

A large, dark silhouette of a soldier in profile, facing right, occupies the left side of the image. The soldier is wearing a helmet and holding a rifle. The background is a warm, golden-yellow gradient, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

GIVING OUR HEROES

A NEW LEASE

ON LIFE

We are deeply committed to
healing the emotional wounds of
military service, for our veterans,
their families, and our communities.

Imagine!

Ten years ago, an estimated 22 veterans died by suicide each day

500,000 veterans were living on the streets.

Together we made a difference!

Suicide is down 25%!

Since 2010, veteran homelessness has decreased by over 55%!

Your donations, volunteer time, compassion, and action helped make this possible.

Healing Warrior Hearts has been providing free retreats for veterans since 1993, contributing to saving lives and families.

You can help us continue to lower these statistics.

How Does Healing Warrior Hearts Help Veterans With Your Contributions?

Healing Warrior Hearts is the primary program of the Starfish Foundation, offering free retreats for veterans and their families, where they can share their stories and receive emotional support from other veterans and trained peer specialists.

For over 30 years, Healing Warrior Hearts has been providing weekend retreats for veterans and their families. Founded by Patricia Clason, daughter of a WWII decorated army medic, and a renowned speaker, author, instructor and podcast host, these

weekend retreats are specifically designed to assist veterans, of any time or service, with the emotional, moral, and spiritual traumas often associated with military service.

It all started with the Starfish Foundation that was formed over 25 years ago, as a charitable, non-profit organization. Their mission is to assist emotional trauma survivors to release their grief, rage and shame, and allow joy, productivity and prosperity back into the lives of themselves and their families.



“We spent a weekend amongst strangers and experienced the impact of healing, forgiveness and bonding. It drew us closer as we shared and learned new things about one another, connecting on a whole new level. We didn’t know what to expect but are so glad we had the opportunity to experience the Healing Warrior Hearts Couples retreat. What an amazing opportunity for couples to heal from trauma that impacts their lives and relationships. This definitely will impact your life. I encourage any veteran to experience this retreat. For me, I plan to stay connected with this organization and become a volunteer for future retreats. The transformations I witnessed truly touched my heart.”

— Uzoma Ra, Marine Veteran, and Peggy Evans

At Healing Warrior Hearts, We Know The Stories of These Veterans and Their Family Members!



Shedy Kyle and her service dog, Ace.



Ben Singleton of Ben's Story, Warrior Films' Veterans Journey Home documentary

Military service is more than the official theatre of combat. Beyond physical action, it can be a battle of the spirit resulting in moral or spiritual injury and emotional trauma to the service members and to the families and friends who support them.

Before they are deployed to various arenas of combat, men and women must complete basic training or boot camp. Here, life for the service member is extremely regimented and rigid, and most often is a far different way of living than before their arrival.

The objective for any of the branches of service is to mold the new recruit into a person who is ready for the realities of fighting in a war. This includes how to dehumanize an enemy, to the point where it is a reflexive action for troops to kill when the situation deems it necessary. If troops do not learn how to put emotion aside, they could be killed along with other members of their team, and innocent civilians. They may witness death and destruction and then have to find the fortitude to continue until their tour is over.

Service members returning home from combat missions often feel anguish from what they have seen and experienced.

They are not the same people who left to attend basic training or boot camp. They will always look at life differently and may feel remorse for having to take action that went against their moral grain. Their sacrifice for our freedoms never ends.

Suicidal ideation, divorce, alcoholism, anger issues, PTSD, depression, isolation, traumatic brain injury, are all common issues many veterans face as they try to reintegrate into society and learn to be around people again.

These soldiers are our grandparents, parents, spouses, children, siblings and friends.

“You come back home feeling like you can’t be accepted into society anymore.”

“My experience with Healing Warrior Hearts retreats was definitely a game changer in my life, on how I look at things, how I navigate through every problem. It helped take a hard look at the man in the mirror with truth.

Dealing with and accepting my past was very challenging and painful for me, not realizing that sweeping my past underneath the rug would keep me from operating and living my life to it’s fullest. My abuse and my losses as a child with no guidance had only taught me how to deal with fear, pain and loss from the eyes of a child. That had become my comfort zone, my safe place, my norm.

Dealing with every problem and every situation in the same manner had stunted my growth, my learning and understanding. I spent my entire life dealing with situations in the same fashion expecting different results that would never come.

By taking this course, I was able to look at my life, my military experiences, from a different perspective, no longer preconditioned with the same old, same old. I was finally getting the guidance I so desperately needed to accept and deal with life. I have a different view and I’m getting different outcomes.

