

# 2012

## Freedom Center Annual Report



[Mifreedomcenter.org](http://Mifreedomcenter.org)

Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc.

**FR**≡≡≡**ED**★**M**  
**CENTER**

Serving Those Who Serve Us.



# Our First Year of Operation



During the past 12 months those involved with the Freedom Center have witnessed an amazing sequence of events. Together, we have been partners in the development of a new concept in military service centers. From the birth of the idea through the launch of the project and fulfillment of the vision, we have been blessed with the right talent and resources to complete each step of the process.

Of course, the idea to provide support for in-transit military personnel and their families is not new. However, until the Freedom Center was dedicated on November 11, 2011 in formal ceremonies held at 1100 hours, there was no such facility in the Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW). Since DTW is a major international airport, serving more than 30 million passengers per year with daily flights from Europe and Asia connecting to all over North America, it was long overdue.

Most importantly, it has been the vision, passion and dedication of the leaders, staff and volunteers that have made the Freedom Center stand out. From six in the morning until midnight, every day of the year, our volunteers keep the operation running. They are the ones who greet our guests and offer the resources to meet each individual's needs. On a daily basis, we continue to make a real difference in the lives of our guests.

None of this would be possible without the support of our sponsors and contributors. What we've discovered is that no single organization or individual has to do everything. Some organizations provide in-kind support. Others provide financial support. Individuals contribute their time, talent and money. We are very grateful for each of these generous contributions.

I invite you to review this report and join me as Freedom Center and Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc., celebrate our first year of operation. During the past 12 months, the Freedom Center has served more than 30,000 guests. That means we've touched the lives and improved the travel experience of more than 30,000 military personnel and their families.

**Thank you for your support as we continue  
"serving those who serve us."**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth S. Pratt".

Kenneth S. Pratt, President  
Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc.



Everyone here was wonderful - the facility is grand. I will definitely fly through Detroit more often.

YOU WERE A BRIGHT SPOT IN A DARK NIGHT. YOUR WELCOMING ATTITUDE SPEAKS VOLUMES OF WHO YOU ARE ... GREAT PATRIOTS! MY DAY WILL BE MUCH BETTER BECAUSE OF YOU.

This is an outstanding facility for the troops. Didn't have this type of place 40 years ago - sincerely hope this can continue and grow.  
- Retired Military Member

Amazing Surprise! Was dreading the 3 hour layover and then I saw this! All airports need people like you!

Thanks for all you do for our service members. You have a world-class facility. I enjoyed my stay. Please pass on my personal thanks to all the volunteers and sponsors who made the Freedom Center a reality.

Definitely made for a much more comfortable layover.



## Freedom Center

### How It All Started

In December 2010, a group of Delta Air Lines employees organized a temporary Holiday Military Lounge within the McNamara Terminal at DTW. During a three-week period, volunteers from Delta, military veterans' organizations, the TSA and other groups assisted more than 2,400 members of our Armed Forces and their families. The effort was an overwhelming success and clearly demonstrated the need for a permanent hospitality station.

### Opening Day

**On Veteran's Day, 11/11/11 at 1100 hours, the Freedom Center opened its doors and hearts to military members, families and veterans.**



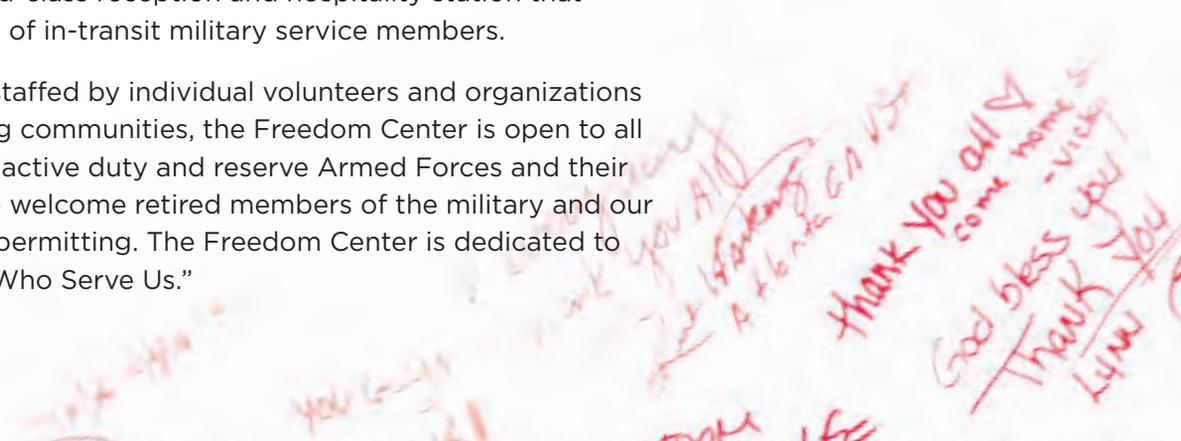
Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc., a Michigan nonprofit, was created to provide the necessary organization and fundraising for a year-round facility called "Freedom Center." The Center is a permanent military lounge adjacent to Gate A43 in the center of the McNamara Terminal.

