



Veteran's Passport ★★★ **To Hope** ★★★

"Empowering Veterans through awareness, support, and collaboration"

Summary

- Veteran's Passport to Hope (VP2H) was founded as a Colorado based 501(c)3 nonprofit in 2012.
- VP2H's primary purpose is to: raise awareness about issues veterans face today, support Colorado based veteran friendly nonprofits, and bring Colorado veteran friendly nonprofits together to more efficiently help veterans.
- Our grant program supports local veteran's charities. Funds raised at our fundraising events have been distributed via this grant program to deserving veteran friendly Colorado based nonprofits. In 2017 VP2H awarded grants to 29 different Veteran friendly nonprofits.
- In addition to our annual Gala, VP2H has several smaller fundraising events each year including a golf tournament, a fund-raising dinner at the Melting Pot with guest speakers and in 2017, the first annual 3-mile Freedom Run in partnership with Charles Schwab.
- As the military reduces the number of service men and women needed, it is even more prudent to provide support for our veterans as they integrate back into civilian roles.
- **We have raised nearly \$1,500,000 and had over 10,000 attendees at our events.**
- 2017 VP2H hired a full time Executive Director, Tony Drees – a Desert Storm Veteran and Purple Heart Recipient.
- The Board of Directors are all volunteers

Mission

VP2H's mission consists of three main focus areas: Awareness, Fundraising, and Cooperation.

AWARENESS:

VP2H's Primary mission is to raise awareness within the Colorado area about the issues Veterans face: Multiple tours in combat zones, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), high unemployment rate, high homelessness rate, high divorce rate, and a record high suicide rate. As the military mission winds down in Iraq and Afghanistan and veterans reintegrate themselves into civilian society, we believe that this awareness will foster an understanding of their efforts and compassion for their struggle.

FUNDRAISING:

VP2H's secondary mission is to raise money for Veteran friendly non-profits. Through due diligence and research, we organize fund raising events which support local, Veteran friendly non- profits. We only support high quality charities that maximize their accountability to veteran's causes and are transparent in their fund raising and giving practices.

COOPERATION:

VP2H's tertiary mission is to act as a rallying point for other veteran friendly non- profits. Our goal is to organize and conduct meetings with the leadership teams of these groups within the Colorado area with the goal of finding ways for us to work together more efficiently. We believe that by working together and by sharing ideas, we can reduce competition between non-profit groups and more efficiently and more effectively help veterans.

We also consolidate information about resources that are available at no charge to veterans and families by keeping our veteran's resource website (www.veteransresourceportal.com) up to date and relevant. The Veteran's Resource Portal is a list of resources utilized as an online resource center where veterans and their families can search for and rate available resources.

History:

Veteran's Passport to Hope was founded in 2012 by Shane Schmutz, an Army veteran, to help aid Colorado veterans and their families. VP2H is non-partisan organization with many members of the Board having military and civilian backgrounds. We have distributed over \$746,000 to Colorado based veteran friendly non-profits.

Accomplishments:

- In 2012 VP2H was founded, using the West Point Society of Denver as our fiscal sponsor and legal corporate base
- In October 2012 VP2H became a Colorado-based nonprofit corporation and additionally received 501(c)3 status from the IRS
- In October of 2012, VP2H hosted our inaugural fundraising event at Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum with 800 people in attendance. We raised \$307,000 at our first event. Our 2012 Gala supported the Wounded Warrior Project
- Since inception, we have nearly \$1,500,000 and have distributed over \$746,00 to Colorado based veteran friendly non-profits
- We have had four successful golf tournaments beginning in 2014
- In past years VP2H funding has supported Vail Veterans Program, The Home Front Cares, Wounded Warrior Project (Colorado Springs office), and Project Sanctuary. In 2017, we awarded grants to the following Colorado Veteran friendly non-profits:

- Project Sanctuary
- Wounded Heroes Family Adventures (Breckenridge)
- Patriot Anglers Corporation
- Vail Veterans Foundation (Program)
- Veteran's To Farmers
- SEAKR Foundation
- Angels of America's Fallen
- VFW Post #1
- Volunteers of America (CO)
- Support-A-Soldier
- Redistribution Center, Inc.
- No Barriers USA
- Healing Warriors Program
- Arapahoe Community College
- Hearts and Horses
- Warrior Bonfire Program
- Eagle's Nest Ranch
- No Soldier Left Behind
- Freedom Service Dogs



VP2H is comprised of a 100% volunteer Board of Directors and a full time, paid Executive Director. We try to reduce overhead cost as much as possible. Between 2012 and 2017 our efficiency rate has been 78% and 83% (percentage of money donated given directly to Veteran charities).



