

We Need Your Help

Surprise, Surprise, Surprise!

For better or worse, the fact is that few things surprise me these days. However, I confess that a recent and unexpected delivery of a pallet loaded with forty cases of dog treats from our friends at "Bark Box" was one of the nicest surprises I've had in quite some time. After we gave all of our dog veterans their own case we then passed on the remaining cases to our local ASPCA. courtesy of "Bark Box"



Your financial gifts help keep the doors open, the lights on, and the staff at LMVFM available whenever a veteran, military contractor or family member needs help dealing with the moral and spiritual wounds of war.

Why your help matters

LMVFM provides veterans, contractors and their family members with *free* counseling services and assessments, help with VA claims, assistance locating and connecting with other types of resource support.

- ◆ *LMVFM does not solicit or accept any government funding or resources.*
- ◆ *All LMVFM programs and services are free to our clients.*
- ◆ *LMVFM has never turned a veteran, contractor or family member away for any reason.*
- ◆ *We are good stewards of our resources and we don't waste the donations we receive.*

Donating Your Choice Dollars is Easy

There are two ways to Donate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries

1. Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted say "Thrivent Choice" when you are prompted which will connect you to a Customer Care Professional and tell them that you would like to donate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to:
Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries
2. You can also donate your Choice Dollars by logging into your account at Thrivent.com/Thriventchoice and select:
Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries



In-Kind Donations help us, help them



Donations of these items help us to keep our programs and services free to those we serve.
Gift Cards (especially gas and general merchandise) of any amount, **Unused stamps, Small/Large Business Envelopes, File Folders, Note Pads, and General Office Supplies.**



Paypal is an easy way to give to LMVFM.
Follow the PayPal link on our website,
www.lmvfm.org

LMVFM is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Ministry . In keeping with our faith beliefs, and need to remain free of government requirements, that conflict with the teachings of our faith, *LMVFM does not solicit, or government funding or resources.*



Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.

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Ministry Challenges, Growth and Opportunities

This year has been filled with growth, unexpected major changes at LMVFM that have been both challenging and rewarding all of which has lead to dynamic ministry growth.

One major change was the unexpected early retirement of my dear friend and assistant of six years, Jody Ford. Jody was an amazing assistant and ministry partner. As we looked at her impending retirement our prayers turned to finding the right person to fill her position. The most challenging issue was finding a Administrative Assistant who possessed the unique skill set, including the ability to think creatively that was required at LMVFM. Long gone are the days when every task (counseling, program development, fundraising, administrative and even basic maintenance and janitorial tasks) at LMVFM was handled by one employee. Thankfully, it wasn't too long after our prayers and search began that God answered those prayers. Within a month, LMVFM had found and hired new Assistant, Jami Barnes, who after two weeks of training with Jody, began her service as Jody began her much deserved retirement.

NALC Ministry Partnership

This year, after years of being a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the NALC, LMVFM was made a "Full Ministry Partner" of the Church. As our relationship with the church grows we are seeking more ways and opportunities to assist our churches with their ministry outreach to veterans and their families. This year we've traveled to NALC congregations in Oklahoma, Texas and many other states throughout the country. Next year we hope extend our mission outreach to NALC congregations in Canada to help them in their military outreach to members of the Canadian Armed forces, and their family members. In the same way that churches in America struggle to provide effective military outreach to our troops, so too do our Canadian churches.

The Blessings of Ecumenical Ministry Partnerships

One of the challenges of military ministry is that no one ministry can meet the needs of all the veterans and family members who are in need across this country. So, it is important that we work with, train and provide assistance to not only Lutheran identified churches, but all church bodies.

Along with strengthening our current church relationships, one of our major goals this year is to establish and develop ministry partnerships with more church bodies such as the **Anglican Church in North America**. In April, we had the opportunity to meet with clergy and lay members of the Anglican Diocese of the Great Lakes for several days and discuss our military care and training programs. From this we look forward to having the opportunity to assist them in their military ministry outreach programs.

Ecumenical Ministry Partnerships Help Us Help Them



One of the best examples of what can happen, when you bring church bodies that otherwise are not in fellowship together for a combined mission project occurred late one night in May at the Airport in Fort Wayne. On that night we brought in handmade lap quilts to give to each of the eighty four veterans returning from their visit of war memorials in Washington, DC on an Honor Flight. The lap quilts had been made by three groups of Lutheran women, who represented the ELCA, LCMS and the NALC. As we presented each veteran with their own lap quilt, we told them that their quilt had been made by a Lutheran woman to thank them for their service. The look on their faces, some in tears, of each of these veterans was an affirmation that we should always look for ways to come together to serve Gods children. Blessings to each of you as we continue in service together.

Leslie

Military Suicide Epidemic Not Considered Newsworthy

As this issue of LMVFM News was going to press, two celebrity suicides were in the headlines. Within four days of each other, a well-known fashion designer and an internationally acclaimed expert on fine dining ended their own lives to the shock of millions of fans.

Four days, two celebrity suicides – and, in four days or 96 hours, some 88 current or former US military personnel take their own lives.