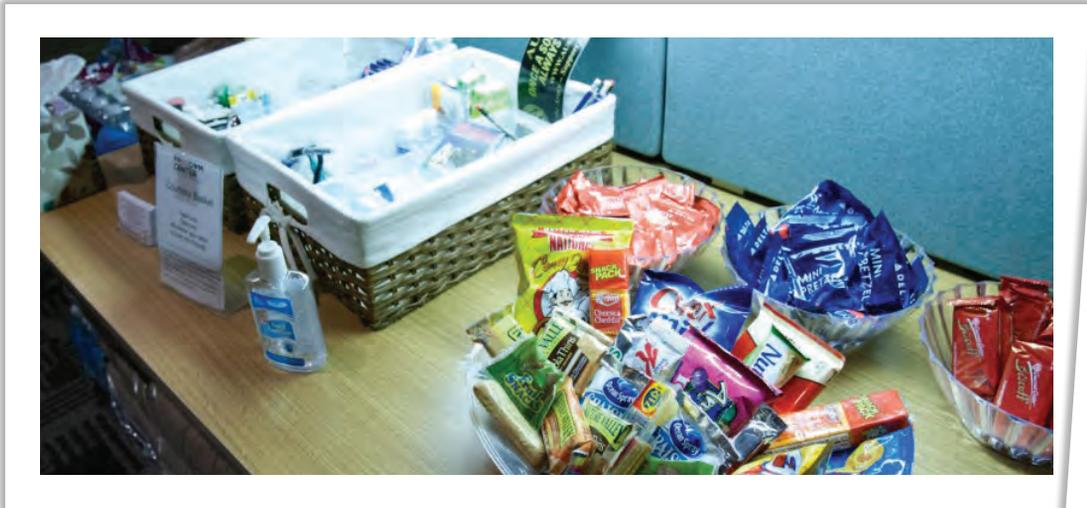
On Veterans Day 2011, dedication ceremonies for the Freedom Center marked the grand opening of our permanent military lounge at DTW. Hosted by a dedicated staff of trained volunteers, the special needs of military travelers are being met seven days a week, 365 days a year. Many of our guests are transiting DTW to or from overseas duty stations.

### Our Mission Is Simple

Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc., is dedicated to providing a world-class reception and hospitality station that meets the needs of in-transit military service members.

Supported and staffed by individual volunteers and organizations from surrounding communities, the Freedom Center is open to all members of our active duty and reserve Armed Forces and their families. We also welcome retired members of the military and our veterans, space permitting. The Freedom Center is dedicated to "Serving Those Who Serve Us."





### Daily Operations

Freedom Center’s normal hours are 6 a.m. until midnight. However, when military members are stranded overnight due to flight delays or weather, Freedom Center remains open around the clock. A dedicated group of volunteers staffs Freedom Center, with one full-time employee, our center director, who coordinates volunteers and ensures smooth operations. In addition, we welcome and have been visited by members of the military of our allied nations.

Our guests enjoy coffee, tea, soft drinks, bottled water and juices, as well as snacks and other food items. Free travel amenities include: lip balm, toothbrushes/toothpaste, combs, nail files, ear plugs, hand lotion, etc. Free Wi-Fi service, books and magazines are provided, and laptop computers are available. Freedom Center offers comfortable couches and recliners, a children’s play area and even has a set of triple bunk beds with fresh First Class pillows and blankets provided courtesy of Delta Air Lines.

