



Veterans Furniture Center Newsletter - Summer 2020

Veteran Run - All Volunteer
Helping Formerly homeless veterans return to society



Memorial Day 2020 passed with little fanfare due to the pandemic that currently grips the country. None the less, most veterans and many others took time to remember and quietly paid tribute to our fallen brothers and sisters who gave all for the United States. They will not be forgotten-

The photo on the right side of the banner above was taken Memorial Day 2020 at the Vietnam Wall by Matt Rourke of the Associated Press.

Stay Safe, Help Those in Need, This too Will Pass



The global pandemic has had a profound impact on all of us. Our homeless veterans, along with the VA and the local nonprofits, including the VFC, have unique challenges. Our homeless veterans are especially vulnerable.

The VA has responded quickly and admirably, quarentining homeless veterans in the medical center and emphasizing rapid rehousing to get them into private living quarters as opposed to the transition shelters used in more normal times. This housing keeps the veterans isolated from each other but comes without all of the rehabilitation and support services associated with the transitional housing and the HUD-VASH program. Special times require extraordinary actions, and the VA, and the VAMC have taken swift action to deal with the issues presented by the virus.

Impact on VFC Resources



The VFC relies on financial support from a variety of sources to purchase and obtain the furniture and household goods our veterans need. Almost all veterans charities are having a difficult time due to the pandemic. Many foundations and corporations that usually help support our charities have diverted their available funds to new organizations formed to fight the virus directly. Several of our more significant past sponsors have done this, while others have cut back on their contributions for the same reason.

The VFC conducts several fundraising activities during the year, funding about 10% of our total budget. We had to cancel two significant events scheduled for the past quarter. We are now looking at two events in November, but these will depend on the conditions in Arizona at the time.

On the brighter side, Arizona Department of Veterans Services awarded the VFC a grant earlier this year that will cover about 25% of our costs. This grant provides four payments based on progress and has helped to cushion the blow.

Also, Living Spaces has provided enough Beds for all of the veterans we will serve for the rest of the year. At this time, we have 150 beds in inventory.

The VFC Delivers



Based on consultations with our partners at the VA, the VFC suspended deliveries in April. We resumed in early May with only a small backlog, and quickly caught up. Due to the emergency strategies implemented by the VA, the number of referrals from the HUD-VASH team has been less than expected. At the end of June, the VFC had helped ninety-six veterans, since January 1st, transition to permanent housing by providing the furniture and household goods they need to start a new life.

In recent weeks, the number of referrals increased closer to the regular rate, but it is unclear at this time what we can expect for the rest of the year. Weekly deliveries continue with our volunteers taking extra precautions to protect themselves and the veterans we serve.

Trilogy Veterans Club Tax Credit Campaign Results



As announced in our Spring newsletter, the Trilogy Veterans Club held a campaign to encourage club members and supporters to take advantage of the tax credit programs and support our destitute veterans. This Campaign raised over \$8,000 to help our veterans. All of us at the VFC thank the Trilogy Veterans for their support.

The Trilogy Veterans Club is a 501(c)(3) organization of veterans living in Trilogy at Vistancia. The club and its members go above and beyond to support veterans in need.

Groups and Grants

In the second quarter of 2020 we received support and grants from several foundations and organizations.

- **Elks Lodge #335**
- **American Legion Post #44**
- **Employees of Charles Schwab**
- **Thunderbirds Charities**
- **APS**

Their support is greatly appreciated.



Volunteer Spotlight



With this issue of the newsletter, we kick-off a new feature honoring our volunteers who make the VFC possible. It is only right that we start this series by thanking all of the many volunteers who have delivered for our veterans week after week. In future issues, we will shine the spotlight on individuals, couples, or small groups whose exemplary contributions have done so much to help those in need.



Most of our veterans have almost nothing. We find them sleeping on the floor.



Every Friday morning, our volunteers gather at the warehouse.



Loading the truck. Each veteran will get everything they need to make a home and start a new life.



The apartments are very small and often difficult to access.



Nothing is more important than a brand new bed.

