



HOMETOWN HEROES
Annual Report

2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement	3
Camp Hometown Heroes	4
Camp Reunite	5
Letter from Our Executive Director.	6
Impact by Numbers	7
Demographics In Review - Camp Hometown Heroes	8
Demographics In Review - Camp Reunite.	9
Financials In Review	10
What is Mental Wellness.	11
Camp Hometown Heroes Grief Therapy Practices	12
Camp Reunite Trauma Care Practices.	13
Our Exceptional Staff	14
Family Feedback	15
Turning Rivers Facility Updates.	16
Thank You to Our Volunteers	17
Thank You to Our User Groups	18
Thank You to Our Donors	29
Ways to Give	22
Thank You to Our Board of Directors.	23

Mission Statement

Strengthen family systems, break cycles of trauma and hardship, restore dignity and empower humans to thrive for a brighter future through positive youth-centric programming.

Heroes don't wear capes
THEY WEAR DOG TAGS





Camp Hometown Heroes

Camp Hometown Heroes welcomes children, ages 7-17 who embody the statement “Freedom is not free.” They have made the ultimate sacrifice of losing a loved one who has served in the military and passed away. Serving Gold Star Children from all over the country, including Hawaii and Alaska, the campers are taken through a journey of healing through play, therapy and bonding. Many come back year after year, and some have transitioned from camper to counselor after much care and trauma-based recreation over the years. The focus of their week at camp is mental wellness, healing and hope for brighter tomorrows.

Camp Reunite

Camp Reunite serves children who have incarcerated parents in Wisconsin — now expanding to partner with a third prison in 2026. Through trauma-based care, art therapy and meditation, the program works to curtail the cycle of incarceration, while also reuniting the children with their incarcerated parents during the camp stay. This program serves children ages 7-17. A significant number of participants in Camp Reunite live below the federal poverty level (qualify for free and/or reduced lunch programming) live with relatives, in foster care, have food insecurities, have inconsistent housing and lack basic needs that other kids their age often rely on. To address basic needs concerns, all campers received new clothing, new hygiene items and new backpacks full of grade-appropriate school supplies while at camp. The focus of their week at camp is mental wellness, reunification between and child and a reduction in social inequality.



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Hometown Heroes,

This past year, the team at Hometown Heroes Inc. is proud to have delivered the camp experience to over 500 children at our camp home, Turning Rivers. Dozens of long time returning camp counselors and volunteers remain dedicated to providing hope, healing and connection to hundreds of youth, from around our state and across the nation. We believe that the mental and physical wellbeing of our youth is one of the most worthwhile investments in shaping a brighter future.

Camp Reunite continued strong partnerships with Taycheedah Correctional Institution and Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution during two weeks of summer programming as well as winter camp. We began a partnership with Racine Correctional Institution to expand the reach of Camp Reunite and look forward to offering reunification and community to an entirely new set of families from this community in the summer of 2026.

The 13th year of Camp Hometown Heroes saw over 200 campers, both returning and new, continue to forge deep connections through shared grief journeys. Our first week of camp was our largest session of CHH since 2014. In 2026, we are reimagining one of the most sacred moments at camp, our honor ceremony, to strengthen the intentionality of our mental wellness offerings at camp.

The report that follows details our organization's work in 2025. We extend our sincerest thank you to our passionate donors, volunteers, camp counselors, and advocates for another wonderful year of delivering our mission to bring hope and healing to children through youth camping. On behalf of the entire staff at Hometown Heroes, we hope you will follow along with us in 2026 for yet another summer of healing, outdoor recreation and connection.



Kenzie Gonzalez

Executive Director | Hometown Heroes, Inc.