### Serving Those Who Serve Us

During our first 12 months of operations, Freedom Center volunteers have hosted more than 30,000 members of our military, their dependents and veterans.

By providing a world-class lounge, we have been able to say, “Thank you for your service” to our troops, who often are in harm’s way. DTW is a major transit airport for our military. Thanks to the generous donations of corporations and individuals, Freedom Center is there to make their journey more pleasant.

**What the Future Brings**  
**In the coming year, we have plans to open a Freedom Center lounge in the North Terminal at DTW.**

Handwritten notes in red ink, including a heart symbol and the words "recom" and "Up".

# Board of Directors/Staff

**Kenneth S. Pratt** ★ **President**  
**Colonel, USAF (Ret)**  
**Captain, B-757/767, Delta Air Lines, Inc.**

---

**John G. McCandless** ★ **Vice President**  
**Captain, USN (Ret)**  
**Retired automotive public relations executive**

"In August 2011, when our timeline was laid out and Veterans Day was set as our target for Freedom Center to open its doors, I had real doubts that that date was achievable. We hadn't begun discussions with the airport authority on a lease, nor raised a single dime for operating expenses. But I was wrong. All the dominos began to fall into place. The Wayne County Airport Authority finalized our dollar-a-year lease within a month. Three weeks before our dedication ceremony, none of my fundraising letters had even been acknowledged, but thank God for Paul W. Smith and WJR radio. I completed an on-air interview with Paul that resulted in an immediate commitment by the Michigan Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association. The folks at Meritor were also listening and within days pledged \$20,000!

Additional contributions of \$5,000 were made by the Masco Foundation, Cadillac Casting, Lapeer Industries, Merrill Technologies Group, Oshkosh Defense, Pratt & Miller Engineering, the Michigan Council of Carpenters and Millwrights, and the Birmingham office of Raymond James & Associates. Furniture was donated by Rent-a-Center, Inc. We interviewed and subsequently hired Charlotte Tripp as center director, and she assembled our team of great volunteers.

On Veterans Day, 11/11/11 at 1100 hours, Paul W. Smith stepped to the microphone at Gate A40 across from Freedom Center and welcomed more than 100 special guests assembled for the occasion. Freedom Center was officially open and would welcome more than 30,000 men and women of our military and their families, as well as our veterans of WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, Iraq and Afghanistan in the following year. Thank you all for making Freedom Center a reality."

**Howard F. Rundell Jr.** ★ **Board Member**  
**Captain, USN (Ret)**

"Those of us who have served know the welcome sight of the USO logo - be it at an airport or at a forward deployed location, it's a little bit of 'home' when we likely most need it. For a world-class airport the size of and with the volume of international and domestic passengers that Detroit Metro Airport handles, it's important to have a dedicated place of quiet repose where those who serve and those who have served, along with their dependents, can escape the crowd.

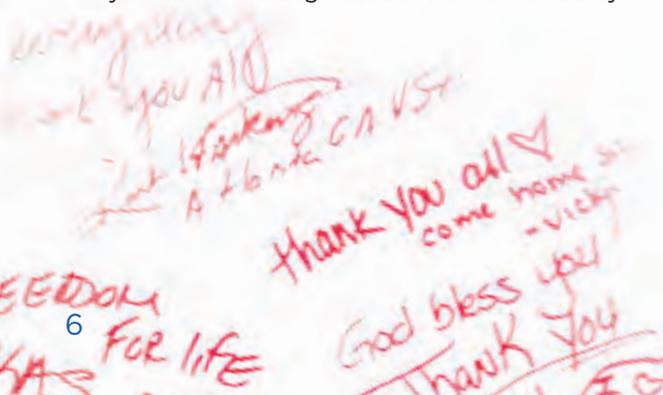
Following the overwhelming consecutive year success of the seasonal military lounge, to be asked to help stand up a permanent facility was truly an honor. Now, more than one year 'into the mission,' the outpouring of support by the local community and corporations, and the countless expressions of appreciation by those heroes using the Freedom Center have made all the effort easily worthwhile. The sight of a young mother soundly asleep, embracing her two young daughters in the bunk bed built by one of the center's volunteers is an image I will carry forever and all the 'thanks' I will ever need."

