



WINTER  
NEWSLETTER  
2019

*"Serving those who preserve our freedom."*  
  
**SEMPER FI 15**  
FUN  
*Inspiring Years*

*It's not what's under the Christmas tree that matters, it's who's around it.*

—CHARLIE BROWN

**A**LTHOUGH LIKE CHARLIE BROWN'S Christmas sentiment, the Semper Fi Fund strives to find the intangible moments in life. The embrace of a caregiver after receiving her much-deserved assistance, the smile of a service member as he is handed the keys to his new adaptive vehicle, the laughs and bear hugs between Veterans as they reunite at our unit reunions—it is these moments that make every ounce of effort from our amazing staff and volunteers worth it. As we reach the end of our 15th year, it is the intangibles that we measure our success by. During the holiday season we are reminded of the people we are able to embrace,

to welcome into our Semper Fi Fund family. Over time, whether someone spent 10 seconds or 10 years with us, we have always wanted them to walk away feeling the love and compassion of this organization. It is our goal to continue to encircle as many families, staff, volunteers, donors, and service members from all branches as is humanly possible. This mission deserves nothing less! Your dedication to our military families helps bring love, support, and life changing programming to those we serve—**THANK YOU** for remaining by our sides as we take this critical mission forward *Serving Those Who Preserve our Freedom.*

Wishing ALL a Blessed Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year!