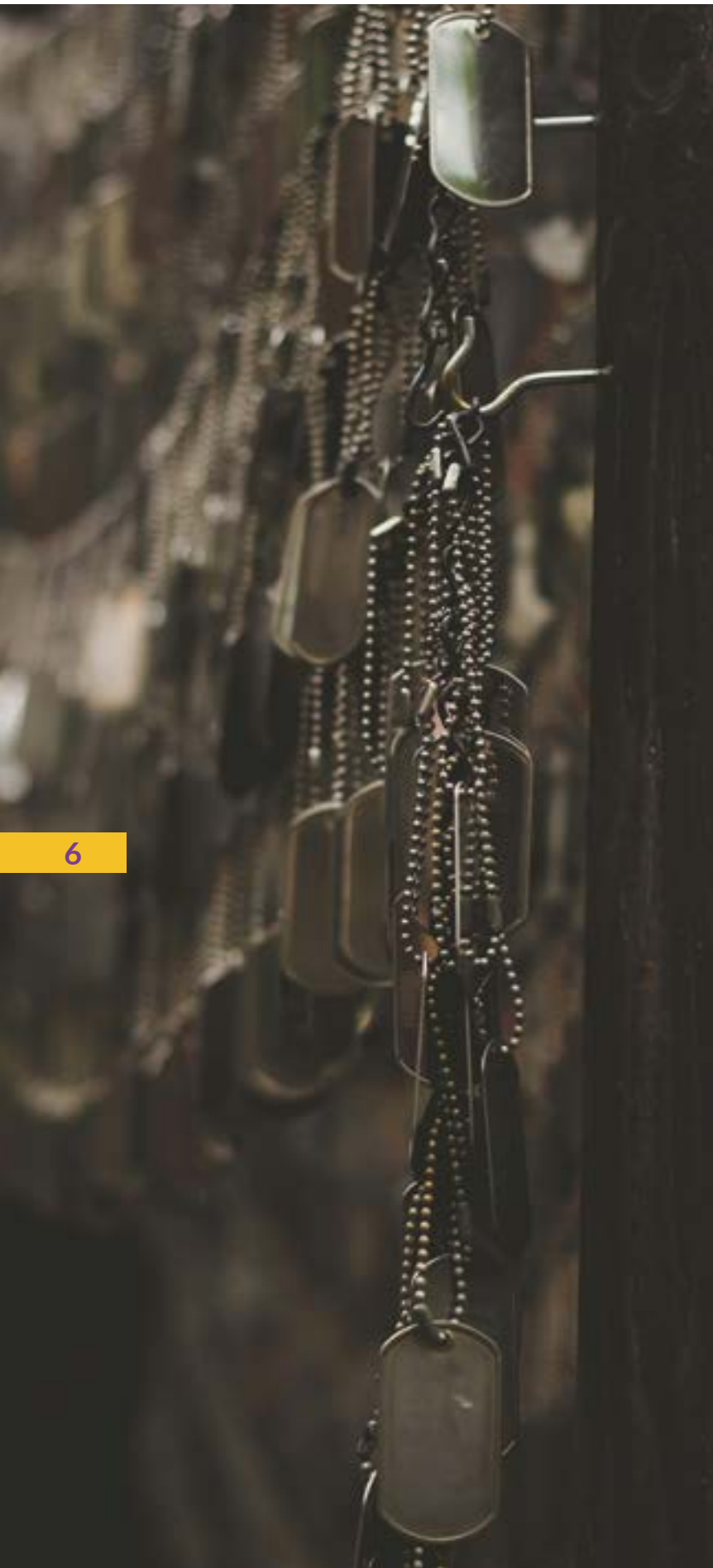
I thank all the staff of Healing Warrior Hearts for their love, understanding and guidance. Thank you for the change. I see me from the eyes of man”.

— Perry Ross, Marine Veteran



“I first learned about Healing Warrior Hearts through the VA while struggling with trauma from my military experience. The retreat changed my life dramatically – every minute is tailored to participants’ stories and needs. Unlike other programs I’ve tried, Healing Warrior Hearts gave me lasting results. I now have fewer panic attacks and am less triggered by things that bothered me before. When anxiety creeps up, I remember I have a huge support network of graduates and staff I can reach out to. I’m not alone in my struggles or healing anymore. I have more confidence to go out in public alone. This experience has been truly life-altering.”

— Shedy Kyle, Program Graduate and Board Member



With Your Generous Donations, Healing Warrior Hearts Helps Veterans And Their Families Every Day!

Healing Warrior Hearts provides a safe, confidential environment for veterans and their participating family members to share their stories and for those experiences to be witnessed without judgment. It is a space for healing and hope, with a support system of veterans and civilian friends who care and will help these veterans on their journey.

Retreats are staffed entirely by volunteers, consisting of veterans and civilians, including peer specialists and trained instructors. Retreats are small to provide quality and individual attention, with a maximum of 10 participants and a staff of two leaders, plus at least one staff person serving as a mentor for each participant, and several logistics staff.