Impact By Numbers

48,258

HOURS OF JOY, HEALING,
& CONNECTION AT CAMP

6,875

VOLUNTEER HOURS

2,000+LBS

CLOTHING, HYGIENE ITEMS,
+ SUPPLIES PROVIDED

520

CHILDREN SERVED
IN 2025

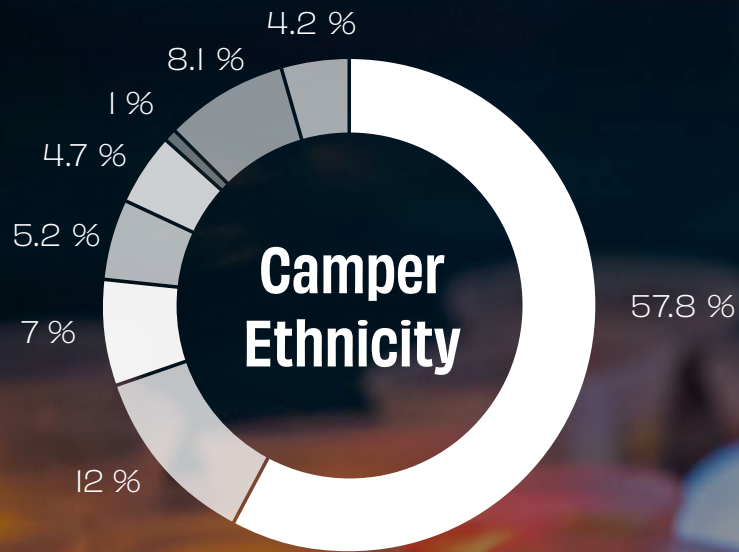
10,280

MEALS SERVED

218

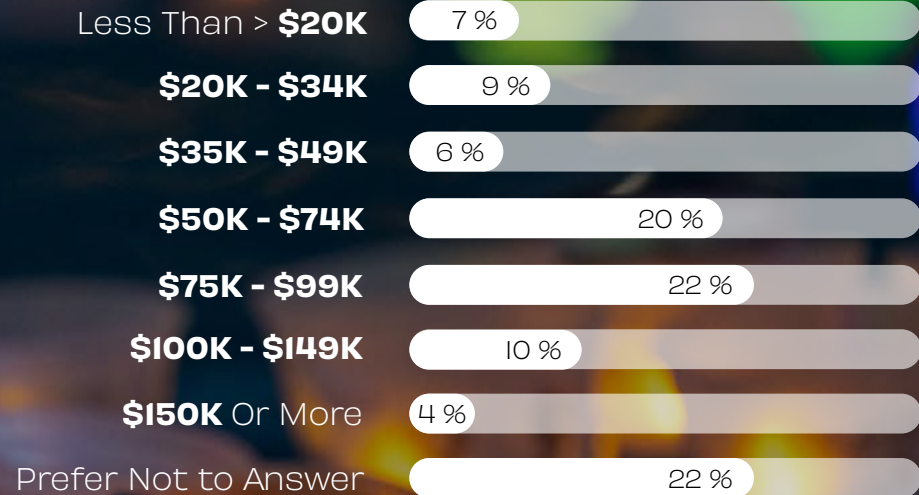
CANDLES LIT IN HONOR OF
FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS

Demographics - Camp Hometown Heroes



- 57.8 % - White
- 12 % - Latino/Hispanic
- 7 % - African American
- 5.2 % - Native Indian/Alaska Native
- 4.7 % - Asian
- 1 % - Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 8.1 % - Other
- 4.2 % - Prefer Not to Answer