KAREN GUENTHER

*Karen Guenther*

President, Chief Executive Officer, Founder



# DoubleDown4Vets

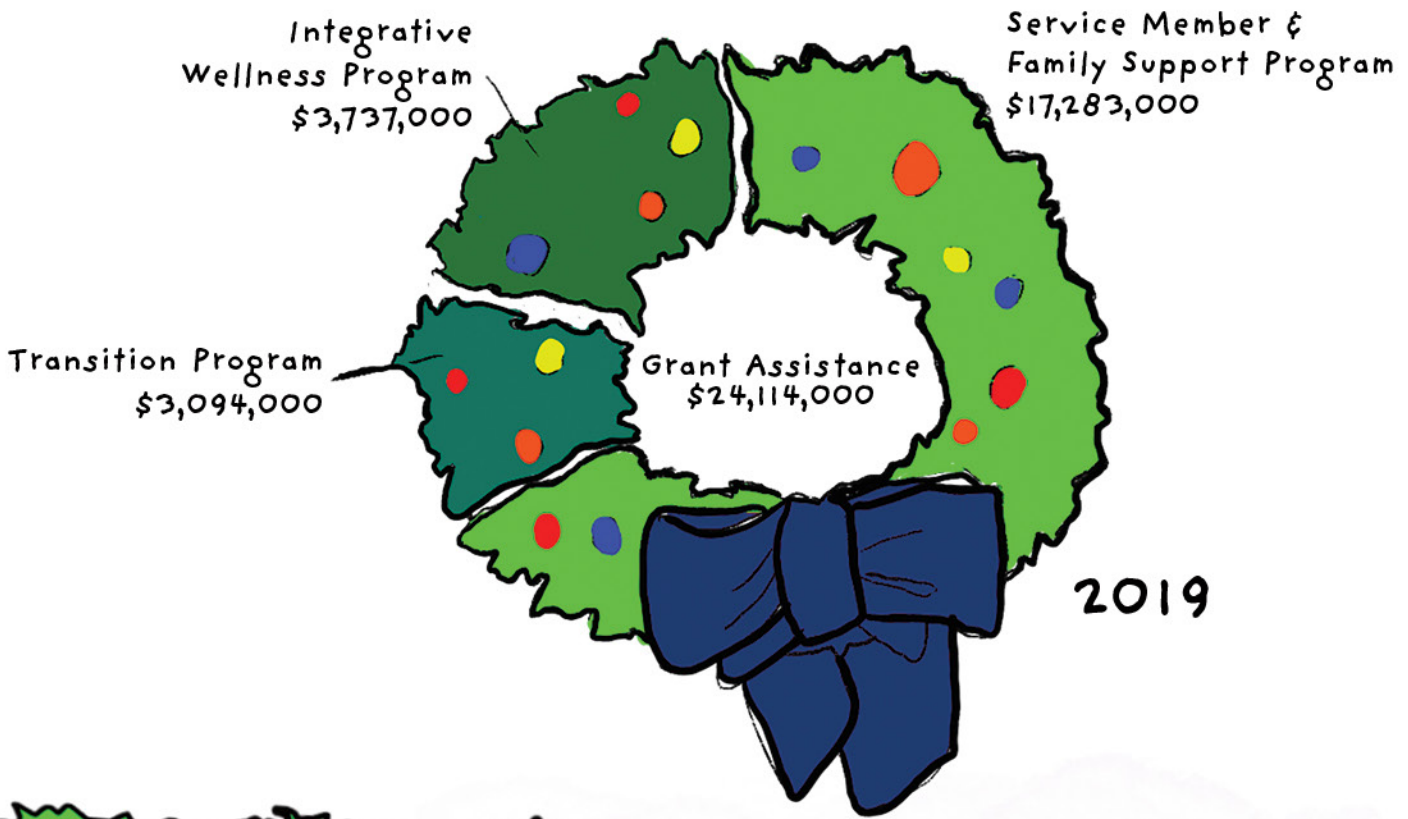
—2019—

**F**OR THE PAST 8 YEARS, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation has so generously launched a Match Campaign and raised more than \$100,000,000 with the help of charitable supporters just like you! This campaign is our lifeline in keeping our programs strong and at the ready—providing critical funding for the entire year of support for our military families. Please join us for the **2019 Double Down for**

**Veterans Match Campaign** and help us spread the word far and wide! Every donation big and small will be matched dollar for dollar up to **\$10 million, until December 31st!** Our hope is to make this a historic year in donations, sending a strong message to those we serve—service members from every branch of the military—that the Semper Fi Fund and America's Fund stand beside them as strong as we have in the past, and long into the future. Let's go—Double Down for Veterans!



# Assisting the Family Unit from Injury Through Recovery



2,000  
First-Time  
Grant Recipients



6,600  
Service  
Members Impacted



29,200  
Grants Delivered



\$24,114,000  
Total  
Assistance Provided



## OUR MISSION

Semper Fi Fund is dedicated to providing immediate financial assistance and lifetime support to combat wounded, critically ill, and catastrophically injured members of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. We deliver the resources they need during recovery and transition back to their communities, working to ensure no one is left behind.

# A HERO'S STORY



**A**LEX'S STORY—We are proud to share this AMAZING story of perseverance, courage, and optimism!

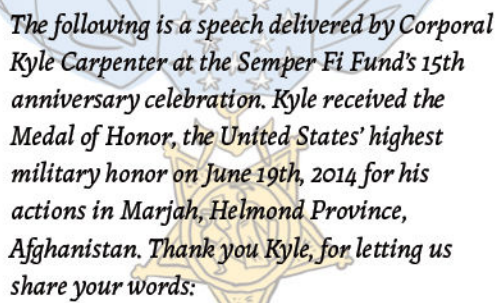
SSG Alejandro Jauregui was wounded on April 8th, 2012 when he stepped on an IED in Afghanistan during his 4th combat deployment with the United States Army Infantry. Alex sustained injuries to his hands and suffered the loss of both legs—spending two years recovering in Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

After retirement, Alex found it difficult to find a job, so his brother-in-law suggested a unique business venture—beekeeping! Their growing business clones bees and sells them to farmers in the area to pollinate their crops. Now that they have increased the number of hives, Alex's business is expanding to process and bottle the honey. The Semper Fi Fund has stood beside Alex since his injury in 2012, from the bedside to the beehives and all in between. We are so PROUD of Alex and his inspiring journey—motivates us all!



# A SEASON OF HONOR AND HOPE





*The following is a speech delivered by Corporal Kyle Carpenter at the Semper Fi Fund's 15th anniversary celebration. Kyle received the Medal of Honor, the United States' highest military honor on June 19th, 2014 for his actions in Marjah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Thank you Kyle, for letting us share your words:*

IT IS COMFORTING for me to stand in front of you tonight because I don't feel the pressure to try to perfectly convey what we have been through, the struggles we have faced, or the duties we have upheld because you have been right there, beside me.