**BE THE
CHANGE**
VOLUNTEER &
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



Have you ever seen a homeless veteran on a street corner and thought, "why doesn't somebody do something?" We are. Since 2009 the VFC has helped more than 3,200 veterans start a new life. You, too, can help make the difference for our needy veterans. We have many volunteer opportunities, including jobs you can do at home on your own schedule. For more information, visit the volunteer page of our website:

<https://www.veteransfurniturecenter.org/volunteer-your-time.html>

New Volunteers

John Calhoun



John Calhoun is a long time supporter of the VFC. He retired from the Arizona National Guard as a Master Sergeant with 30 years total Military service.

John transferred to Phoenix in 1980 from the Midwest and spent a career in banking and real estate. He and his wife currently reside in Trilogy at Vistancia.

Jay Mahajan



Jay Mahajan is an active duty USAF Lieutenant Colonel and F-16 instructor pilot with twenty-two years of service. He is stationed at Luke AFB, lives in Vistancia with his wife Lauren and their two daughters, and is looking forward to serving veterans that need a little help getting back on their feet.

Lauren Croft-Mahajan



Lauren Croft-Mahajan is a loving mother of two beautiful girls, a part-time Pilates instructor, and a heroic military spouse. She has spent the last eighteen years supporting her itinerant fighter pilot husband through seven moves and three combat deployments and is excited to join the VFC in hopes that none of us ever have to see another homeless veteran sitting on a street corner in the Arizona heat.

The Importance of Individual Donors to Our Mission



The VFC is an all-volunteer organization with very low overhead; however, purchasing all of the furniture and household goods our veterans need requires significant resources. We raise funds in several ways. None of these is more critical than donations received from individuals and small organizations. Thanks to your support, our donor base has grown considerably over the last few years. To ensure the sustainability of the VFC, we need to continue to expand and grow that base.

You can help.

1. Forward this newsletter to friends or fellow members of your group or club. Mention the critical work we are doing, letting them know you support the VFC.
2. If you belong to a group that supports charities, let those that make the decisions know about the VFC and recommend they consider supporting our homeless veterans.
3. Consider subscribing to our Friends of the VFC program to make small monthly donations via your credit or debit card. It is easy to do via our website. If you are an Arizona taxpayer, all donations made to this program count toward the tax credit program. We will send you a consolidated tax receipt at the end of the year so that you can claim the credit on your 2020 taxes.
4. As a group or even as an individual, run a campaign to collect NEW items we need. In the past, supporters have collected and donated hygiene kits, two slice toasters, pillows, linens, kitchenware, small coffee makers, and other items. We deliver these to the veterans who need them. If you would like some ideas on how to do this, go to our website, veteransfurniturecenter.org, and click on the Ask Us button, or contact us directly at donations@veteransfurniturecenter.org.

Help us help our fellow veterans in need and add to our growing network of supporters. Your help is enormously appreciated.

Special Events



Our biggest fundraising event for 2020 will be our golf tournament to be held on November 20th at the beautiful Palmbrook Country Club.

This event will be a fun scramble format for four players, and you can sign up individually or as a foursome. While we are still working on our final plans for this event, it will be subject to change if conditions warrant. Mark your calendar and save the date. We will keep you informed.



- Eighteen Holes of Golf**
- Luncheon and Award Ceremony**
- Raffle with Great Prizes**
- Silent Auction**

All proceeds go to fight the battle against veteran homelessness

Watch for more information!

Veterans Appreciation Day

Cross Eyed Cricket - 28615 N. El Mirage Rd. Peoria AZ



Our annual Veterans Appreciation Day at the Cross Eyed Cricket in Vistancia has become a Peoria tradition. We are currently planning on holding this year's event on November 7th from noon to five P.M., pandemic conditions permitting. We will have a band, raffle, silent auction, and door prizes. This fun-filled day is for all veterans and veteran supporters. There is no admission charge, and all proceeds go to help us help our transitioning veterans.

Looking Ahead



It is impossible to predict the future, especially during these troubling times. Just when things were starting to look better, they got worse, a lot worse. None the less there is hope on the horizon, and we know there are better days ahead.

There are a few things we know.

1. There are still a lot of homeless veterans who will need our help to establish a home successfully. It is hard to predict how many will need our help in the next six months. That is up to the VA and their ongoing response to the pandemic.
2. This too will pass. Together, we will get through this. We will continue our deliveries to the best of our abilities, and the VA and the veterans we serve can count on the VFC and all our volunteers in this time of need.