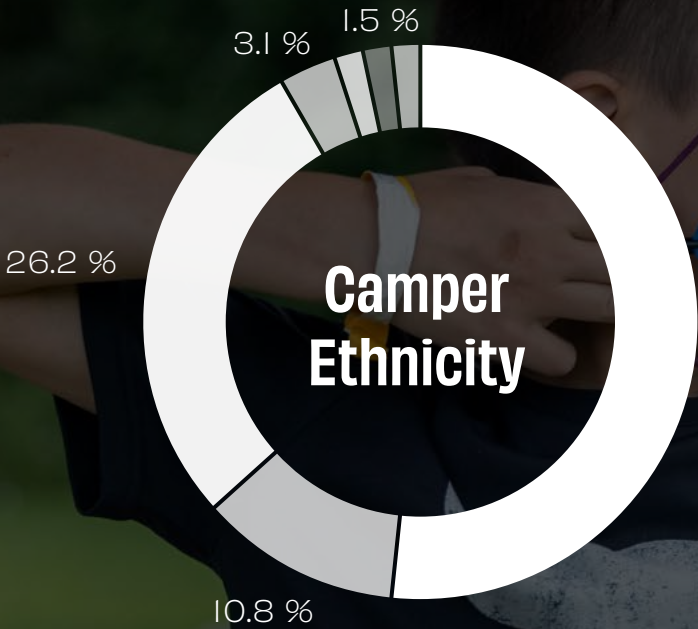
Household Annual Income



Loved One's Cause of Death

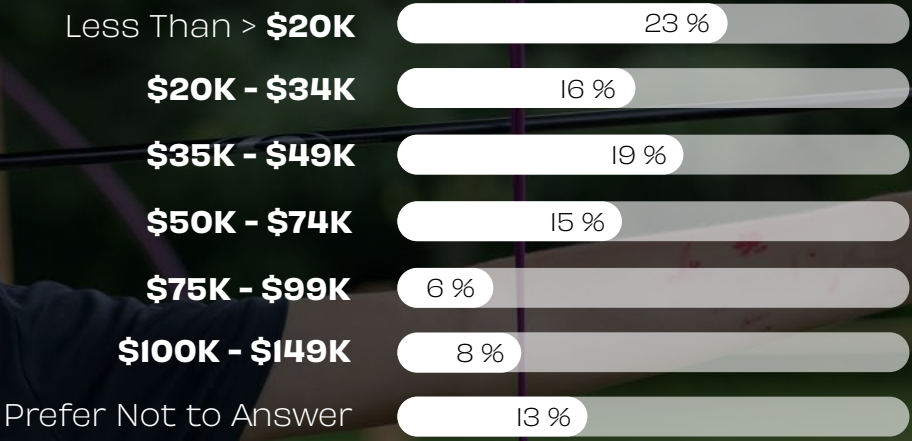


Demographics - Camp Reunite

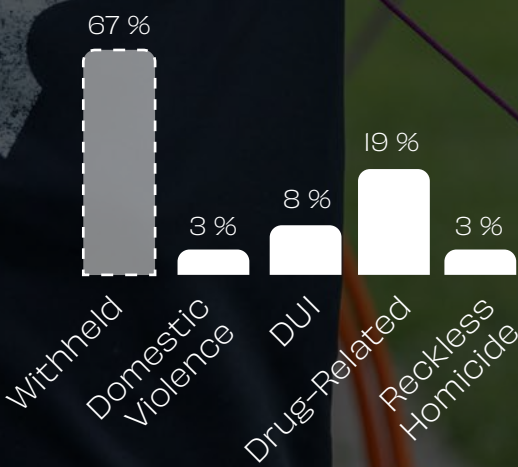


- 47.7 % - White
- 10.8 % - Latino/Hispanic
- 26.2 % - African American
- 3.1 % - Native Indian/Alaska Native
- 1.5 % - Mixed
- 1.5 % - Other
- 1.5 % - Prefer Not to Answer

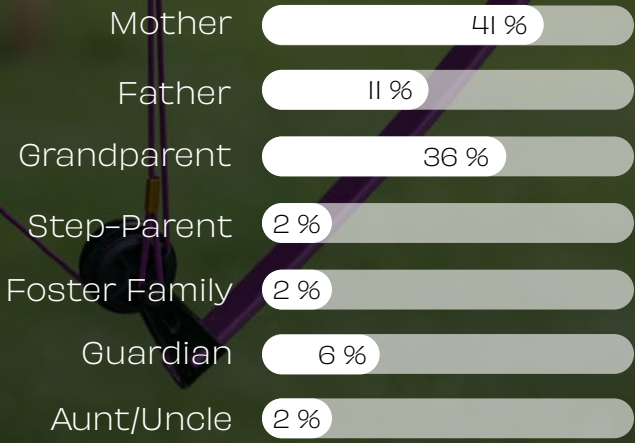
Household Annual Income



Reason For Incarceration



Living Situation



Financials in Review

ADMIN: + \$11,215
— \$146,616
— \$135,401

CAMP
REUNITE: + \$187,747
— \$192,011
— \$102,262

CAMP HOMETOWN
HEROES: + \$740,697
— \$452,625
+ \$288,072

TURNING
RIVERS: + \$136,517
— \$479,750
— \$340,975

GENERAL
PROGRAMS: + \$237,024
— \$5,139
+ \$231,885



What is Mental Wellness?

