



Veterans Furniture Center

Newsletter - New Year's 2019

Veteran Run - Volunteer Based
Helping formerly homeless veterans return to society



Donations now eligible for AZ Tax Credits



*Your donations to the VFC are now eligible for tax credits of up to \$800 per couple on your AZ income tax. That's right - donate to the VFC and subtract it from what you owe the State of Arizona when you file your income tax return. **Donations made before April 15, 2019 are eligible for tax credits on your 2018 tax return.** Note that you must owe the taxes to claim the credit. Direct your taxes to a worthy cause, supporting our veterans who have suffered from homelessness.*

Happy New Year!

As we bid farewell to 2018 and look forward to the new year, the Veterans Furniture Center is in a far different, and better place, than it was a year ago. In the day to day efforts of helping those veterans who have suffered from homelessness to start a new life, it is easy to lose track of all the changes going on around you. The new year is a great time to take stock as we prepare and plan for the year ahead. Thanks to your support and the efforts of our volunteers, we have made astonishing progress toward our goal of providing every veteran we serve with a complete compliment of exactly the furniture and household goods they need to start a new life.



Looking back to where we came from

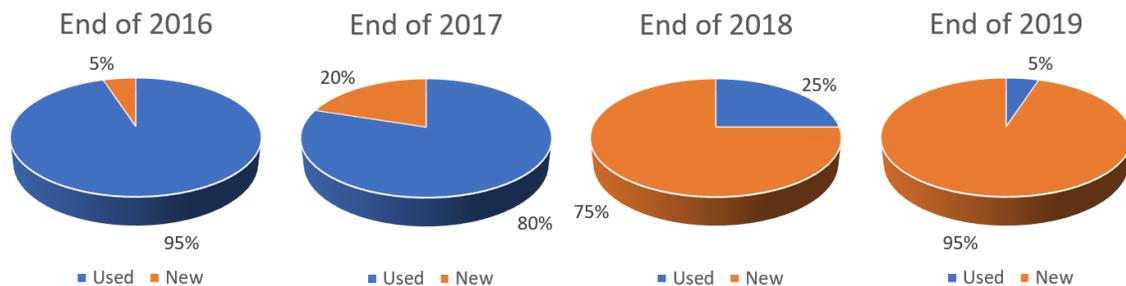
Two thousand seventeen was a difficult year. We started the year 100% reliant on used, donated items. This model had proven to be very inefficient and often resulted in not having the items the veterans needed. Deliveries continued every week, without fail, but were often incomplete. Our volunteers were making pickups three days a week to gather enough to deliver one day a week, but much of what well-intended donors gave us was not useable. Our veterans usually have very small apartments and have no use for large dining room sets, outdoor furniture, or many other items we received. Some items were broken and went to our repair shop where our volunteers worked wonders to make otherwise useless items serviceable. We attempted to sell some of the larger items and use the money to buy more suitable items. We were spending 75% of all our resources collecting and processing donated items, many of which ended up getting thrown out.. Worst of all, while we were helping our transitioning veterans, we weren't meeting their needs. Too many times we had to say "I'm sorry, but we don't have any "

Our biggest problem was beds. Providing a bed to a veteran living in an empty apartment is critical. Most of the donated beds we received were king size, which often didn't fit in the tiny apartments. They were usually well worn, and sanitary issues are always a concern when distributing used beds. In May of 2017, Living Spaces offered to provide new beds for free. This led to us to seriously considering, *"what if we could buy, or get donations of, all new items, specifically tailored to the veterans' needs?"*

In the months that followed a plan gradually developed. The "kit" was defined to include not only furniture (a bed to sleep in, a chair to sit on, a small TV, a small table to sit at) but also much-needed household items (linens, kitchenware, a coffee maker, a small microwave, etc.) We discussed the idea with the VA and some of our social service partners, who enthusiastically supported it. Still, it seemed like an impossible dream. We priced the items out from various sources. Assuming we could continue to get free beds, with the discounts we could obtain, we could buy everything in our kit for only \$900. That was encouraging but doing the math it becomes a little intimidating. We are servicing around 400 veterans a year. At \$900 each that requires \$360,000, far more than the VFC has ever raised in the past. Still, the benefits to our transitioning veterans would be enormous and providing the items they really need would well mean that more of them would be able to successfully transition back to a normal, productive life.