Whether you were in Iraq, Afghanistan, Walter Reed—during those quiet days at home after our time of running and gunning came to an end, as a caretaker sleeping on a makeshift bed in the corner of a hospital room to be there for us, love us, and help us through the long and painful nights that, at times, seemed like they may never end, or as Semper Fi Fund case managers who become beacons of hope and support for your loved ones, and who also become best friends and texting buddies with your mom before you even regain consciousness—You have been there.

To say it is an honor to be here tonight would be an understatement. It is so humbling to be around so many genuine people that truly care and have helped me and so many others not only get back to the warriors we were before, but in so many cases...even better. We might be physically, mentally, or emotionally different and that's okay. We have owned our struggles, learned from our struggles, and become better because of them.

It is impossible for me to think about struggle without perspective. I think perspective is extremely important. Everything in life is a choice. You are never alone in your struggle and the smallest of steps eventually completes the grandest of journeys.

I believe the heart of a volunteer is one of the most powerful things in the world. And thankfully every single person that

is here tonight, in one way or another, understands that too. TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED OR WHO ARE STILL SERVING: I thank you and it is truly an honor to call you brothers and sisters in arms and to have sacrificed alongside you. No one made you go to that recruiting station, raise your right hand, and give up your life for your country. Really think about that and be proud of how amazing that is.

TO MY FAMILY...TO OUR FAMILY...THE SEMPER FI FUND: You were there when so few others were. You were there to give my mom a jacket when she arrived at Walter Reed with almost nothing because of the frantic rush to get to me before I arrived at the hospital. You were there to help with the plane tickets to fly my brothers to and from home and to the hospital since they were still in middle school when I was injured. You loved, supported, and befriended my family before I even knew that I had survived, and you have been there ever since.

It helps us realize the truly important aspects, blessings, and silver linings in and throughout life. Many times, my greatest lessons of perspective came to me only after having lived through difficult, painful, and seemingly impossible times. But sometimes, those lessons came in ways that...well...it's safe to say I wasn't expecting.

It was 2012 around 8 or 9 at night and I was walking from my room on one side of building 62 to the other side to go hang out with my squad leader, Sergeant Zac Stinson, who was recovering at Walter Reed as well. As most of you are probably familiar, building 62 is the wounded, ill, and injured barracks for service members and their families who have extended recovery periods at Walter Reed. It is also very nice and professional.

As the elevator opened up, I heard screaming coming from the lobby mixed with sounds and wild animal noises, like Marines who had escaped from their cages. I was immediately intrigued and terrified. As I reached the lobby I, unknowingly, was about to be taught a

beautiful lesson of perspective.

A small group of Marines were laughing and cheering, and as I got a little closer, I finally realized what was going on. Two triple amputees—crazy men and great Marines Tyler Southern and Todd Love—were taking turns holding onto the back of each other's motorized wheelchair while one drove full speed ahead dragging the other through the lobby as they held on for dear life.

Even with three limbs missing and having to live at a hospital while learning what their new life would be like, Tyler Southern and Todd Love had the biggest smiles and were spreading the most happiness out of anyone or any other perfectly healthy person on the base of Walter Reed and probably in all of DC.

In that moment I realized how drastically different perspective can be between people, depending on which lens of life you are choosing to look through.

Even if two people are seeing the same thing or going through similar situations, there will be two different perspectives. Two different struggles or victories. Two different downfalls or lessons learned. Two completely different life experiences.

Never compare your struggle with someone else's. *Everyone. Struggles.*

Struggle and the hardships of life are the common thread throughout every single person on this planet. We have all struggled and we will all continue to struggle. No matter how minor or severe, everyone's struggle is unique to them and everyone handles adversity differently. But when the inevitable hardships of life knock you down remember that.

There are no words that can describe how truly appreciative and thankful we are but just know that your hope and love have deeply and lovingly impacted more lives, families, and recoveries than you will ever know. *Be proud of who you are, what you do, and the mission you carry out.*

CORPORAL CARPENTER'S REACTION to the two Marines racing about the lobby in wheelchairs at Walter Reed, amid shouts of laughter and cheers from others in the room, is one of nature's remedies—humor. And as he reported, the chief active ingredient in humor is an altered perspective. Humor is a

uniquely human event.