---

**Stephen Ihrig** ★ **Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Captain, USN (Ret)**  
**Attorney**

"As a Navy captain who has served for 30 years and traveled all over the world, I have seen many service members sitting and waiting at airports, at times on the floor, tired and exasperated after many hours of travel. So when the call came and I was asked to help set up a Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center at the Detroit airport, where service members could sit and relax between flights, I agreed with a resounding yes. This was more than a year ago, and with the contributions of many, the Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center opened on Veterans Day 11/11/2011 at 11:00 am. The continuous support the Center receives from local corporations, businesses and individuals has been tremendous.

In its first year of operation, more than 30,000 service members have taken advantage of the center, and I am thankful to be able to help provide a place where they can have some comfort and respite. It is truly an honor to be part of such a wonderful opportunity to give back to all the men and women who serve us."





**Patrick Colbeck** ★ Board Member  
State Senator, 7th District of Michigan

“I first became aware of the need for a military center at Detroit Metro Airport when I traveled through other large airports and witnessed the wonderful hospitality centers they had in place for our military personnel and their families. With tens of thousands of veterans, members of our armed forces and their families traveling through Metro Airport each month, it seemed that a small way to show our appreciation for their service was to create a quiet, private place for them to rest as they traveled through the area.

As I contemplated the best way to accomplish this task, my first thought was to open the project up to the community – I believed that there would be a genuine desire by others to support our military personnel. I was not disappointed. It was humbling to see so many people and organizations rise to the challenge and offer both the time and resources needed to provide a first-class hospitality center. Because of the generosity of numerous volunteers and donors, we are able to provide a comfortable space for members of our military and their families as they travel through Metro Airport. The Freedom Center is one small way for us to say ‘thank you’ to our men and women in uniform and their families, who sacrifice so much for us and our nation.”

**Donald P. Kotchman** ★ Board Member  
Colonel, USA (Ret)  
Senior Director, Technology Programs  
General Dynamics Land Systems

“When offered the opportunity to be part of the Freedom Center’s board, I accepted without hesitation. As a career Army officer with 27 years of service, I have been on more trips than I can remember. There was nothing more frustrating than either being stuck at an airport or, more frequently watching service men and women and their families stuck at an airport without recourse or resources to do anything but sit in the gate areas until alternative travel arrangements could be made. This was especially true in Detroit which, as a major hub for travel, lacked a USO facility. The Freedom Center demonstrates to those who sacrifice on a daily basis for our security that we understand what they and their families are doing for the country, and that as a community, we are compassionate and want to help lessen the burden. I’m proud to be associated with the center.”

**Carol Ann Fausone** ★ Board Member  
Brigadier General, USAF (Ret)

“Detroit Metropolitan Airport is the gateway to Michigan. It hosts millions of individuals each year as they travel. Freedom Center has become a place for our soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen and Coast Guard service members, as well as our veterans, to relax, decompress and find rest during their travels. It allows them the opportunity to recharge in a safe, protective environment and continue on with their journey. During this past year, Freedom Center had the distinct honor to provide refuge to several families as they prepared to bring home their beloved family member, true heroes that were killed in action, for the last time. Freedom Center is a great way to say ‘thank you’ to our service men and women for their service. It allows us to provide them protection and refuge, something that they have done for our great nation.”

**Timothy P. Burns** ★ Board Member  
Vice President and General Manager  
Defense & Specialty, Industrial  
Meritor, Inc.

“Meritor has a 100-year heritage of serving our nation’s armed forces by producing components for military vehicles in service around the world. We provide our warfighters with the best possible equipment, and being involved with the Freedom Center is a natural extension of that service. Ensuring our military members, veterans and their families, who have sacrificed so much for our freedom and happiness, have a place where they can relax and reconnect is important. I’m pleased to be involved in the ongoing success of this organization.”

