



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

WORK VESSELS FOR VETS Mission: To equip America's veterans with donations of vessels, tools or vehicles to start a business or pursue career education.

Work Vessels for Vets, Inc., is a 501-c-3 national public charity whose mission is to equip America's veterans returning from the theaters of war with the "vessel" that can start a career or enhance a life of our returning service men and women. Since incorporation as a nonprofit in 2008, more than 2000 veterans in all 50 states have received "vessels" valued at over \$3 million to begin their transition to civilian life. By matching corporate and individual donations with veterans who demonstrate a viable business plan, Work Vessels for Veterans, Inc. has provided a "Hand Up" with fishing vessels, vans, vehicles, laptops, trucks, tool sets, tractors, trailers, farmland, fencing, furniture and more.

2019 By the Numbers:

- **\$350,602 in Income via Donations, Grants and Fund-Raising**
 - **\$130,336 in INKIND Donations of Equipment**
 - **\$ 59,629 Individual Contributions**
 - **\$ 52,183 Grants and Foundation Donations**
 - **\$ 92,786 Fundraising Income**
 - **\$ 12,631 Direct Corporate Contributions**
 - **\$ 2,550 Memorial Gifts**
 - **\$ 486 Other Income (cash boxes/refunds)**
- **\$329,430 in Equipment and Mentoring Services were awarded**
- **\$ 2,423 in Management Costs (under 0.007%)**

2019 AWARDS TO VETERANS - 72 Veterans awarded equipment valued at \$261,007

- **\$15,300 in 43 Laptops and 5 printers**
- **\$58,667 in Agricultural Equipment & tractors to 10 veteran-farmers**
- **\$42,000 in equipment awarded to 6 veteran-serving nonprofits assisting over 150 veterans**
- **\$37,805 in machinery to 7 veteran-entrepreneurs**
- **\$96,365 in cars, trucks & trailers awarded to 4 veterans**
- **\$6,614 in tools awarded to 2 veterans**
- **\$3356 in technology equipment (not laptops) to 4 veterans**
- **ALSO \$74,570 in Direct Veteran Support Services**

2019 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

1. GOAL: Be the GO TO charity for veterans seeking equipment to set up their own businesses across America.

In 2019, Work Vessels for Vets, Inc. made direct equipment awards to 72 veteran applicants for their businesses and 6 Veteran-serving nonprofits received equipment valued at \$42,000 to serve an estimated 155 veterans. In addition, WVFV's mentors served more than 200 veteran applicants through business counseling, application assistance and mentorships.

2. GOAL: Be recognized by national funding organizations as a partner in serving the transition needs of OEF/OIF veterans

In 2019, Newmans Own Foundation continued its support by granting \$25,000 and OverWatch Alliance sent \$3000. Scores of calls from VA Vet Centers, social service agencies, veteran-serving organizations and others came into the office. Partnerships were established with the SBA, Veteran Business Office Centers, USDA Veterans office, AgrAbility programs and vocational Rehabilitation programs.

WVFV partnered with funders to match grants for equipment for three veterans:

Tim Alexander of GA, a USA and USAF amputee, received a \$11,000 diesel truck for his mushroom farm – Semper Fi Fund matched \$5500 with WVFV \$5500. The Univ GA AgrAbility Program assisted in the selection and execution of the award.



Three charities worked together to purchase a \$30,000 adapted forklift for Alejandro Jauregui's commercial pollinator operation in Salinas Valley, CA. WVFV contributed \$10,000 which was the proceeds of our grant from Vets Aid. Semper Fi Fund paid \$10,000 and the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) paid \$10,000 and coordinated the award presentation including a banner from WVFV.

At the end of 2019, Matthew Goetsch, an Army Sgt with 100% combat injuries benefitted from our partnership with FVC. We finalized the purchase of a 2018 John Deere tractor with a \$7500 grant from FVC matching \$7500 from WVFV. Matt took delivery in early January 2020 and now the tractor is working hard at Goetsch Equine Therapy Program in central Florida.



3. GOAL: Be recognized by corporate funders as a strong partner in furthering their philanthropic purposes.



WVFV increased the number of donors who use their company-matching programs in 2019.