So, where are the headlines about the sobering facts of military service-related suicide? The sad fact is that very little is being reported about them. But here is one quick fact, in 2016 military suicides were; **483** versus **509** in 2017.

| DoD Service and Component | Total 2016 | Total 2017 |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Active Component | 280 | 285 |
| Air Force | 61 | 62 |
| Army | 130 | 116 |
| Marine Corps | 37 | 42 |
| Navy | 52 | 65 |
| Reserve Component | 203 | 224 |
| Reserve | 80 | 93 |
| Air Force Reserve | 10 | 11 |
| Army Reserve | 41 | 63 |
| Marine Corps Reserve | 19 | 10 |
| Navy Reserve | 10 | 9 |
| National Guard | 122 | 126 |
| Air National Guard | 14 | 12 |
| Army National Guard | 108 | 114 |

There is a tragic irony in the reporting of celebrity suicides and the news media's relative silence about military-related suicide.

Following the recent celebrity suicides, some mental health and news media observers cautioned that irresponsible, sensationalized media coverage could spark a string of copy-cat deaths. So what would "responsible" coverage of the epidemic of military suicides look like? Perhaps it should include providing resources for people who need help, not oversimplifying the cause, not sensationalizing the details of means of death or the outpouring of grief..

Additionally, the silent epidemic of military suicide could use some responsible reporting – not only on the topic itself, but by ending the chronic delays in reporting by the government agency charged with keeping the public informed of such matters. Our wounded warriors who suffer in silence to the point of taking their own lives need to know that there is hope – and where they can find it.

LMVFM does more than tell you the sobering truth about climbing military suicide rates. Our trained counselors combat this epidemic daily with direct, Christ-centered support to vets and their families. Our educational ministry equips a growing number of congregations, pastors and other care-giving professional to recognize and respond to military service-related spiritual and moral trauma that can lead to taking one's own life.

At Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, we are unwilling to treat the increasingly high rates of military suicides as the "new normal" when there are ways to effectively reduce those numbers.

The veterans crisis line is: Free, Confidential, available 24/7 to: All veterans, All service members, National Guard and Reserve Members, and Their family and friends.

Call: [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255) and Press 1 Text: [838255](tel:838255) Support for deaf and hard of hearing: [1-800-799-4889](tel:1-800-799-4889)

LMVFM Welcomes Aboard, New Recruit Patrick-Dooly

Please join us as we welcome aboard our newest team member Recruit Patrick-Dooly. Like our founding Paws & Effect member "Holly", Dooly is also a British Cream Retriever.

We selected Dooly out of a litter of eleven pups, for the qualities we saw in him, such as gentleness and sociability that had been such a part of Holly's nature which made her an ideal therapy dog. Dooly, is nearly four months old, and accompanies us on visits, and works with clients. He is

showing us that he has the same qualities that our former beloved therapy dog, Holly.



Recruit Patrick-Dooly passes his first medical exam with flying colors!

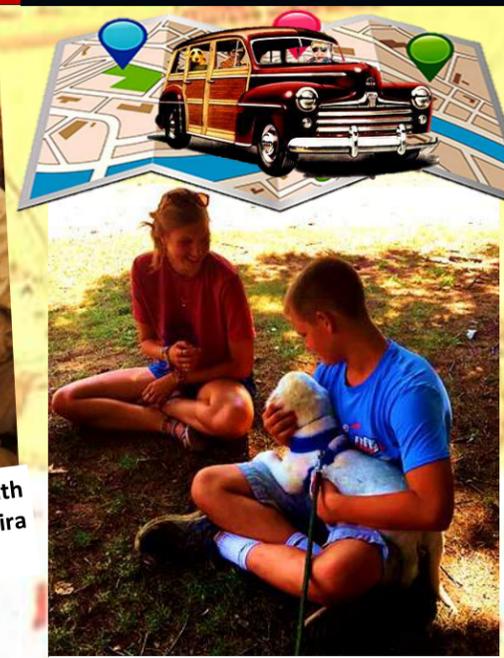


Since his arrival, Dooly has been attending church services and has traveled on mission trips with the LMVFM team visiting congregations in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois as part of his therapy dog training.

TRAVEL LOG



Team Member, Lilly-Bell visits with Pastor Chris Thorson at the Chaira Center in Springfield, IL



New recruit, "Patrick-Dooly" enjoyed visiting with kids attending programs at Camp Lutherwald this summer.



Lilly-Bell made her first visitation at a hospital this year



LMVFM team members, Jody and Lilly-Bell with our good friend Dcs Dowdell at an LWML Zone Rally in Ohio.



Lilly-Bell and her friend Amelia, sitting on the floor across the aisle, have become good friends at church.



With a little help from LMVFM team member Jami, Lilly-Bell lends her paw to help a new friend fill in her raffle sheet.



This year we had the opportunity to share our ministry and connect with several different Veterans organizations.



LMVFM team member Stanley-Tucker admires one of the beautiful lap quilts we received for our veterans