Topics discussed include:

- Emotional Intelligence and how it will assist the veteran in managing emotions and relationships
- Understanding how the brain, body and emotions work together in healing
- The basics of PTSD and Moral Injury and how they affect behavior and emotions
- How to release unhealthy emotions the veteran may be carrying from their military experience and other areas of their life
- Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual Wellness
- Building better relationships
- Creating goals for moving forward in their healing journey

There are several variations of the program to accommodate specific issues experienced by veterans including:

Healing Warrior Hearts

A program for individual veterans, open to anyone who has served in the military, for any length of time and any discharge status.

Warrior Family Heart Couples

Specific programming for veterans and their partners designed to teach ways to communicate more effectively, build more intimacy and create a stronger bond.

Healing Warrior Hearts LGBTQ

Unique experiences of injustice, discrimination and abuse, both physical and emotional, are the emphasis of this special focus retreat for individual veterans. This confidential environment is staffed by veterans and trained civilians who share similar experiences or have identified as LGBTQ+ and their allies.

Healing Warrior Hearts Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

The purpose of this specialized retreat is for individual veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma. The staff of these retreats are veterans who have endured MST and civilians who have experienced sexual trauma.

Healing Warrior Hearts is non-denominational, and non discriminatory to race, age, gender, sexual preference, discharge status or type of service.

Retreats run through a weekend, beginning on Friday evening, and ending with a graduation ceremony on Sunday evening. Our program has been featured on numerous media outlets including podcasts and television, and was prominently featured in the documentary *Veteran's Journey Home*, (Warrior Films) written and directed by Frederick Marx (Hoop Dreams). To see firsthand what an impact our retreats make, please visit WarriorFilms.org.

Local participants return home each evening and visitors to the city will stay at a nearby hotel. Lodging expenses are covered by the sponsoring organization, either The Starfish Foundation (Wisconsin) or Texas for Heroes, (Texas).



"I'm just helping them stay alive every day."

-Jon Christensen (Vietnam Veteran, U.S. Army and retreat leader)



How to Support Healing Warrior Hearts in Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, Healing Warrior Hearts is sponsored by the Starfish Foundation.

The easiest way to support our work through the Starfish Foundation is to become a member. Your \$25 annual contribution will help cover our administrative expenses (all the work is done by volunteers) so we can use other donations for scholarships and sponsorships. Over 95% of Foundation income goes directly to programming! You will receive notifications of the Foundation's events and are invited to attend board meetings. You are welcome to volunteer for fundraising events and administrative tasks.



Online Donations

You can make a one-time donation or set up a monthly direct funds transfer from your bank account or credit card. [Donate Now](#)

Donate by Check

Mail your donation to:
The Starfish Foundation 2437 N. Booth Street Milwaukee, WI 53212

Adopt a Heart

This special program allows you to provide a full scholarship to a veteran to attend a retreat. Your donation can be revealed to the recipient if you choose.

The cost for a veteran to attend a retreat averages approximately \$500. Those who are hurting emotionally can very often be those who are hurting financially. Your sponsorship is the beginning to help them help themselves.

Adopt a Heart, help it to heal, and make the world a better place for us all. [Download Form](#)

“There is no organization in the veteran service community that is more engaged than Healing Warrior Hearts, not only in presenting events, but also in participating in veteran community, veteran events, and in the development of programs and policies that support veterans and their families.”

— Quentin Hatfield, Director, Wisconsin Veterans Network

We Need Your Help To Continue To Provide These Transformational Retreats Free To Our Veterans.
The Work We Do Is Not Offered By The Veteran's Administration (VA) Or Any Other Government Programs.



The [Starfish Foundation](#) and [Healing Warrior Hearts](#) retreats are completely funded by donations and are free for veterans. They are completely staffed by volunteers and no one receives any financial compensation.

Donations provide the funds to cover all expenses of the retreat, including the rental of the facility, lodging for out-of-town participants, transportation, food, and materials.

Every donation makes a difference...

\$15 provides a t-shirt to welcome the veteran to the Family of the Warrior Heart

\$50 provides a backpack full of materials for continuing their healing

\$75 provides meals for a veteran during the retreat

\$500 provides all of the above and lodging for the retreat weekend

\$5,500 provides a retreat for 10 veterans



Legacy Giving [Download Form](#)

A charitable bequest is the simplest form of legacy giving. In your will, you can specify a particular asset, a fixed dollar amount, or designate a percentage of your estate, or the remainder of your estate after all other bequests have been fulfilled, to go to the Starfish Foundation.

Your gift will help bring to those who cannot financially afford the opportunity, the ability to participate in emotional healing programs, such as Taking It Lightly, Renewal for Sexual Abuse Survivors, Healing Warrior Hearts, and similar workshops and seminars. By providing this financial assistance, the Foundation and its donors provide the resources to assist emotional trauma survivors to liberate their grief, rage and shame, and allow joy to return to their lives.