Chloe Blish is our Mental Wellness Director and possess expertise in children's health. With a trauma informed lens, she designs a curriculum that facilitates conversation, relationship building, coping skills, processing and release. The art is varied, tactile, evidence-based and age-appropriate. At camp, the children participate in daily mental wellness sessions in which they are working within their age groups, in a specified safe and consistent environment. Each session is guided by Chloe and consists of a one-hour session that gives instruction on the project, the why, and a reflective debrief amongst the group where campers can share their art, their thought process, feelings that come up and connect with one another on shared experiences.





Camp Hometown Heroes Grief Therapy Practices

Since 9/11, more than 7,000 U.S. children have lost a parent who served in the military. Many experience deep grief, isolation, depression, and even PTSD. While resources for grieving adults exist, support specifically designed for children remains limited. Founded in 2013, Camp Hometown Heroes provides healing and hope to these children in the Wisconsin woods. Campers spend a full week participating in recreational activities alongside trauma-informed care and therapeutic programming.

- **Grief Support**
- **Healing Discussion Groups**
- **Art and Music Therapy**
- **Life Skill Training**
- **Enhanced Increased Self-Esteem Practices**
- **Leadership Development Activities**
- **Restored Sense of Hope for the Future**

- **Tree Planting Ceremony:**

Campers plant a tree in memory of their loved one. Volunteers tie yellow ribbons to represent the fallen service members, creating a living symbol of remembrance and growth through grief.

- **Celebratory Carnival:**

The week concludes with a carnival featuring games, popcorn, cotton candy, bounce houses, and a dunk tank. Many activities are hosted by veterans who volunteer to give back to the children.

- **Butterfly Release:**

On the final evening, campers release butterflies while listening to a poem about transformation and renewal, symbolizing hope and healing.

- **Honor Ceremony:**

Campers walk a candlelit path to the pool to honor their fallen family members through song and reflection. Those who wish may proudly speak the name and military title of their loved one before placing a votive candle in the water.

- In this, the most pivotal night of camp, the children can say the name of their fallen service member with their official military title. No one is pressured to participate but many children say the name of mom or dad with pride.

Camp Reunite Trauma Care Practices

While research on incarceration in the United States is extensive, relatively little focuses on the children of incarcerated parents. Programs supporting these children—particularly through trauma-informed care—remain rare. Camp Reunite is the only camp-based program in the U.S. providing comprehensive support for children with incarcerated parents while facilitating repeat reunification visits during a weeklong camp experience. Many campers have never experienced a typical relationship with their parent outside prison walls. Camp Reunite aims to strengthen those bonds while helping children build resilience and reduce the likelihood of future incarceration. Campers participate in:

- **Mental health promotion activities**
- **Conflict resolution training**
- **Anger management strategies**
- **Stress-reduction activities**
- **Non-violent communication techniques**
- **Prison Visits and Family Activities:**
The most impactful moments occur during visits with parents. Families participate in art projects, games, basketball, movie time, and reading together—experiences that many have never shared before. Families also contribute thumbprints to a “Family Tree” artwork symbolizing connection and growth.
- **Addressing Basic Needs:**
All campers received a backpack full of school supplies, new clothing and hygiene items, winter coats, new shoes and so much more!
- **Trauma-Responsive Support:**
Staff provide compassionate care for trauma responses, including nighttime support for bed-wetting, comfort items, and calming routines to help campers feel safe.
- **Structure and Predictability:**
Because many campers come from unstable home environments, daily schedules are posted in cabins to provide structure. After emotional prison visits, campers are given additional rest and downtime.
- **Celebratory Carnival:**
Like Camp Hometown Heroes, the week concludes with a carnival celebrating new friendships and healing.



Our Exceptional Staff

Supporting children affected by trauma requires specialized training and preparation. Our staff bring backgrounds in education, social work, and special needs support. Many return year after year, and some are former Camp Hometown Heroes campers themselves. Staff participate in an intensive two-week training program focused on child development, trauma-informed care, and crisis response. Through simulations and reflection exercises, counselors practice supporting campers and leading discussions that encourage vulnerability and healing. Exceptional staff members may receive the Beyond the Call of Duty Award, and older participants can join the Leaders in Training program, which focuses on resilience, teen grief support, and leadership development.