We laugh because we humans can detach ourselves and look at ourselves and the world in a different light, from a different perspective. And the new perspective makes sense to us from within, which is where we make the connection, and where we laugh.

Corporal Carpenter is right. Everyone on the planet has some kind of struggle, from the cradle to the grave. The meaning and purpose of the struggle, though, is deeply personal. The heroes we've come to know through the work of the SFF teach us where to look for the meaning and purpose of our struggle.

First, in what they do. Men and women, like Corporal Carpenter, have gone on to form corporations, aid others in their struggles by outreach programs, or embrace personal athletic challenges.

Second, they help us discover the meaning and purpose of our struggle by being themselves engaged in their own fight. Nothing brings meaning to one's life like love, love of a spouse or children, love of country and neighbor. Corporal Carpenter learned that night from his Marines in the barracks lobby that they were spreading love; and he learned it from the people working with the Fund. We can't live without it.

Thirdly, and most importantly, they teach us to face a fate that cannot be changed. "Everything in life is a choice," Corporal Carpenter said, "And you are not alone." Many have said it. It's not what happens to you that is important as much as how you respond to what happens to you that makes the difference. I say, we want the most out of life; and life wants the most out of us. Growing beyond our limits—new ones and old ones—is to witness life's goodness beyond our imagination or expectation, the gift inside of every new perspective, and that's no joke.

FR. CHRISTOPHER MERRIS,  
CAPT, CHC, USN (RET.)

WITH THE COUNTDOWN to Christmas inching closer and closer to the big day, over 250 of Santa's elves came together for the 11th annual Semper Fi Fund Ornament Packing Party on November 24th. The goal is to spread Holiday Cheer every year to our wounded, ill, and injured service members and their families by providing a Christmas Tree ornament as a small token of our honor, care, and support for them during the holidays.

Kris Kringle's helpers came from many local communities, young and old, to ensure each ornament was packaged with love and care—(18,000 ornaments!). They began arriving around 9:45 am and quickly went to their assigned workstations. With Christmas music blasting and a delicious lunch donated by Mission BBQ, the atmosphere was merry and bright.



By 2:00 pm the US Postal service Truck arrived to pick up the finished packages to be mailed all around the country. It's a powerful reminder that America is deeply grateful for our service members and their families. They are not alone and certainly are never forgotten!





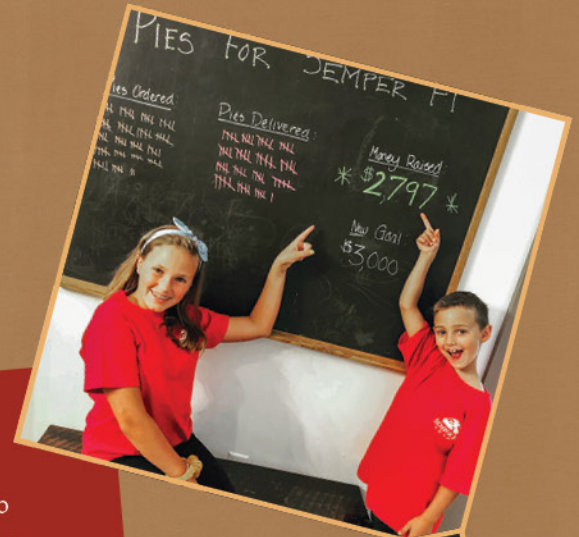


As is the case in so many communities across America, the transition from summer to fall in Burton, Ohio, finds many residents firing up their ovens and rediscovering the joys of baking. The fall foliage is accented by delicious aromas of breads, cakes and pies. "We're a family that loves to bake," says Rebecca Klein, whose children Annalise (13) and Jack (8) created the "Pies for Semper Fi" fundraiser—which raised nearly \$4,000 to help support the Semper Fi Fund's mission! The kids set a goal of \$1,000. Pies are sold at a suggested donation of \$15 each. Rebecca's family covers the cost of the pies so that the entirety of the donation can go to the Fund, and Patterson's Farm in Chesterland, Ohio, generously donated apples to the effort.