**Charlotte Tripp** ★ Staff  
Center Director

“It has been an honor and privilege to work with a dedicated and motivated group of volunteers to bring a world-class military lounge to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. This last year has been an exciting one as we opened the doors of the Freedom Center and began brightening the days and touching the lives of our military personnel and their families.”



## Military Personnel & Families

**“THANK YOU!!!!** ... for the wonderful welcome you helped with in welcoming our son Eric home from Afghanistan. Everyone was warm, helpful and full of as much excitement as we were. A must visit for our service people ... **Great job Detroit!!!!”**

- Military Parents

“To all in the Freedom Center, I wanted to say thank you! ... [After over 30 hours of travels,] I found the Freedom Center and walked in ... I was greeted by a smile and a handshake along with a, ‘Thank you for your service.’ It was quiet, and a young family was there along with a soldier in his Army uniform. I was thankful! I sat down and I set my alarm on my cell phone ... it was quiet and I dozed off without any loud noises. I woke to my alarm vibrating and chimes. The gentleman smiled and said, ‘I think you dozed off.’ I did, but I had a second wind now and felt much better. I walked to my connecting flight to Tampa and slept the rest of the way until the flaps slowed the aircraft down. I was home now about 45 hours after I departed Afghanistan. The quietest place during that journey was in the Freedom Center. It allowed me to get some needed rest and a second wind when I needed it most! I thank you and all the volunteers that made this possible. I also thank all the people that contribute to make our service members feel welcome by providing for this Freedom Center to operate ... you make a difference. **God Bless America - land of the free and home of the brave!”**

- Air Force Officer traveling to Tampa from Afghanistan via Qatar, Frankfurt and Detroit

“I’m traveling with my mom and was so pleased to be warmly greeted and welcomed into the Freedom Center. We’re currently enjoying your very comfy couches, free Wi-Fi and a great escape from the airport hustle and bustle. **Thanks for being here for our service members and their families.”**

- Military Spouse

“Thank you so much for welcoming my husband into the Freedom Center last night. He was headed back overseas and had a 16-hour layover. He was so happy you guys were there. He called me and said he was kicking back, watching football and eating a burrito (which you provided!). He called me a little later from a hotel. A volunteer arranged for a free room for him for the night, complete with shuttle service and breakfast the next morning. It gave me such a peace of mind knowing that he would get a restful night’s sleep and hot shower before heading out the next day. Thank you for your service to our men and women in uniform! **The Freedom Center rocks!”**

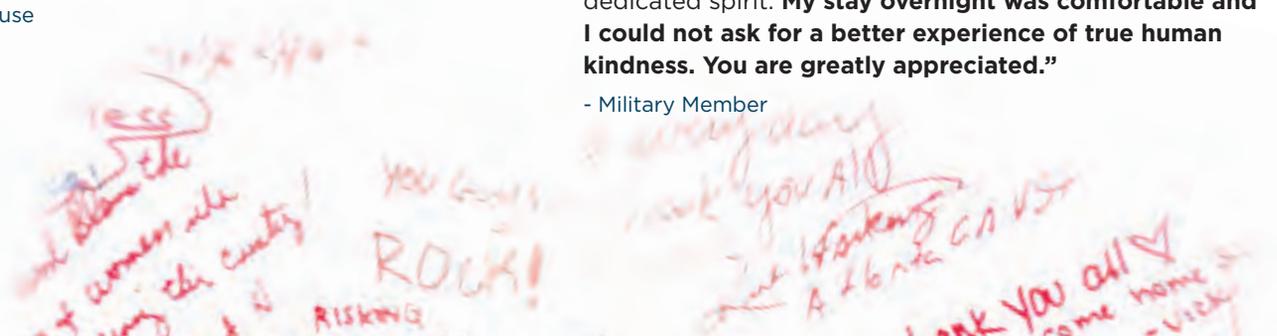
- Military Spouse

“Thank you for your kindness and hospitality. It is amazing to see a privately funded ‘USO type’ lounge serving us who serve. Comfy chairs, beds, good company and amenities. Outstanding! **Keep up the good work!”**

