

Healing Tools for Warriors 2020: The Year of the Pandemic

As for most, 2020 has been a very challenging yet rewarding year for Healing Tools for Warriors. The executive director, Penny Pinkham, has had 3 surgeries, had a difficult time healing, is going through some restructuring at home, is remodeling a house and preparing to sell it. Our board members have been just as busy: Robin and Teresa Ford remodeled their house, sold it, and lived in temporary quarters until they found their lakefront dream home (which they can't wait to share with the Warriors), all the while trying to keep their restaurant operational throughout the Covid Pandemic. Jeremy Martin has spent 3 months on FMLA taking care of his ailing parents. He's such a good son!

Healing Tools for Warriors has been unable to gather as usual since the Covid Pandemic in March due to most of our Warriors being immune compromised. When the economy started opening up, Penny was able to meet with partner organizations and other resources to reach out to the local warriors again. Once the area fully reopened and the economy began recovering, Hurricane Sally hit and brought major flooding to the area. Yet all during this time, Penny and Michael Pinkham distributed 60 cases of produce and other food to our veterans and 1st responders every 2 weeks, stayed connected with them and checked on them regularly. If there was a real need, Penny would go out of her way to find help to meet their need. By staying connected, checking in with them and being supportive, they were able to prevent twelve suicides!

In between everything else, Penny spent time organizing a concert which got delayed until November 2021 due to Covid. HTFW was also unable to hold the annual retreat since Camp Timpooshee did not open up in time to get it organized. Good thing it wasn't pursued because Hurricane Sally, along with her 30" of rain, then destroyed the camp's sea wall.

While the government offices were shut down, many of those who were on the list to receive aid suffered due to this delay. Healing Tools, in the form of Penny Pinkham, stepped in to fill in the gap. She spent several weeks helping a Vietnam Veteran move from one home into another, through many complications and setbacks, but she finally got the job done with the help of a few of her many resources. Healing Tools for Warriors was also able to help a veteran family in Pensacola who was lacking food and couldn't work because his vehicle broke down.

Through all of these struggles, Healing Tools also helped the Battle Buddies of the canine variety by partnering with What's Up Dog of Miramar Beach and Road Dogg Rescue of Destin to help distribute donated dog food to families who were out of work. By doing so, dogs were kept out of shelters and in the homes and the service animals were taken care of.



In December, after hearing how scarce the appearance of Santa and Mrs. Claus was, we were able to convince them to visit with our warriors and their families at 4C BBQ in DeFuniak Springs, FL, in order to give out beautiful stuffed animals and games to the children. During this time, we were able to bless ten families with a Christmas meal and gifts. Several of these families had just suffered major losses and were not even going to celebrate Christmas this year!

So even though the typical events have not been held, Healing Tools for Warriors has been extremely busy helping the local veterans and 1st responders. Hopefully life can get back to business as usual in 2021. But rest assured, if that is not the case that Healing Tools for Warriors will continue to be there for our local heroes, fulfilling needs and connecting them with other local resources because that is what they do!

