

Small Miracles 2022 Horses Empower Heroes Annual Report

To each of our donors, community partners and volunteers, thank you for supporting Horses Empower Heroes. YOUR generosity enabled Small Miracles to provide over 1,0650 hours of pro bono Trauma-Informed Care Equine-Assisted Services (TIC-EAS) for 45 to military veterans. Small Miracles served veterans from three James A. Quillen Mountain Home V.A. programs and veterans from The Vet Center in Johnson City.

Horses Empower Heroes (HEH) promotes the self-sufficiency and emotional well-being of veterans navigating PTSD, TBI, depression, moral injury, Substance Use Disorder and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) by enhancing cognitive, emotional and social growth through Trauma-Informed Care EAS that emphasizes an awareness of living in the moment, while moving forward in life with clarity and intentionality.

HEH is increasingly imperative as the isolation caused by the prolonged COVID pandemic accelerated anxiety, depression, PTSD, and combat stressors within the Veteran population. Because Small Miracles appreciates the brave military service people who have already greatly sacrificed—and continue to sacrifice on a daily basis— HEH is provided at no cost.

Small Miracles does not receive funding from the Veteran’s Administration or any government source, so YOUR support helps to ensure the sustainability of our Horses Empower Heroes program.



"I just wanted to thank you again for having Horses Empower Heroes and Petey available to help heal my wounded heart. September 28th was the last day I had an active thought of killing myself. Right now I think of it the same as October 5th. That is sobriety date. I won't forget my *suicide thought free* date. Two days later I met Petey. I don't think it was coincidence that I haven't thought of suicide since I started my relationship with Petey."

Petey

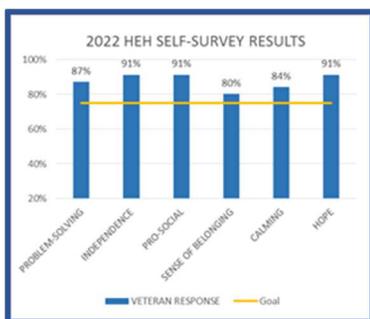
Ken, 2022 HEH Veteran

Horses Empower Heroes program graduate and U.S. Army Military Police Veteran, Michael, lives with PTSD and severe post-combat stress. He shared “I am very broken ... I am so filled with shame; I tried to take my life. This place [Small Miracles] helped me to want to seek treatment; I knew if I went to the VA for help, I could come out to the horse program.”

Michael and therapy horse, Lakota, “chose each other” and instantly bonded. “She rested her head on my shoulder and took my pain away.” He asked about Lakota’s story. I shared that when Lakota was born, she was “tagged” for destruction, fortunately, she was rescued. “See, I knew we understood each other, neither one of us was supposed to live.” Michael went on to share more about his combat experience and his job responsibilities as M. P. that required him to train the Iraqi police, though he was only 18. On March 22nd, 2005, his unit was driving through a rural town outside of Bagdad, when an IED deployed. He lost 5 of his buddies that day and Michael was shot in his left thigh — he will never forget that day. When Michael recovered, he rejoined his unit and went back into the field. “You can say nothing to your horse, you can say everything to your horse; they are listening,” Michael said with tears in his eyes. Michael successfully completed his treatment program at the VA and secured housing close to Small Miracles. Michael continues to consider Lakota his therapist — giving him peace and healing his war torn heart.



Daily Veteran’s Surveys validate the hope and healing the horses bring to the participants. Once again, 100% of the veterans reported that they would recommend HEH to their fellow veterans.



Thank you to our HEH sponsors:

- United Way of Greater Kingsport
- Citi Community Contribution Program
- Walmart Community Foundation (Stores #5734, #1080 & Sam’s Club #8222)



Small Miracles maintains the Gold Level of Accountability and Financial Transparency on www.guidestar.org

