question was not an intentional or knowing act constituting illegal, willful, or wanton misconduct. However, Hero's Bridge will not defend you in any case where the injury resulted from your operations of a non-Hero's Bridge motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which a pilot or operator's license is required or where the suite is brought by an authorized governmental officer to enforce a federal, state, or local law.
13. In legal actions in which Hero's Bridge provides your defense, Hero's bridge will pay for reasonable attorney fees, judgments, settlements, or other expenses directly related to your defense only up to the limits presently stated in the appropriate State statutes, one time only per volunteer. Hero's Bridge will control the defense and you must reasonably cooperate and comply with Hero's Bridge decisions and procedures.

By signing below, the parties confirm that they have read, understand, and consent to the terms of this waiver agreement.

Volunteer

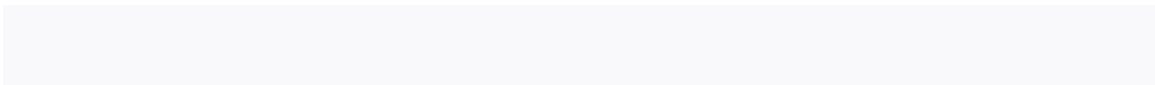
Printed Name

Date

Hero's Bridge Representative Signature

Printed Name

Date



Hero's Bridge VEHICLE USE POLICY

THIS FORM ONLY NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED IF YOU WANT TO DRIVE THE HB VAN.

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the guidelines under which Hero's Bridge's vehicles may be used.

Vehicles owned or leased by Hero's Bridge are to be used solely for Hero's Bridge business. There shall be no personal use of the vehicles. Individuals driving Hero's Bridge vehicles may have occasions where an incidental stop is necessary between business stops. Such use shall not be considered to be in violation of this policy. Vehicles shall not be taken home unless written approval by your CEO.

All employees and volunteers will be given a copy of this policy and will be required to sign a confirmation receipt.

Rules Governing Use:

1. Hero's Bridge vehicles may only be operated by authorized individuals who are at least 18 years old, possess a valid driver's license issued by the state of their current residence for the appropriate class(es) of vehicle(s), and who have Hero's Bridge approval.
2. Drivers are to complete a pre-trip inspection prior to taking a vehicle out.
3. Drivers are expected to keep Hero's Bridge vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to a Hero's Bridge staff member immediately.
4. No alterations of vehicles are permitted. Examples include stereos, amplifiers, radar detectors, trailer hitches, window tinting.
5. The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts at all times. No vehicle should be operated when the number of occupants exceeds the number of passenger restraints available.
6. Drivers shall obey all applicable traffic and parking regulations, ordinances, and laws.
 - a) Employees and Volunteers who incur parking or other fines in Hero's Bridge vehicles will generally be personally responsible for payment of such fines.
 - b) Employees and Volunteers who are issued citations for any offense while using a Hero's Bridge vehicle must notify a Hero's Bridge staff member immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for disciplinary action.
 - c) Any employee or volunteer who is arrested for or charged with a motor vehicle offense for which the punishment includes suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license while in a Hero's Bridge vehicle, must notify a Hero's Bridge staff member immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Conviction for such offense may be grounds for loss of Hero's Bridge vehicle privileges and/or further disciplinary action.
7. Any driver who is involved in a motor vehicle collision involving personal injury to any party shall notify a Hero's Bridge staff member immediately. If the collision involves property damage only, the driver shall notify a Hero's Bridge staff member upon return to the work location. A "Collision Reporting Kit" envelope, which includes a Driver Collision Report Form, is in the glove box of all Hero's Bridge vehicles.
8. The driver shall not talk on their cell phone, text message or operate any electronic equipment while driving the vehicle. If the driver receives a call or needs to make a business call, they shall park the car in a safe location to receive or make a cell phone call.

or

The driver shall use hand's free equipment when necessary to talk on a cell phone when driving. In no event shall the driver text message or operate any other electronic equipment while driving the vehicle. It is always preferred that the driver park the car in a safe location to receive or make cell phone calls.

- 9. All persons operating Hero's Bridge vehicles shall, at all times, drive defensively and take actions behind the wheel that will convey a favorable impression to the public.
- 10. No personal items are to be stored in the vehicles. Hero's Bridge shall not be liable for the loss or damage of any personal property transported in the vehicle.
- 11. Smoking is prohibited in all Hero's Bridge vehicles and all operators and passengers are required to comply with this policy.

I, (print name) _____, have read and understand the Vehicle Use Policy established by Hero's Bridge. I agree to abide by the provisions of this policy. I understand that failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal of Hero's Bridge vehicle privileges, suspension and/or termination of employment.

Driver Signature

Supervisor Signature

Print Driver Name

Print Supervisor Name

Date

Date



MEDIA RELEASE FORM

Publication(s): *Any newspaper, magazine, website or social media account which is reflecting information, stories, or advertising and marketing pertaining to Hero's Bridge and its activities in assisting aging veterans.*

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

I hereby assign a grant of rights to the full, global, royalty-free use of my image and likeness, and copyright of my story and photographs together with the right of reproduction either wholly or in part.

I grant Hero's Bridge permission to use my or my family members' quotes and photographs either separately or together, either wholly or in part, the perpetual and irrevocable and unrestricted right to use and publish video and/or photographs and stories and to assign the same.

Hero's Bridge may use the above for whatever purpose, including advertising, with any retouching or alteration without restriction. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Hero's Bridge will not use AI to manipulate speech or video to misrepresent the individual granting these rights.

I have read this release form carefully and fully understand its meaning and implications.

Signature:

Date: _____

Please direct any questions or concerns to Hero's Bridge info@herosbridge.org. For more information on Hero's Bridge visit www.herosbridge.org.