Family Feedback

Camp Reunite:

“ Camp Reunite really gave him experiences, coping skills, and hope that I couldn't. And for that I will forever be grateful to all people who were involved. ”

“ It was a fantastic time for my child and me. I loved feeling like his mom again. ”

“ Before coming to this camp, I didn't know there were other kids in my same situation. ”

Camp Hometown Heroes:

“ I had a family member commit suicide recently, leaving behind a young daughter. Camp has been such a comfort to her, and I believe camp has helped Charlotte know how to help in a lot of ways. Just want you all to know that the work you're doing matters, and it has such a far-reaching effect, not just for the campers. Camp Hometown Heroes is making the world a better, easier, kinder place. ”

“ This camp has brought a glimpse of happiness back into our lives. After my two oldest boys lost their dad suddenly to a combat-related injury, our lives have been forever changed. My oldest son was in a dark place, while the other one merely didn't understand why his daddy would never see him again. No counselor, psychiatrist, medication or group therapy was helping. After experiencing camp, they were the bright children they were before this tragedy. ... because they have hope from all the amazing people that have crossed their paths and share the same loss at Camp Hometown Heroes, because of this, they have hope. Hope is all we need to restore their hearts. ”

Turning Rivers Facility Updates

**THANK
YOU:**

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

for replacing six lower cabin windows and replacing rotting ramps on our Alpine Tower.

The Thomas and Ellen Hogue Family Foundation

for installing the dishwasher hood, sprucing up our existing Ga-Ga ball pit and constructing a new one.
More work to continue in the spring of 2026!

Thank You to Our Volunteers

We are honored and grateful for the dedication of the many volunteer groups and individuals who support our camp and the children we serve. From preparing meals and distributing basic needs items to assisting with grounds clean-up, their impact is felt in every corner of camp.

Some contributions are especially meaningful, like the Northwestern Mutual Veterans Group, who prepared Honor Ceremony flags for each Camp Hometown Heroes camper—each adorned with a ribbon bearing their loved one's name.

The Blue Star Mothers once again tied yellow ribbons on our memorial trees, planted each year to honor the fallen. These trees stand as lasting symbols of remembrance and growth through grief.

We are also thankful for the many groups who give their time and talents, including the Northwestern Mutual Hispanic Employee Group and Disability Employee Group, Field Fastener, Keller Williams, Culver's, Kiwanis of Kewaskum and West Bend, Kohl's, Kohler Veteran's Employee Group, the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and Kapco Metal Stamping.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to the individual volunteers—both youth and adults—whose generosity and compassion continue to inspire us.



Thank You to Our User Groups

Each summer, we are proud to host partner camps that utilize our facility and staff to provide mission-driven programming for deserving children. These organizations include:

- **Camp Hope America:**
Wisconsin Chapter, (in partnership with the Sojourner Family Peace Center), supporting children affected by domestic violence.
- **Camp Klotty Pine:**
Serving children living with bleeding disorders (in partnership with Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation).
- **The Sparta Project:**
Supporting veterans and first responders experiencing PTSD.
- **Homestead High School**
- **St. Joseph Academy**



Thank You to Our 2025 Donors!