- Military Spouse

“Thank you so much Charlotte and your wonderful family-team at the Freedom Center in Detroit. When I arrived after midnight [...] I looked on the Internet and found that the Freedom Center was created through Delta’s efforts combined with the help of loving people like yourself. I called the telephone number on the door outside normal operating hours and you answered! I was so overwhelmed with a feeling of comfort from such a dedicated spirit. **My stay overnight was comfortable and I could not ask for a better experience of true human kindness. You are greatly appreciated.”**

- Military Member





## Freedom Center Volunteers

“A Korean War Veteran and his wife heard the airport public service announcement and came into the Freedom Center to check it out. They told me that they were on their way to Korea on a revisit tour for U.S. servicemen and servicewoman that had served in Korea during the Korean War. The rest of their group would be traveling through McNamara Terminal on Tuesday, but they wanted to get there early to see a couple of places that were not on their group itinerary. I explained what the Freedom Center had to offer and showed them the lounge. They decided to stay and wait in the lounge for their flight.

Shortly thereafter, a young soldier came in and signed the book destination ‘Inchon.’ He told me he was going back to finish out his tour. He had been home on leave because his wife had given birth to their first child. He was a little down about having to leave home.

I walked him into the lounge and introduced him to the couple and told them that they were all traveling to Korea. They began to talk. The Vet shared what Korea was like during the war, and the young soldier told the vet what Korea was like now. They discovered they were stationed at the same base stateside as well. The vet said that they were housed in Quonset huts, and the young soldier told him about base housing and the apartments. The young soldier spoke about how difficult it was to leave his wife and baby. The vet and his wife assured him that the time would pass quickly, and he would be back with his family before he knew it.

I overheard their conversation while sitting at the lobby desk. The vet and young soldier continued their conversation as they walked out of the lounge together to catch the same flight. The vet’s wife stopped to tell me how much she appreciated the Freedom Center and was going to make sure that other Korean vets knew we were there. I thought to myself, without the Freedom Lounge, two strangers – a 70-something vet and a 20-something soldier – would have never had the opportunity to sit down and have a conversation like this.”

- Freedom Center Volunteer



“In the Freedom Center, rank is not a factor. On more than one occasion when the lounge was filled to capacity, I have witnessed a **major or colonel** give up their place to an enlisted man, woman and/or their families and go someplace else to wait for their flight.”

- Freedom Center Volunteer

“On a Thursday morning, I helped escort a family and family friend of a young soldier that died in an apartment fire at his base in Texas to their gate. The mother and sister needed wheelchairs. They were traveling to the base to attend a memorial service for their son/brother and another soldier that was killed in the fire. The gate they were flying out of was the same gate where their son/brother’s dignified transfer took place.

The following Saturday night when their flight landed at the North Terminal, I was waiting for them at their gate. I thought it would be good for them to see a familiar face. When the runway door opened, the first to exit was a flight attendant pushing the sister in a wheelchair. The sister pointed at me and said, ‘I’m with her.’”

- Freedom Center volunteer, Family Support Team

## Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc. Balance Sheet

September 2011 through September 2012

### ORDINARY INCOME/EXPENSE

#### INCOME

Direct Public Support	121,673.22
Investments	
Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	10.49
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>10.49</b>

<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>121,683.71</b>
---------------------	-------------------

<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>121,683.71</b>
---------------------	-------------------

#### EXPENSE

##### BANK CHARGES

Paypal Fees	32.56
Bank Charges - Other	1,378.58
<b>TOTAL BANK CHARGES</b>	<b>1,411.14</b>

##### CONTRACT SERVICES

Accounting Fees	2,450.00
Legal Fees	450.00
Contract Services - Other	82.68
<b>TOTAL CONTRACT SERVICES</b>	<b>2,982.68</b>

##### FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Rent, Parking, Utilities	2,416.69
Facilities and Equipment - Other	278.83
<b>TOTAL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>2,695.52</b>

##### LODGING

	<b>137.24</b>
--	---------------

##### OPERATIONS

Beverages	70.95
Fundraising Expenses	7,152.25
Postage, Mailing Service	18.95
Printing and Copying	166.32
Supplies	15,438.18
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONS</b>	<b>22,846.65</b>

