MEDIA RELEASE

The Community Foundation’s Veterans Fund Grants $4,500

Boulder (Nov. 8, 2016) – As Veterans Day approaches on Nov. 11, the Community Foundation Boulder County announces $4,500 in grants to support the strengths and needs of Boulder County veterans and their families.

The Veterans Fund, a permanent endowment of the foundation, supports our community by raising money and distributing grants for programs that enhance the lives of its veterans and their families. Goals of the fund include building community among veterans, creating dialogue between veterans and others, supporting organizations that serve the veteran community, and advancing education about veteran issues.

“The fund prioritizes projects that demonstrate strong veteran involvement and engagement in planning and implementing the proposed projects,” says Elvira Ramos, Vice President of Programs and Inclusive Leadership. “Grantees provide outreach to isolated veterans, create spaces where veterans can gather, facilitate connections between older and younger veterans, and identify best practices for services to veterans.”

For example, Boulder County CareConnect (BCCC) helps connect veterans with other veterans by providing much-needed transportation services. “We incentivize younger vets to drive older, more isolated vets to a Veteran’s Affairs medical facility,” explains Regis Lindsay, Medical Mobility Manager.

“We’re helping to change that sense of isolation among local vets by gaining their trust, engaging them, and getting them to VA facilities.”

With an emphasis on addressing homelessness among veterans, Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (HOPE) – also a Veterans Fund grantee – provides life-sustaining and supportive services for homeless and at-risk veterans to encourage their stability and self-sufficiency. “We know that veterans who are experiencing homelessness are quite often the most vulnerable among us,” says Lisa Searchinger, Executive Director. “They often have a combination of needs that require extra effort and time.

“With support from the foundation, we’re actively looking for those folks who might slip through the cracks, and who may need some special attention on our part – dedicated supplies and services that are beyond what we can offer through donations.”
Searchinger goes on to describe a “deeper level” of care that some veterans require. “We provide medical respite care if someone needs it. We’re looking for those veterans who may have a medical emergency, or who can’t function without housing due to medical issues – we can provide that support.

“The general public doesn’t necessarily understand the depth of needs for anyone experiencing homelessness, especially vets who have also experienced trauma in the course of their service. That’s why we’re seeking them out, and not just waiting for them to come to us.”

Another Veterans Fund grantee, Warrior StoryField, provides an artistic approach to engaging veterans and civilians in conversation, building community, and facilitating healing. “Together, over a period of years, we’re creating very large works of art,” says Robert Bellows, an artist himself who founded Warrior StoryField. “We’re working with fire, heat, and hammers, keeping veterans hands busy with really fun work, and stimulating meaningful camaraderie and conversations in a communal environment.

“Through the medium of art, we’re hoping to make visible the invisible wounds or war, and to give voice to the unspeakable.” Indeed, the metal sculptures themselves – a 16-foot dragon and an 18-foot Phoenix – are the result of conversations with participating veterans.

“While I can’t put into words what our collaboration means for them, I can speak to how much I’ve changed on hearing about the loss of their friends, the chaos they’ve endured, and the hurt they feel when they come home,” adds Bellows. “The art we’re creating together represents emotional expression and transformation – through the eyes of warriors, and from the perspectives of civilians, too.”

All told, current Veterans Fund grantees include:

- Boulder County RSVP Board, Inc. / Boulder County CareConnect Veterans Medical Mobility program ($1,500)
- Boulder Pride dba OUT Boulder County ($500)
- Bridge House ($500)
- Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement ($1,000)
- Salute Colorado ($500)
- Warrior StoryField ($500)

For more information about the Community Foundation’s Veterans Fund, or to schedule interviews with any of its grantees, please contact Gretchen Minekime, Vice President of Communications, at Gretchen@commfound.org or 303.442.0436 x107.

The Community Foundation Boulder County

For 26 years, the Community Foundation Boulder County has been a community catalyst, responding to immediate needs and anticipating future challenges. Through informed decision-making, we inspire ideas, ignite action and mobilize resources to improve the quality of life for all. Advancing inclusivity and providing leadership and on key issues, the foundation collaborates with community-minded individuals and organizations that want to make a difference, accomplishing more together than we do alone. Since its founding in 1991, the foundation has granted more than $75M to nonprofits focused on health and human services, basic needs, children and youth, education, civic engagement, arts and culture, and animals and the environment. commfound.org/news-media

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