Advanced Coatings	Brian Fuerstenberg	Deirdre Cavanagh	Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce
Advanced Feedlines LLC	Brian Moshe	Delafield Legion Auxiliary Unit 196	Great Lakes Hemophilia
AES Restaurant Foundation Inc (Arby's)	Bryan Harter	Delta Dental of Wisconsin	Great Midwest Bank
Agatha Dawson Charitable Gifting	Cara Lewis	Denise Brownlee	Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Inc
Alexander Ruocco	Carol Beveridge	Dennis L Cooper	Hal Steffen
Alicia Braatz	Carol Salander	Diane Kennedy	Hannah Bristol
Alison A Aubrey	Carolyn Gall	Direct Supply	Harley Davidson - Post 400
Alyssa Loest	Casey Rykki	Disabled American Veterans Waukesha Cty	Hart Fest Wauwatosa Inc
American Legion Auxiliary #486	Cathy Bacher	Don Schultz	Heather Nawolski
American Legion Auxiliary #036	Cathy Backer	Donald Hackbarth	Henning Lang
American Legion Lt. Ray Dickop Post #36	Cedarburg Elementary	Donaldson Mayme	Herbert H Kohl Charities Inc
American Legion Riders Dist 4 & 5	Cedarburg Over Head Door LLC	DS Engage	Holly Ternes
American Legion Riders Dist 8	Charles Hauske	Edmund Eldredge	Holton Brothers
Amrita Daiere	Charles Pleier	Edwards, Stewart & Joanne Danforth	Hudson N Cavanagh Belvedere Foundation
Amy Hannerman	Charlotte Hohner	Elaine Olson-Santos	Hupy and Abraham, S.C.
Andis Foundation	Cheryl Becker	Ellen & Allen Lavine	J J Wenger
Andy Scuderi	Christie Reth	Emma Smith-Stevens	Jake Hemming
Angela Malone	Church Mutual Insurance	Emma Weinert	James Dauterive
Angela Rosine	Claire Treutel	Eric Bulgrin	James Harvieux
Anon Charitable Trust Agency	Cliff Bergin & Associates, INC.	Erica Guimaraes	James J Micale JR
Anoop Prakash	Coil Plus IL	Erika Gronenthal	James Kainec
anthem	Community Foundation - Fox Valley Region	Erin Bridges	James Poplawski
Associated Bank	Complete Filtration Resources Inc	Evan Schlachter	Janet Kleinert
Association of Grafton Fire Department	Connie Strook	Everett McKinney	Janet Schalk
Association of the U.S Army MKE Chapter	Craig Lori	Fox Bros. Piggly Wiggly	Jason & Rita Erdman
Aurora Healthcare	Creative Maintenance Solutions Inc	Franceska Bucci	Jay Giese
Bader Philanthropies	Curtis Matter	Gail Skonecki	Jean Endres
Bank Five Nine	Daniel Clausen	Gary Beyer	Jeff Prochnow
Basic Metals	Daniel Laine	Gary Sinise Foundation	Jenna King
Becky Dotzler	Daniel Moakley	GFWC-WI Lakeshore District	Jenna McCormick
Becky Gahart	Daniel Whitehouse	Gil A Blomdahl	Jennifer Coney
Benjamin Morris	Danielle Melfi	Gina Dicristo Neuner	Jennifer Landowski
Blain Supply Inc.	Dave Peterson	Gina Freitag	Jeremy Bramucker
BMO	Davidson family fund	Girish Shah	Jerry Stricker
Bob Nelson	Debra Ann McQuaid	Glenn Levinson	Jessica Mooror

Thank You to Our 2025 Donors!

Jessica Swearingen	Leah Bauer	Metal Edge Partners	Randolph Boryscka
Joe Cardona	Leonard Bucholz	MFMF	Randy Phillips
Joel V Stenman	Lift-X Lift Services, LLC	Michael Botkin	Rasheed Walker
John & Kathleen Logan Trust	Linda Desorcy	Michael M Watts and Julia F Henderson	Rebecca Holappa
John Stropes	Linda M. Miller	Michael Mallory	Redeemer Lutheran Church
Joy Patton	Lisa Kommer	Michael Sarnowski	Redeemer Lutheran Church Foundation
Julianna Perry	Lisa Toledo	Michelle Oliver	Reinhart Boerner
Julie Guenette	Lori Barthelemy	Milwaukee Lodge Foundation	Ricci R Vargas
Julie Jolitz	Lori Gay	Nannette M. Gardetto Charitable Fund	Richard Blommer
Julie Mulvaney	Lori Schommer	Naperville Post #43 Amer Legion Ridgers	Richard Borys
Julie Prochnow	M3 Insurance Foundation Inc	Natalia Taft	Richard Minor
Jul-Nin Klarr Tayone	Maddison Adams	National Association Boxcar Hobos	Richard W Frank
K Mueller	Magic Coil Products LLC	Neil Willenson	Rita Lewis
Kala R Linder	Marcy Conen	Nextera Energy, Inc.	Robert Nelson
Kale Kimmel	Margaret Colombe	Ngan Ngo	Robert Poull
Kapco, Inc.	Margaret Dethloff	North Shore Marine Detachment	Ronald Elving
Kari Anderson	Margaret Govek	Olympic Steel	Russ Jayme
Kathleen Caragher	Margaret LeDoux	One Mile Leadership Project Inc	Russell and Gail Brewster
Kathryn Werning	Margie Freeman	Oscar C. & Augusta Schlegel Foundation	Russell Nicolet
Katie 'Halloran' Bruckner	Maria Hader	Osum Charles	Ruth Fialkowski
Katie Hassmer	Mark Borca	Our Lady of Lourdes	Ryan Petska
Kelly Livingston	Mark Eisendrath	Ozaukee Deputy Sheriffs Assoc	Sally Kennedy
Kenneth Klumb	Mark Okey	Pamela Schmitt	Sandra Moore
Kenwal Steel Corp	Mars Family Foundation	Patricia Badger	Sandy Hanus
Kevin Melka	Mary Janes	Patricia Whaley	SE WI Chapter of the Military Officers
Kiwanis Club of Milwaukee, INC.	Mary Robertson	Patriot Riders of America Chapter 1 WI	Sean Cummings
Kohls	Matthew Andrews	Paul Polter	Sentinel Benefits
Kreici-Braun-Meier	Matthew Zaniewski	Paypal Charitable Giving Fund	SFM Mutual Insurance
Krista Sherer	Maura Packham	Peter Funding	Shannon McGinnis
Kyle Kuzma Family Foundation	Medix Corporate	Peter Lemberger	Shirley Ellis
L M Landau	Megan Stafford	Peter Thompson	Sidney Litke
Laatsch Food Market	Meghan Reid	Philip Babler	Simon Cox
Laura Anderson	Melitta & Joan Pick Charitable Trust	Quad Graphics	Sons of The American Legion Post 522
Laurin Strange	Mequon Police Association, Inc.	Quinn Marita	Soroptimists International of FDL
Lawrence Proehl	Mequon-Thiensville School District	Randall Buser	Steve Russell

