

OUTREACH TO AMERICA'S DISABLED HEROES

“Our year has been an overwhelming success as we have welcomed a total of 117 new wounded warriors and 79 family members at our nine ‘Race Day’ events this season.”

— Jason M. Carter, Founder/President, “Racing for Our Heroes”

“Racing for Our Heroes” in Dallas, Texas, is using a grant from the DAV Charitable Service Trust to bring the joy of motor sports into the lives of veterans as they recover from injuries and illnesses suffered for our country. As part of their day in this program, wounded troops actually get to ride on the track with a professional driver. “Furthermore, our occupational therapy and job placement assistance program is off to a remarkable beginning,” announces Mr. Carter; the program is placing 14 veterans into new careers in the motor sports field.

Outreach to disabled veterans and their families not only received a significant boost from individual supporters of the DAV Charitable Service Trust in 2009. It was also significantly advanced by grants from corporations, foundations and bequests. The Trust is deeply grateful to all. In this time of war, they made it possible to meet a greatly expanded need.

The Trust, for example, awarded \$750,000 to the DAV in order to provide outreach to disabled veterans and their dependents across the country. The grant purchased 10 Mobile Service Offices that literally put DAV veterans' benefits experts on the road. These professionals assist veterans where they live, increasing their access to benefits and claims filing assistance.

This outreach is critical because our nation's system of veterans' benefits and services is so large and complicated. We cannot expect our disabled heroes and their families to comprehend everything to which they're entitled.

Joining hands with the DAV's National Organization, the Ford Motor Company continued its superb, long-term support of the DAV's National Transportation Network with a very significant contribution of vans to the DAV Charitable Service Trust. The vans shuttle the sick and disabled to and from VA medical facilities.

In 2009, 152 new vans hit the road throughout the country. Last year, DAV and Auxiliary members, as well as other caring people from the community, volunteered 1.6 million hours, driving 27 million miles and providing more than 704,500 rides. While those statistics are impressive, no one can measure the therapeutic power that's generated when this program brings disabled veterans into contact with other disabled veterans one-on-one.

A Harley-Davidson Foundation grant is sending DAV Mobile Service Offices to towns and rural communities across America to make sure veterans and their families get all the information they need about benefits and services earned through military service. Points visited are locations distant from DAV National Service Offices.

The DAV Charitable Service Trust also assisted the Hospital Hospitality House of Richmond, Va. in accommodating veterans and families facing medical crises at the VA medical center there. Because this is the site of so much long-term treatment of wounds suffered in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need for this service is critical now.

Some other examples of outreach work that you support through the DAV Charitable Service Trust include:

- ★ Audio Information Network of Colorado in Boulder provides blind and visually impaired veterans with specially adapted radios and special programming and audiocassettes.
- ★ Operation First Response in Culpeper, Va., provides assistance to injured troops and their families, including help with rent and utility payments, vehicle payments and repairs, food and lodging costs.
- ★ The National Alliance on Mental Illness in Saint Paul, Minn., provides peer-to-peer mental health support groups for disabled veterans.
- ★ The National Amputation Foundation in Malverne, N.Y., provides legal counsel, vocational guidance and placement, and training in the use of prosthetic devices for amputee veterans.
- ★ Salute Inc. in Prospect Heights, Ill., provides financial aid to veterans and their families for mortgage/rent, medical bills and other costs.
- ★ The University of California at San Francisco advances HIV research to identify anti-viral factors in humans that may lead to new drug therapies for veterans affected by HIV.