A Bold New Plan

A bold, multiyear plan was put in place with the objective of broadly increasing the donor base and transitioning to 95%+ new furniture and household goods by the end of 2019.



The goals we set for ourselves for 2018 were challenging, but we are pleased to announce that we have met them all and are well on our way to achieving our two year objectives. 2019 will be another difficult year with many challenges ahead, but we are optimistic. The VA and our social service partners are supportive, and the veterans we serve are thrilled when we deliver a complete kit to help them start a new life.

2018 – A New Beginning



Here is a summary of what was accomplished in 2018 and what our goals are for the coming year.

Deliveries

- We assisted three-hundred and seventy-five veterans referred to us by the VA or one of our five social service partners.
 - Deliveries took place 52 weeks of the year, without fail.
 - Anyone requesting a bed received a new bed provided by Living Spaces.
 - By October we achieved our 2018 objective of delivering complete kits consisting of at least 75% new items. On average, for the whole year, we delivered over 50% new items in 2018.
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Pickups

- We drastically cut back on the pick ups of used furniture, greatly reducing the drain on our resources and the need to dispose of items not suitable for our needy veterans. Unfortunately, some potential furniture donors expressed resentment when we declined to pick up their used items. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but our focus must be on helping veterans who have suffered from homelessness, and many of the items offered are simply not suitable for their small apartments.
 - We eliminated furniture drives, reducing the load on our volunteers.
 - The warehouse is much more organized and operating more efficiently than in the past.
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Outreach

- We developed a completely new website and Facebook page at no cost to the VFC.
 - We added new videos, which you can access through the website or the Facebook page.
 - We developed new literature explaining the VFC, our mission, and our donation programs.
 - We held two open house events at the warehouse.
 - We did two TV interviews, one on PBS, the other on Peoria Pulse.
 - We established new relationships with numerous corporations, organizations, and groups.
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Fund Raising

- We added a new donor management system that gives us the ability to accept donations via credit cards, provides for subscriptions, accurately tracks donations and issues initial tax receipts, and provides outreach tools.
 - We implemented two new donation campaigns, Support a Veteran, and Needed Things for Needy Veterans, where 100% of the donations received go directly to purchase the items our veterans need.
 - We obtained certification from the Arizona Department of Revenue as a Qualified Charitable Organization allowing individual donors to receive up to \$800 in tax credits on their Arizona Income Tax for donations made to the VFC.
 - We held our first golf tournament to benefit with proceeds going to help our needy veterans.
 - We held our first Veterans Appreciation Day event with proceeds going to help our needy veterans.
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Donations

- We received perfectly sized beds for each of our veterans from Living Spaces
- Overall financial donations increased about 4X over 2017.
- The number of financial donations from individuals increased 10X over 2017. Increasing this is especially important as we believe many smaller donors is important to our mission. It sends a better message to our needy veterans and is more sustainable over the long run than a few large corporations.
- We received a \$75,000 grant received from the Arizona Department of Veterans Services in support of our transition to all new furniture and household goods.
- Grants received from Disabled American Veterans Foundation, Thunderbird Charities, APS, Southwest Veterans Foundation, the City of Peoria, American Legion Aux Unit 107, and B.P.O.E Lodge #335.



Looking Ahead

Our long-term goal is to put ourselves out of business. Between 2009, when the VFC was formed, and 2016, the number of veterans suffering from homelessness was cut in half. It rose slightly in 2016, and the VA's numbers from 2017 showed over 40,000 veterans suffering from homelessness. The January 2018 survey indicates a drop to 38,000. We are moving in the right direction, but there is much more to do.

One concern is repetitive homelessness. Placing a veteran in subsidized housing without furniture or the basic household items needed to make that apartment a home often results in a return to the streets. Our transition to providing a complete kit of all new items is directly aimed at increasing the success rate and thereby reducing homelessness even further. With your help, we are making a difference.

In the short term, we are focused on serving those who need our help and completing our transition to all new items that we started in 2018.



Goals for 2019

Assist all the veterans referred to us by our partner agencies We will continue to deliver every week, maintaining our unbroken track record of helping those in need.

Deliver an average of 95% new furniture and household goods with 100% by year-end.

Obtain a new truck. Our current truck has over 350,000 miles on it and breaks down frequently. We have been able to borrow the VA truck to help offset this, but this is not guaranteed to continue, and we need a new truck that belongs to the VFC. We have one grant request pending for this purpose. We have our fingers crossed!

