

Healing America's Heroes (HAH)

**Presentation to the NM Military &
Veterans' Affairs Committee**

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Founder & President

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Video Summary of HAH



Introduction

- HAH, a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization, was founded by Vietnam veteran Eddie Crain in 2014.
- This was in response to the large number of suicides – **22 per day** – of military members returning from combat.



The HAH Mission

- The mission of HAH is to use recreational horse and fly-fishing therapies to help treat combat veterans and active-duty service members who suffer from
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
 - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

[The HAH fly's body represents a National Defense Service Ribbon in honor of those who serve this country during a time of war. The fly was designed and tied by HAH Fly-Tying Instructor Dan Gandee.]



Our Work

- HAH has successfully hosted 32 male veterans and 36 female veterans through our 5-day sessions.
- There was overwhelmingly positive feedback and testimonials from participants describing how the HAH program has changed their lives.



HAH Awards

- HAH has won 5 awards from various organizations throughout New Mexico for our innovative approach and instructional method.
- The most current awards include the following:
 - “2021 Behavioral Health Star” for HAH (Pictured above)
 - “2021 John Henry Support Animal” for our horse “Cracker”. (Pictured below with Ted)



THE FY2022 COVID RECOVERY PROJECT

- The COVID lockdown since March 2020 has resulted in an estimated 20% increase in suicides of military members because of isolation.
- HAH has developed a COVID Recovery Project to conduct two 3-day sessions, one for men and one for women, by May 2022.
- The COVID Recovery Project has been awarded an FY2022 Quality of Life grant by the NM Governor's Commission on Disability.

Expected Outcome & Impact

- The Project will serve 16 disabled individuals – 8 men and 8 women – in two 3-day sessions.
- The expected impact on the participants' quality of life will include improved family and social relationships, emotional health, levels of independence and life skills, and physical well-being.



Recent Updates

- Awarded the FY2022 Quality of Life grant on June 11. Plan to conduct the two sessions in April and May of 2022 in the leased facilities at Ft. Stanton, near Ruidoso and Capitan, NM.
- Near completion of the lease agreement with NM General Services Department for the facilities at Ft. Stanton.



Recent Updates (Continued)

- The leased facilities include dormitories, classrooms, administration building, dining hall and commercial-sized kitchen, workshop, horse corral/barn, and acres of grazing land. These facilities provide an ideal environment for conducting HAH programs, but they are empty and require furniture, equipment, and supplies.
- The move of HAH to Ft. Stanton has gained significant visibility and enthusiastic support from local communities (Lincoln County, Capitan, Ruidoso, etc.), political leaders in New Mexico and Congress, and media.

Next Steps for HAH

- Sign the lease agreement with NM General Services Department when provided.
- Move existing HAH equipment, horses, and 20 tons of hay from Tierra Amarilla to Ft. Stanton.
- Work with NM Congressional delegation staff to apply for funding/grants to support HAH programs in Ft. Stanton.
- Obtain a Fiscal Agent for HAH to apply for government funding that requires a fiscal agent.

Next Steps for HAH (Continued)

- Obtain support from local communities including banking/finance, hospitality industries, maintenance, and other service providers to furnish, equip, and staff the Ft. Stanton facilities.
- Expand current contacts with veterans and service organizations across NM & Texas.
- When HAH starts operation next spring, our plan is to expand services to police, fire fighters, first responders, and those who suffered from the recent Afghanistan withdrawal.