"This experience has been incredible," Rebecca told us. "The kids are learning life lessons in every direction: the importance of considering the needs of others, our responsibility to help those who serve our country, writing

personalized notes of gratitude, and so much more. Every donation that comes in is thrilling, and it's a joy to know that each one is a worry that can be removed from the heart of a military member in need." The 2019 Marine Corps Marathon, which took place October 27, was Rebecca's fifth, in honor of Specialist Chris Horton, killed in action in Afghanistan. Annalise ran the Marine Corps 10k (her first!) and Jack ran his third MCM kids' race.

"Being able to share this with my kids has been an incredible blessing. They're learning the importance of giving what you can, when you can. The care of our service members is something that we, as Americans, should all feel a responsibility to do. The Semper Fi Fund has given our family the opportunity to do just that, and we are very grateful." Honoring service and supporting service members who need assistance. Sounds to us as American as apple pie!



# Compassion In Action

**I**N ADDITION TO THEIR general operating support, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation has generously helped us launch two new programs—the LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund and the Semper Fi Fund Visiting Nurse Program.

## LCPL PARSONS WELCOME HOME FUND

More than 75,000 veterans were severely injured in Vietnam-23,000 of whom are 100% disabled. Through this new initiative, the Semper Fi Fund is providing assistance to catastrophically injured veterans from all U.S. service branches who suffered their injuries as the result of combat operations in Vietnam. It is designed to provide transportation, housing, and medical care grants to Vietnam veterans with a 70% or greater rating for combat-related PTSD, blindness, paralysis, amputation, burns over 50% of their body, severe traumatic brain injury, and life-threatening illness due to Agent Orange exposure.

## SEMPER FI FUND VISITING NURSES PROGRAM

The Semper Fi Fund Visiting Nurses Program provides support to military service members and veterans of all five service branches. They provide emotional support, assist in the development of coping skills, identify health and wellness needs, gaps in care, and barriers to care using a self-care management model. The goal of the Visiting Nurses is to create a framework of support to improve overall health and wellness for our service members, veterans and their families.



**LCPL PARSONS WELCOME HOME FUND**  
• Program launched in June 2018  
• 127 Vietnam vets assisted  
• \$1.2 Million in direct support

**SEMPER FI FUND VISITING NURSE PROGRAM**  
• Program launched in July 2019  
• 18 nurses brought on as staff

**JULY VISITING NURSE ACTIVITY**  
• 103 in-person meetings with service members  
• 692 follow-up assessments  
• 14,571 miles traveled by car and air to meet service members face to face  
*Activity in July 2019*

# COMFORT WHEN IT'S NEEDED MOST



AFTER SERVING IN the U.S. Army in Vietnam for just a few months, Donald encountered something that would change his life forever.

Like many other service members serving during the Vietnam War, he was exposed to Agent Orange, a powerful chemical defoliant used mainly from 1962 to 1975. Cancer, Parkinson's disease and heart disease, are only a few of the detrimental conditions resulting from the exposure to this dangerous substance. In Donald's case, the result was stage IV lung cancer.

He has suffered lifelong health conditions including a problem breathing for many years. "I'm sick, I'm not able to do the things I used to do," said the father of nine who used to enjoy fishing, hunting and the outdoors. "I'm so grateful for the Semper Fi Fund—they are extraordinary. I wish I had contacted them a long time ago."

"We had just bought this house," Donald recalled, referring to the home in Gainesville, Florida, where he and his wife Beverly currently live. "It was about 30 years old, the air conditioning was 30

years old, it just shut off. It was so hot in here, we had to get fans, the AC wasn't working. My case manager came out to interview me, he's a veteran, too."

The Fund helped Donald in several ways, not only getting the air conditioning fixed but also taking care of significant adaptive home renovations.

"My experience has taught me very well that there are some good people in this world, and I am so blessed with the network that I have," Donald told us. "My wife is by my side, it's hard on her, I know it's hard on her—I'm trying to live longer, and we got to do what we got to do. The support I have from the Semper Fi Fund is outstanding. I can find no other organization that's better. As a veteran living with cancer, Semper Fi helps me live longer and live the quality of life I'm living."

