

Forward Flag Newsletter

February 2021

Issue # 27

Happy Birthday

Our Co-Founder, Roger Pipkins, celebrated his 76th birthday last month on January 25th. We want to wish Roger a very happy birthday and thank him for making our mission possible. Roger calls the Rogersville, TN branch his home yet continues to act as the heart and soul for both locations. Hoping this year is one of the best yet!



A Helping Hand

We received a request through our website to assist a disabled Vietnam era veteran who had to move and did not have anyone to help him get it done. We put a request out through the grapevine and within no time at all, had a team of 9 volunteers willing to sacrifice their Saturday to help out a brother in arms; it was inspiring to see how many veterans answered the call. Included in the team was new arrival from Colorado and his daughter. A big thank you to all who stepped up and made the move as easy and seamless as possible. Even in the face of great challenge, our vets banded together and turned, what is normally a less than enjoyable experience, into a fond memory. The real magic happened following the hard work, when the volunteers came back to our NM office to enjoy pizza, sodas and good company. Although a tough task, it resulted in the formation of a few new friendships and gave us an opportunity to give back to our community.



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Find us and Like us on Facebook

NM Forward Flag <https://www.facebook.com/forwardflag.nm/>

TN Forward Flag <https://www.facebook.com/forwardflagtn>

Movin on Up

Less than a year after opening the doors to our second Forward Flag location in Rogersville, TN and we are already expanding! We have grown into the office space just 3 doors down from our existing office so that we can better meet the needs of our veterans and offer even more activities. We are excited to announce over 5,000 square feet in new Forward Flag territory. There are already plans to tear down walls so we can have even more room for the art classes and workout equipment; plus, we have added a multi-purpose room. If you have any ideas on what additions you would like us to make, please let us know! Keep watching to see how the fantastic Forward Flag TN team makes use of our newest space.

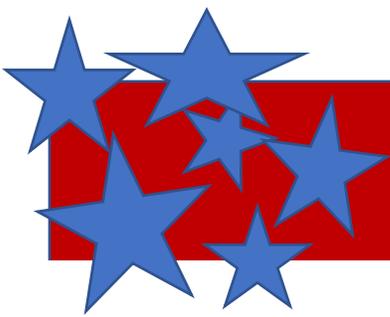


FLUID FUN

The fluid art fun in TN continues and now that we have even more space, there will be more room for more fluid art projects. They have already transformed clothespins, old records and canvases by using the fluid art technique. What will

be next? You do not have to be an artist to succeed in creating these phenomenal pieces; all you need to do is show up. You are welcome to come and utilize the art supplies any time during normal business hours, but to join in the group fun and learn to make your own fluid art masterpieces, come by the TN office any Tuesday at 16:00 hours. What is great about art is that you get to find and lose yourself all at once.





Check out our website for the latest activity calendars

Shining Stars

In honor of Behavioral Health month, the NM Behavioral Health Planning Council accepts nominations for individuals in the behavioral health field who work to make a positive change in their communities. We are excited to announce that our very own Melissa Edean was nominated and selected to receive the 2021 NM Behavioral Health Star Award for the work she does at our NM veteran wellness center. Melissa coordinates all activities for the center, plans and puts on our QPR Gatekeeper training, Veteran Endorsement training and trainings for trainers, co-facilitates our weekly meeting of SMART Recovery, supervises all community service work and provides peer support to veterans, their family members and friends. In addition to these many tasks, Melissa has taken over the managing and oversight of the NM office and continues to work to build relationships with other community stakeholders in an effort to create a strong network of support and resources for the veterans we serve. A great big congratulations to Melissa for this well-deserved award.



A Horse of Course

Also being honored is a beautiful gray Arabian gelding called Cracker who works and resides with Eddie Crain at Healing Americas Heroes ranch up in Chama, NM. Cracker has been working with Sgt Major Ted Skibyak, along with a good number of other veterans, for some time now. Sgt Major nominated Cracker for the John Henry Service animal award because of the profound difference Cracker has made in his life. Cracker knows just how to calm Sgt Major down and to help him re-build his confidence and regain a feeling of peace and serenity. Way to go Cracker and thank you to Healing Americas Heroes for all that they do to serve our veterans.



Fun and Games

Another great Saturday night playing games and spending time with new friends! Check out the TN Calendar for the next Saturday game night scheduled. We play cards, board games, Jenga and finish it up with a few rounds of Bingo. Be the next one to earn bingo champion bragging rights!



STRAIGHT FROM OUR VETS!

Melissa – At this time of the year I am reminded so much of all the people that have worked with our Veterans to make their lives better. I can reflect back to the mid-sixties with many many fond thoughts of persons who volunteered or were paid in there activities that made our service life better either while on duty or while off duty and at play.

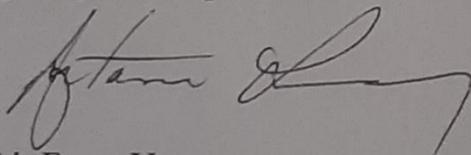
Since I first interacted with you at Forward Flag and since I've been a student and experienced your teaching/support, and since I have watched and your experience with others besides just veterans - I can say that your are one of those persons that rise to the top of their contribution to our warriors.

I wish to extend to you my very best wishes during not only this holiday season but through each and every day that you walk upon this wonderful earth. Well Done!

This email sent by: Mathias E. Stricherz,
EdD Psychologist, APD Psychology Supervisor
USN NAVY and USN RESERVE 4 years active 28 years inactive
- enlisted E9 radioman & Command Master Chief

I started coming to forward flag about a year ago. I feel right at home. The staff are so friendly and always eager to help. They are always here to help me out when it comes to figuring out how to do things on the computer or guide me with completing any legal type documents. I am very happy to see how many activities the Flag has to offer us vets. It is so cool how they offer such a variety, ranging from service dog training to the guitar class. I have made it my routine to stop by 3 or 4 times a week just to hang out, catch up with my friends and make use of the computers. I am so glad that I found Forward Flag! Thank you to the staff for always going out of there way to help me and to all my fellow vets for making it such a great place to spend time!

Sincerely,



Artano Lowery, Air Force Veteran

This testimonial given by one of the NM Flag frequent flyers and always reliable veteran volunteers, Mr. Artano Lowery a proud veteran of the United States Air Force

Veteran in Need

One of our Forward Flag NM veteran participants suffered a terrible tragedy in his family. His daughter was injured in a freak accident and is in UNMH with 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree burns. The family is asking that anyone interested in helping visit the Go Fund Me page that they have set up to help cover her medical expenses and help her to cover the costs of living while she is recovering and unable to work. To contribute please visit <https://gofund.me/ac633e04>