For many, the largest gift of a lifetime may come only through their estate plan. Please consider including the Starfish Foundation as part of your legacy.

The Starfish Foundation does not provide tax or legal advice and the information herein is not intended as legal, tax, or investment advice. Please contact a tax advisor or an estate-planning attorney for information specific to your situation.

How to Donate to Texas Retreats

Donate through their website [Texas for Heroes](#)



What the community has to say

“Healing Warrior Hearts has played a major role over many years for veterans who suffer from deep war trauma. Thank goodness they are here to ease our pain.”

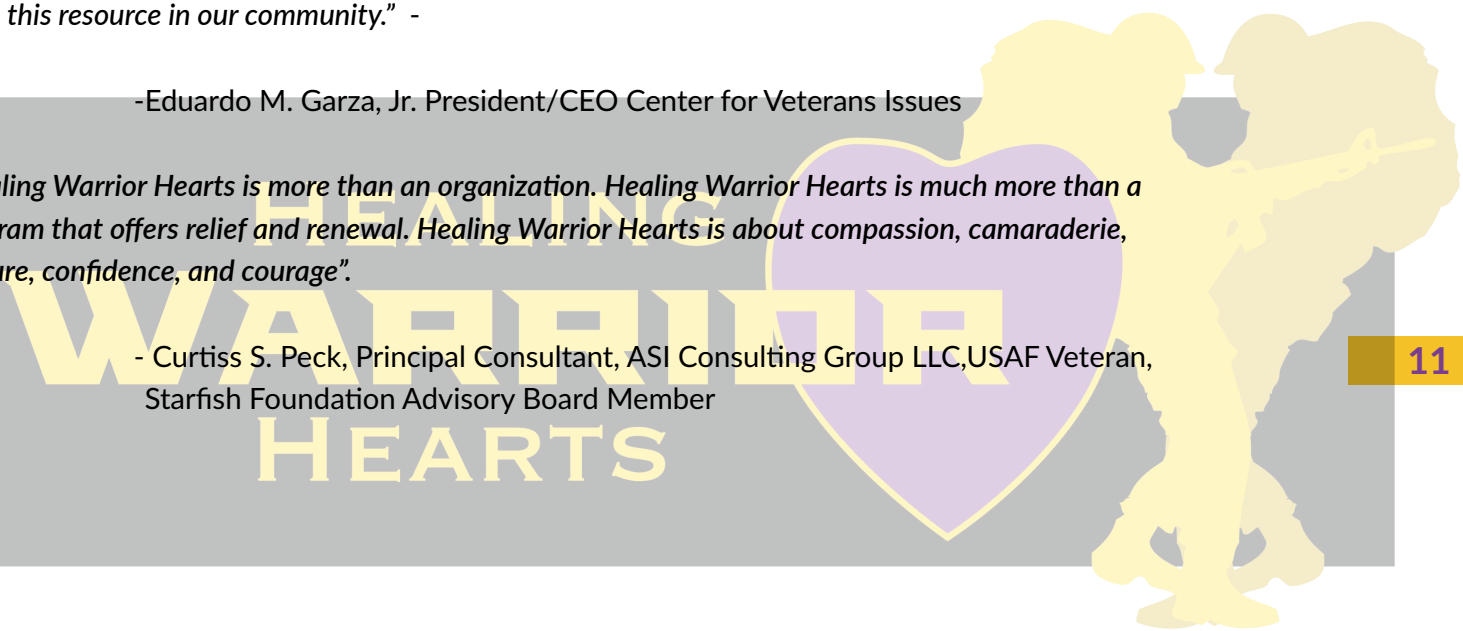
Sincerely,
- Mark Foreman, US Navy Corpsman (1966-1968), 100% Disabled Vietnam Veteran

“We are excited to partner with Healing Warrior Hearts in their service to our Veteran Community. Their work is making a difference in the lives of our Veterans and their families and we are excited to have this resource in our community.” -

-Eduardo M. Garza, Jr. President/CEO Center for Veterans Issues

“Healing Warrior Hearts is more than an organization. Healing Warrior Hearts is much more than a program that offers relief and renewal. Healing Warrior Hearts is about compassion, camaraderie, closure, confidence, and courage”.

- Curtiss S. Peck, Principal Consultant, ASI Consulting Group LLC,USAF Veteran, Starfish Foundation Advisory Board Member



Make An Impact For Our Veterans

[Donate Now](#)

The [Starfish Foundation](#), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, sponsors Healing Warrior Hearts and offers the programs at no cost to military veterans and their families.

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[Contact Us](#)

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To learn more about our programs and how to help, please visit healingwarriorhearts.org

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