##### OTHER TYPES OF EXPENSES

Insurance - Liability, D and O	2,213.00
Other Types of Expenses - Other	400.00
<b>TOTAL OTHER TYPES OF EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,613.00</b>

##### PAYROLL EXPENSES

Taxes	3,273.50
Wages	30,000.06
Payroll Expenses - Other	7,783.30
<b>TOTAL PAYROLL EXPENSES</b>	<b>41,056.86</b>

<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>73,743.09</b>
----------------------	------------------

<b>NET ORDINARY INCOME</b>	<b>47,940.62</b>
----------------------------	------------------

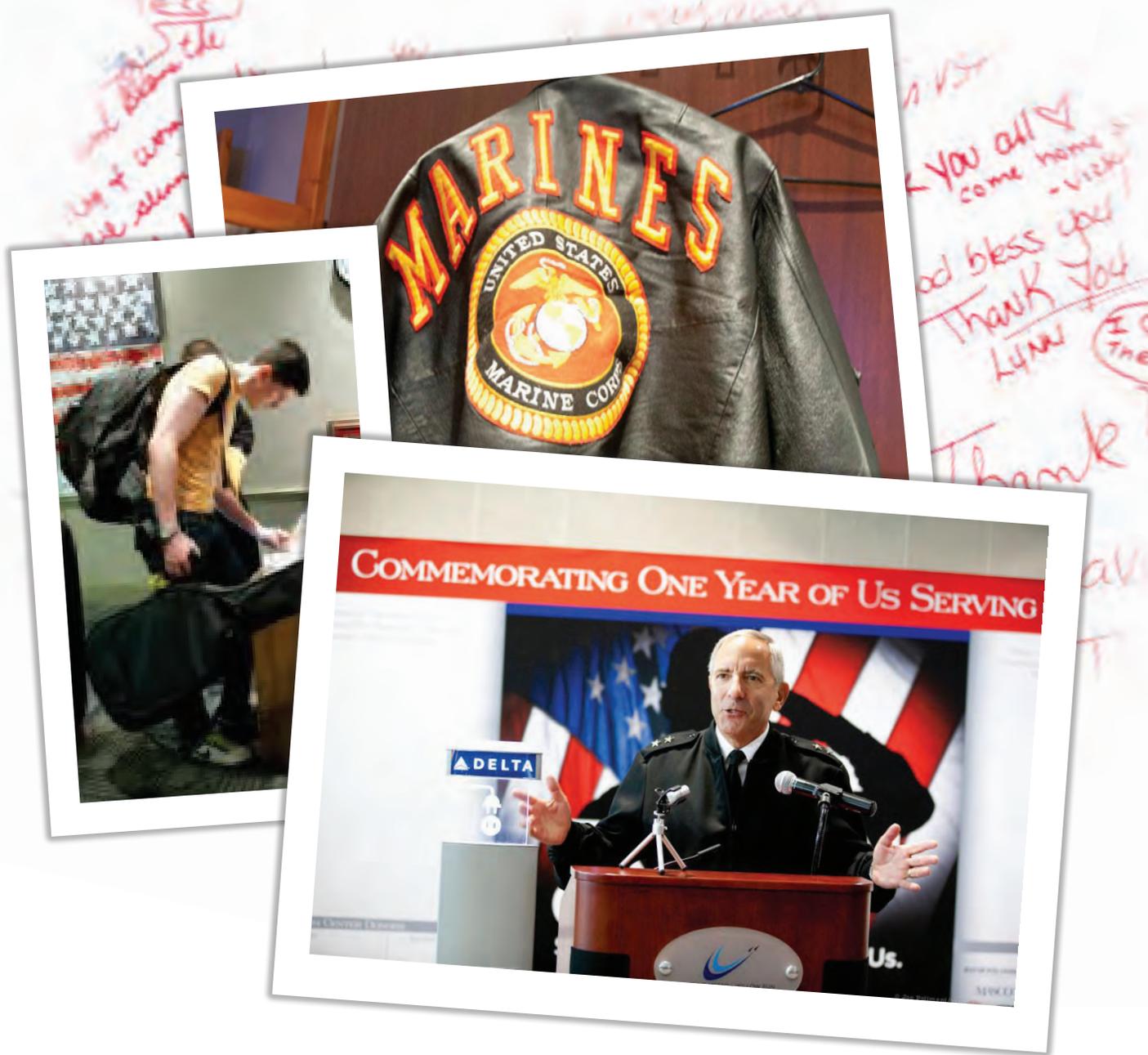
#### OTHER INCOME/EXPENSE

##### OTHER EXPENSE

Ask My Accountant	108.00
<b>TOTAL OTHER EXPENSE</b>	<b>108.00</b>

<b>NET OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>-108.00</b>
-------------------------	----------------