Currently, employee-matching corporations include: Pfizer, Dominion Energy, ABBVIE, Liberty Mutual Bank, Citizens Bank, EB Employees, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, GE Support, and UBS Brokerage.

Corporate INKIND donations in 2019 came from Pfizer (\$10,000 for 25 laptops valued at \$400 each), and Riverhead Building Supply (\$4965 in 35 tons of

landscape tiles for Waterford veteran). More vendors offered corporate discounts, leveraging the power of WVFV purchases in 2019 including \$500 from Liberty Polaris in GA, Whitley's Lock and Safe in TX, The Leather Machine Co in MI and Grainger Co of Alaska.

Chuck Bowe of Grand Wine and Spirits held a promotion in his Connecticut stores for WVFV from Veterans day through Pearl Harbor Day, donating \$1600 from the proceeds from his customers.

Most significant corporate partnership was championed by WVFV VP Rick Crolius with the President of Enterprise Builders Co of Newington, CT who chose WVFV to be the major beneficiary of the annual golf event which raised over \$37,000 for WVFV in September 2019. Enterprise Builders committed to continue their strong relationship with WVFV and dedicate the entire proceeds of the 2020 golf event to WVFV!



4. GOAL: Be a Stand Out Leader in donor integrity.



In 2019, WVFV once again earned the TOP RATED NONPROFIT AWARD from Great Nonprofits, with 5 star ratings from our veterans, volunteers and donors. GUIDE STAR, the international charity rating agency, renewed WVFV's PLATINUM Rating, their highest accolade for nonprofit integrity.

In 2019, Work Vessels passed the 20 rigorous Standards of Charity Accountability and became an Internationally Accredited Nonprofit under the Better Business Bureau, Veterans and Military Charities.



2019 recorded \$130,336 of INKIND donations to the organization from corporations and individuals. WVFV's reputation for extremely low overhead (under 1%) and its program to award equipment to fully vetted and qualified veterans has spread across the nation. WVFV receives referrals from applicants, partner organizations and corporations from all states and national organizations. By negotiating discounts for corporate purchases and by performing the necessary IRS paperwork gives confidence to permit a donor to give high value items such as cars, vans and machinery – even a horse!

5. GOAL: Be the connection between veteran entrepreneurs and aspiring veteran businesses.

WVFV cemented its relationship with the US Veterans Chamber of Commerce, founded by UCONN's LtCol. Michael Zacchea. Following several planning meetings, WVFV will participate in the development of the USVCC and engage in some of their activities across the country.

WVFV is delighted to learn that our friend and recipient of the 2018 WVFV Patriots Award, Col. Kevin Brown, formerly Tribal Chairman of Mohegan Tribal Nation, has been named the new CEO/President of the USVCC. WVFV will work to further connect our veteran-entrepreneurs with the USVCC.

WVFV Executive Assistant Carey Beralderi has been active in establishing better communications with our past awardees. She has developed a peer-to-peer chat room and has surveyed our awardees to learn more about their budding businesses. [See her 2019 report.]



6. GOAL: Maintain low administrative overhead and high participation by volunteers.

WVFV is committed to maintain the lowest possible administrative overhead by engaging volunteers to provide services to our applicants. In 2019 WVFV has maintained management expenses under 1%.

Col. Ted Larson coordinates volunteers for events when needed, as well as offering his expertise in military jargon, interpretation of military benefits, and general mentoring of veteran applicants. He was especially helpful at Vets Rock 2019.

Our Military Advisory Council has volunteer members from across the nation. They are “on call” when a mentor is needed for an applicant, or to connect WVFV with grant applications.

The WVFV Board Members have continued to answer the call for any number of opportunities to assist veterans or promote public awareness of WVFV. This year, Jay Kane has been a tremendous asset by appearing on Channel 3 TV, donating a silver doubloon and other items for silent auctions, and mentoring veterans.

WVFV honored our wonderful volunteer VP Rick Crolius with the 2019 Patriot Star Award. Rick hosts the annual fundraiser dance and manages the coin box collections throughout the year. He also mentors vets when needed. His “Seahorse” connections continue to be fruitful.