Thank You to Our 2025 Donors!

Steve Stricker American Family Insurance	Thomas Kertscher	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5373	Whitnall Park Lutheran
Stork's Automotive	Thomas Lankammer	Vicki Compton	Wisconsin Troopers Benevolent Foundation
Straub Metal International	Thomas Squier	Vicki Styke	Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1
Stuarts Landscaping	Thompson Family Foundation	Vikki Deming	Worthington Steel
Susan Krueger	Tim Radtke	Walker Family Foundation	Yontz Valor Foundation
Susan Pipkorn	Timothy Othmer	Watertown-Beaver Dam Elks Lodge	Young Innovations
Susan Simpson	Tod Scholz	Waubeka Fire Department	Zach Eisendrath
TDECU Cares Foundation	Todd Polack	Waukesha County Community Foundation INC	
Teri Anderer	Tracey Baumann	Waukesha Elks Bingo Fund	
Terri D. Schwartz	TriCounty Chapter Christian Life Resource	Wauwatosa VFW Post 1465	
Terri King	Trissa Code	Wauwatosa Village BID	
Thaddeus McGuire	Uline	WBCA Charities Inc	
The Home Depot	United HealthCare Svs Inc	WE Energies Foundation	
Theresa Harmala	US Connect	West Bend Hockey Club One LLC	
Thomas & Ellen Hogue	Veterans Alliance Charity Golf Outing	West Bend Kiwanis Early Risers Foundation	



Ways To Give

MAIL PAYMENTS TO:

Hometown Heroes, Inc.,
1000 Badger Circle, Grafton, WI 53024
Attn: Development

ONLINE:

<https://givebutter.com/hometownheroes>

CORPORATE MATCH:

Inquire with your employer about their corporate matching program. Donate to our organization and seek a match for your good deed!

PLEASE NOTE:

We can help you set up recurring gifts and help you include Hometown Heroes into your estate plans.





Board Of Directors

KENZIE GONZALEZ

Executive Director, Hometown Heroes, Inc.

JIM KACMARCIK

President of the Board

CEO and President, Kapco, Kacmarcik Enterprises and Co-Founder of Hometown Heroes

ZACH EISENDRATH

Vice President of Stakeholder Development
Kacmarcik Enterprises

RACHEL MINOR

Registered Nurse, Advocate Aurora

TOM MULTERER

Founder and Managing Member, Junction Box, LLC

SUE TUROWSKI

Owner, Turowski HealthCare Products, LLC



Liz Braatz

Director of Development | Camp Hometown Heroes

braatz@hometownheroes.org

EIN: 90-0421984