"I am an honorably discharged Vietnam veteran," Donald added, "and I encourage every veteran that was exposed to Agent Orange to seek medical help. And if you need any kind of assistance, it's very simple: *Call the Semper Fi Fund.*"



SEMPER FI FUND & AMERICA'S FUND PROGRAMS—How We Help!



SERVICE MEMBER & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM



Assisting the family unit from injury through recovery:

- Bedside Financial Support
- Caregiver Support & Retreats
- Housing Assistance
- Transportation Assistance
- Kids Program
- Specialized & Adaptive Equipment
- Visiting Nurse Program
- LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund

TRANSITION PROGRAM



Integrating service members back into their communities:

- Education & Career Assistance
- Veteran & Unit Reunions
- Veteran 2 Veteran Support (V2V)
- Semper Fi Fund Odyssey Retreat
- Semper Fi Fund Apprenticeship Programs

INTEGRATIVE WELLNESS PROGRAM



Providing wellness tools to improve body, mind, and spirit:

- PTSD & TBI Support
- NeuroFitness
- Specialized Equipment
- Post-Traumatic Growth Video Resources
- Wellness Corner
- Counseling
- Sports Program
- Jinx McCain Horsemanship Program
- Tim and Sandy Day Canine Companion Program

# THANK YOU!

## Our Promise Continues...

We are deeply grateful for your faithful support of our crucial mission—  
“Serving Those Who Preserve Our Freedom.”

Every day we continue to encounter Heroes and their families who persevere with incredible courage and hope. Together, we are providing immediate assistance, showing them

a new way forward, and reminding our service members and their families that they are not alone.

To learn about the challenges faced by our service members, and the assistance the Semper Fi Fund provides, please visit [www.semperfi.org](http://www.semperfi.org)

24,000  
Service Members  
Assisted

\$210 million  
in Assistance Provided

209,000  
Grants Issued

CharityWatch A+ rating—of 68 veteran and military charities rated, Semper Fi Fund is one of only two charities to earn their highest rating of A+.



Charity Navigator 4-Star rating—Nine consecutive years of the highest possible 4-Star rating, a milestone achieved by only 3% of charities.



GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency demonstrating our commitment to transparency.



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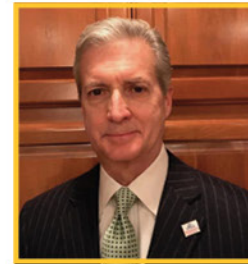
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Lieutenant Colonel, USMC Reserve



**T**HE HOLIDAY SEASON is a time of remembrance and of thanksgiving; when we pause to count our many blessings. For 15 years, the Semper Fi Fund has been blessed to serve those who have sacrificed so very much in defense of our nation. We have been blessed by tens of thousands of donors who have provided the financial resources to do the important work of the Fund. And, we have been blessed by the staff and volunteers who have tirelessly given of themselves to assist our wounded, critically ill and catastrophically injured service members and their families.

Please accept my most heartfelt thanks for all you have done to help the Fund in

this most noble endeavor of helping those who pay the price for our freedom. May each of you have a Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.



BOB BOWLIN

*Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Semper Fi Fund*



“The Semper Fi Fund has always allowed me to connect with family since my initial injury, especially during the holidays. When I returned home it was around the time of Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Semper Fi Fund flew my family from the West coast to East to spend time with me during those

holidays and has gone above and beyond still continuing today in assisting not only myself, but my family in getting whatever assistance we may need in order to keep cohesion and stay connected as a family. Thank you!”

—CPL DARRYL CHARLES II

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**SEMPER FI**  
**FUND**  
ARMY · MARINE CORPS · NAVY · AIR FORCE · COAST GUARD



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Please send check donations to:  
Semper Fi Fund  
825 College Boulevard  
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For any additional information,  
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A+ RATING  
from CharityWatch



4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator



Platinum Seal of Transparency  
from GuideStar

# THANK YOU

\$210,000,000  
GIVEN IN ASSISTANCE

24,000  
WOUNDED HEROES  
& THEIR  
FAMILIES ASSISTED

209,000  
NUMBER OF GRANTS