Bob Fiore is our Pfizer connection and has been instrumental in the donation of much needed refurbished laptops. Kathleen and Dan Burns are ever-ready to offer maritime assistance when a donor offers a boat to WVFV. Their local connections have resulted in considerable financial support to the organization. Paul Jacey continues to warehouse our inventory and transport laptops to Lou’s Computers for refurbishing. Paul also coordinates our tool donation program.

Finally, President John Niekrash is always available with support. He was instrumental in our presentation at the New England Innovation Awards and at all our other events. He is the best possible salesman for our mission, and appeared several times on radio, television and at club meetings to promote our mission. WVFV is blessed with the dedication of other organizations that dedicate their work to raise funds for WVFV. SkyDive for Veterans of Branford, CT held their 4th annual parachuting event and presented WVFV with a check for \$8000. The Avon UNICO Club sends the proceeds of their annual golf outing to WVFV, resulting in a check in 2019 for \$6000. PMW Marine of Stonington, CT also holds an annual fishing derby to benefit WVFV.



7. GOAL: Maintain relationships with past awardees and foster new peer-to-peer mentorships among vets.



In preparation for the New England Innovation Awards, WVFV awardees were surveyed for information about their businesses, annual revenues, number of hires, and other information. While the response was not 100%, we learned that at least 450 of these new enterprises have generated over \$10 million a year in annual revenues, and have

hired more than 1000 new employees. The veterans are grateful to WVFV for helping them get started with the critical equipment needed.

WVFV has organized a closed page on Facebook for our veteran awardees and applicants to engage with one another – they buy and sell products with each other, and offer mentoring advice. It has grown each month.

WVFV followed up on the 2018 “reunion” of veterans with enhanced communications, frequent email postings, rapid response to their inquiries and sharing veteran social media.



8. GOAL: Promote public awareness of the continuing needs of injured veterans in transition to civilian life.

Public relations is always a high priority for WVFV. In 2019, several remarkable events helped promote WVFV and its mission:

New England Business Bureau with its 6000 member companies held a competition for the NE Innovation Award. Information about WVFV was spread throughout their network, and WVFV made several presentations to member meetings. Work Vessels for Vets competed and became one of 5 nominees for top nonprofit. The nomination process involved creation of a 3 minute PSA which was developed by one of our awardees, Greg Trost of NH. The PSA is highly regarded and has aired throughout New England and on our website.



The PAWSOX Baseball franchise in Pawtucket, RI displayed information and brochures about WVFV in their Fan Base throughout the baseball season.

Channel 3 TV Hartford, CT named WVFV as one of 10 nonprofits in the state to receive airtime and an award of \$1000. Cathy Cook and Jay Kane

were featured with awardee Marc Harrell in Noank, CT.

Channel 8 TV New Haven, CT featured WVFV awardee Annette Montoya of Waterford with the landscape tiles she received from WVFV. Cathy Cook was featured at the WVFV office in Mystic.

WVFV on the Radio - John Niekrash and Cathy Cook appeared several times on radio in Providence RI "Service Matters" program with Rona Mann, and in Ledyard, CT on Lee Elci Show.

Magazines like WindCheck and Our Neighbors featured stories about WVFV in 2019.

WVFV has published quarterly newsletters to spread the word about our accomplishments on a regular basis to donors, awardees, vendors, advisors and the media.

Press releases were released throughout the year, with many picked up by local media in several states, and by Military.com and other online media.



Onward to 2020!

It will be hard to top our best year yet in veteran awards. Work Vessels for Vets is eager to see what 2020 brings! The goals will not change, nor will our efforts to achieve them!

There are many organizations good and bad, who want to help America's returning veterans. For eleven years, Work Vessels for Vets, Inc. has found no other organization solely dedicated to awarding a real "hand up" in the form of physical equipment needed to start a business. WVFV has no long VA forms, no red tape. WVFV specializes in awards adapted to suit injuries, partnering with business mentors, offering assistance without judgment and with cheerful hearts, the volunteers of this amazing nonprofit have said "thank you for your service" to our Post 9/11 military veterans.

Work Vessels for Vets, Inc.
P.O. Box 215
West Mystic, CT 06388
501(c) (3) Public Charity EIN# 26-3201760