Increase funds raised by 2.5X over 2018. This is essential if we are to meet the objectives above.

Increase individual donor base by 5X over 2018. Strong support from many individuals is our best path to a sustainable operation.

Increase average individual donation by 2X with the tax credit offer.

Obtain four corporate grants with an average of \$25,000 (Two requests currently outstanding).

Increase the number of fund-raising events from two to five, raising \$40,000.

Major Challenges

These are aggressive goals. To achieve them we will need your help. The first quarter of 2019 will be especially challenging. While we have applied for several grants, even if we receive that funding, it won't be available until later in the year. Therefore, we will need as much support from individuals as possible.

Tax season is upon us. The VFC is a Qualified Charitable Organization registered with the Arizona Department of Revenue. Up to \$800 per couple and \$400 per individual of your donations to the VFC may be claimed as a tax credit against your Arizona Income Tax. Note that this is a credit, not a deduction. That means you subtract the applicable amount from what you owe in income tax. In other words, you get your donation back! You must owe the tax to get the tax credit.

If you have already donated to the VFC, thank you! The QCO number you need to claim this credit is 21977. You should have received a tax receipt for your donation. If not, or if you have misplaced it, please send an email to vfcdonations@gmail.com. We will provide you with a copy. Please tell your friends about your donation, share this newsletter, our videos and our website with them, and ask them to join you in supporting our deserving veterans who need our help. If you have not donated, please consider doing so. If you are not sure how much tax you will owe, complete your tax return, then donate up to \$800 of that to the VFC and subtract it from what you must pay the Arizona Department of Revenue. Donations can be made online on our website, veteransfurniturecenter.org, or by filling out the donation form at the end of this document, or downloadable from our website, and sending it, along with your check, to the address shown on the form. Then let your friends know that you are helping transition veterans from homelessness to a new life and ask them to help as well. **Donations made prior to April 15, 2019 are eligible for tax credits on your 2018 tax return.**



Thank You

First, a huge thank you to all our volunteers, especially those who show up week after week to deliver the furniture and household goods to our needy veterans. **You are the VFC**, and you are making a huge difference in the lives of these needy veterans.

Also, a big thank you to all who have donated funds to support our veterans during 2018. You have made a difference. The Board, our volunteers, and most of all the needy veterans who receive the items we buy with your donations, really appreciate your support. To continue our mission, we need a growing base of folks like you who are willing and able to help in our fight against veteran homelessness.

A special thanks to the Arizona Department of Veteran Services, who believed in and supported our plan to serve our needy veterans much more effectively by providing a complete kit of all new items by providing a large grant in 2018 to launch the program.



Finally, thank you to our organizational and corporate sponsors who played such a big role in allowing us to meet our goals in 2018. Living Spaces, Disabled American Veterans Foundation, Thunderbird Charities, Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation, APS, Southwest Veterans Foundation, the City of Peoria, American Legion Aux Unit 107, and B.P.O.E Lodge #335



And Thank You for Your Support!

Veterans Furniture Center

Help us Help Our Veterans

Donation Form



Help Our Needy Veterans

The VFC is assisting 6-8 veterans a week transition from temporary shelters to permanent housing by providing them with the furniture and household goods they need to start a new life and successfully return to society. Thanks to careful purchasing and discounts we receive from vendors we can supply everything a veteran needs for only \$900. For \$900 you can support a veteran.

Donations in any amount are greatly appreciated. \$600 will purchase all the furniture needed for their small apartments, and \$300 will purchase all their household goods. Visit VeteransFurnitureCenter.org to see how smaller donations may be applied to purchase specific items.

Arizona Tax Credit

Your donation may be eligible for a tax credit of up to \$800.



When you donate to the VFC we will provide you with a tax receipt and a special number for your AZ tax return. **Donations received before April 15 are eligible for tax credits on your 2018 tax return.** You may subtract up to \$800 per couple or \$400 per individual from the taxes you owe for donation made to the VFC. Note that you must owe the taxes to receive this credit. VFC QCO code is 21977.

Please complete the following form and give it to any Board Member or mail it to:

Veterans Furniture Center
c/o Walter Schumacher, Treasurer
12338 W Cactus Blossom Trail
Peoria, AZ 85383

Please Make Checks Payable to Veterans Furniture Center
or go to VeteransFurnitureCenter.org to donate online

Name:

Street:

City: State: ZIP:

Phone:

Email:



Important for a tax receipt