<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>47,832.62</b>
-------------------	------------------



# Sponsors

The Freedom Center operates entirely on monetary and in-kind donations from our sponsors and contributors. Without the following companies and individuals, Freedom Center would not exist. We appreciate the continued support and generous contributions of the following sponsors.

## Patriot Sponsors (\$20,000+)



## Warrior Sponsor (\$10,000)





**Honor Guard (\$5,000)**

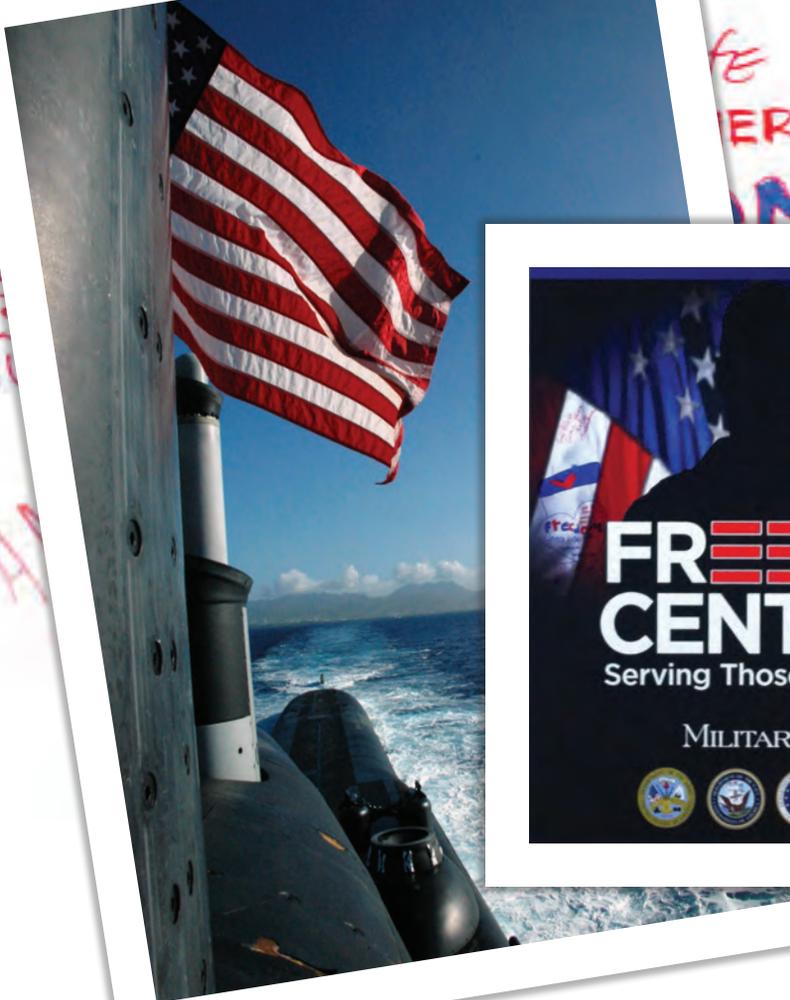


Contribution from a Michigan Family



**Always There Supporters (In-Kind)**





**“Thank you for the care and concern for the soldiers and their families that pass through this airport.**

**We felt at home while we were here. Thank you for all you do, we love being a military family and it feels amazing that the sacrifices made by my husband and all those who serve make, are appreciated.”**

**- Military Family**

2581 World Gateway Place  
Detroit, Michigan 48242  
734-247-2762

[Mifreedomcenter.org](http://Mifreedomcenter.org)

Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality Center, Inc.

**FREEDOM  
CENTER**  
Serving Those Who Serve Us.