

STROLL®

Harmony

FIRST RESPONDER TRAUMA SERVICES

Ed and Joanne
Rupert with their
Therapy dogs

DELIVERING NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



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FIRST RESPONDER *Trauma Services* HARMONY RESIDENTS CARING

BY PHIL GOLDSTEIN, HARMONY RESIDENT

We here at **Stroll Harmony** love to promote good causes, and one that surely is worthy of our attention has to do with **First Responder Trauma Services (FRTS)**, a 501(c) (3) non-profit founded in 2022 by Harmony residents since 2014, Joanne and Ed Rupert.

FRTS provides mental health support, crisis response, and education for current and retired emergency responders and related frontline workers, including law enforcement, fire, EMS, dispatch, health care workers, and their legal partners. The FRTS team, experienced emergency services professionals, ensures that responders have the support, tools, and resources needed to manage their well-being as they do the difficult work upon which communities rely.

Core services provided by FRTS include:

- Mental health counseling and related modalities for individuals and couples by clinicians trained in trauma, operational stress, and responder culture.

- 24/7, 365 crisis response for individuals and agencies dealing with acute stress caused by critical incidents or traumatic events.
- Participation in the Regional Multiple Agency Peer Support (RMAPS) program, a 40-hour training empowering response to colleagues in distress.
- Education sessions focused on trauma, suicide prevention, burnout, resilience, and family support, all customized for various responders and healthcare participants.
- Wellness and skill-building services such as yoga therapy, beekeeping therapy, financial planning, couples events, mentorship, and creative self-care programs promoting healing, confidence, and post-traumatic growth.
- Adaptive Resilience Model for Operational Readiness (ARMOR), the only program of its kind in Colorado. The ARMOR program aids responders in acute crises after experiencing traumatic events with



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- 1 / FRTS Mobile Emergency Vehicle at The CENTER
- 2 / Therapy dogs Bunker, Badge, Stryker and Moose
- 3 / Ed and Joanne Rupert with therapy dogs
- 4 / The CENTER

Fundraising for FRTS's valuable work is essential. Volunteer contributions and interest in serving on the non-profit's board are also welcome. To find out more about FRTS's work, visit <https://www.frts911.com/> or reach out to the Ruperts at (970) 222-6668 or ed@911overwatch.org.

Stroll Harmony salutes Harmony residents Joanne and Ed Rupert for their important work for a worthwhile cause!

Phil Goldstein is a 15-year Harmony resident who has been writing for Stroll Harmony for 7 years. He finally uses his West Virginia University journalism degree after getting sidetracked 52 years ago. Contact Phil at philgoldstein1@gmail.com with comments or if you are interested in having your family, pet, vocation or avocation featured in Stroll Harmony.

immediate, on-site mental health support to head off burnout, early retirement, or suicide.

- The 911 Navigators Program, which strengthens the mental health of frontline professionals and creates a renewed sense of purpose and belonging for those who have retired from service.
- Family and community engagement, encompassing seasonal gatherings and quarterly engagements for responders and their spouses, helping to weather the stresses of frontline service.

FRTS traces its beginning to 2008 and **First Responder Trauma Counselors (FRTC)**, also founded by the Ruperts. With a combined 80 years in the first responder community, Joanne and Ed saw a growing mental health crisis among their peers, marked by Post-Traumatic Stress Injury/Disorder (PTSI/PTSD), depression, and suicide.

Beginning as a counseling service, with much of the work pro bono, FRTC quickly evolved to include 24/7 crisis response, peer support, and specialized training programs, including the National Peer Support Academy, which aided agencies in 27 states in reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues among responders and building emotional resilience. Over the next 15 years, FRTC became a trusted provider, serving thousands of individuals and agencies.

The Ruperts' dogs even got in the act, highly trained to provide comfort and therapeutic presence to first responders in the aftermath of critical incidents, when stress and trauma can take a heavy toll.

Recognizing the increasing need for services beyond their pro bono work, Joanne and Ed then founded FRTS to increase capacity, secure grant and donation funding and, most importantly, ensure that cost would never be a barrier to support and healing for the guardians of our communities.

Then, in 2024, recognizing a further need for a centralized location from which services could be delivered, the Ruperts used their Harmony home's equity to open **The CENTER**, an acronym for Counseling, Education, Navigation, Training, Empowerment, and Resources. The CENTER is a house at 28311 County Road 15 in Windsor, where Joanne and Ed lead a dedicated team in a welcoming space. It provides behavioral health services, skill-building workshops, and responder-centric community events for first responders and their families.