2018 Goals:

- Successful fundraising Gala. We estimate we will reach 600 attendees at our 2018 Gala which is February 22, 2018.
- Expansion and Growth: VP2H is focused on growth. We not only expect to drastically increase our fundraising and exposure, we plan on hosting more events, involving more of the local community and recruit more volunteers and VP2H advocates.
- Expand to additional non-profits served to increase the reach and benefit even more Veterans.
- Increase corporate relationships to expand awareness and promote volunteerism in our corporate partnerships.

In 2017, we

- Hosted our 4th annual golf tournament.
- A fundraising dinner at the Melting Pot.
- Co-recipients in the first annual Lone Tree Freedom Race, hosted by Charles Schwab.
- Partnered with Sailor Jerry's, a Colorado based spirits distributor. \$1 from every bottle of Sailor Jerry Rum sold was donated to VP2H.
- Donated 100k to over 20 Colorado base Veterans non-profits.

Programs:

As the needs of veterans are broad and the support they need is truly a statewide issue, the nature of our program eliminates the necessity for those who want to donate to a local veteran charity to specify a unique program or location in Colorado. Our beneficiaries have been, and will remain; Colorado based veteran friendly charities, keeping the primary purpose of VP2H close to home.

Veterans Resource Portal:

For years, the Colorado legislation had recognized that a clearing house or directory for veteran related services did not exist and was direly needed. Veterans and their families have some unique problems and deserve the support of the nation.

The Veterans Resource Portal was envisioned as a source document to aid Veterans and their families with finding out exactly what resources are available within Colorado. Colorado legislation even funded their own efforts, but as of 2015, nothing usable had been created.

VP2H accepted the tossed gauntlet. In June 2013, Veteran's Passport to Hope launched the Colorado Veterans Resource Portal (www.veteransresourceportal.com). The focus of this program was to offer long-term support through communication, career assistance, camaraderie, and networking for Colorado veterans. The Veterans Resource Portal allows veterans, veteran's families, veteran non- profits, and anyone else seeking to help veterans, a resource to find free solutions to veteran problems in the state of Colorado.

Recognizing that many veterans will start a search for help online, VP2H created the Veterans Resource Portal as an interactive website. The website is a current, up to date resource that not only provides information, but also gives users feedback as to the effectiveness of the charities listed. This resource was built through the efforts of the VP2H volunteers. Development was completed at zero cost to the organization, which shows the dedication of our committee members and volunteers.

Annual Gala:

Since our inception, Veteran's Passport to Hope's primary fundraising and awareness raising event has been our Annual Gala. The Gala was designed to gather members of the general public together in support of all three parts of our mission statement.



In support of our secondary mission of fundraising we also host silent and live auctions at our Gala's. VP2H captures high-end items via donation and the items are presented at the Gala. Funds raised are always distributed to beneficiaries through our grant program.

The Gala has also been the center point of raising awareness, our primary mission. At the event we present guests with speakers that exemplify our returning veterans, host a keynote speaker to share a heartfelt story, and present awards to influential veterans and civilians in the Colorado veteran's community. The Gala serves as a rallying point to bring together members of the Greater Denver community to focus on our Colorado veterans.

Grant Program:

Our grant process includes evaluating each non-profit and their grant submission packet utilizing the following weighted categories. Once the subcommittee approves the complete list of suggested grant awardees and amounts, our entire board votes unanimously on the finalized list. Grant Application Categories:

- Meets minimum requirements
- 501(c)3
- Helps Vets and/or their families free of charge
- Exists primarily to help vets
- Efficiency rating*
- 990 Tax Form, Financial Statements, and Budget review
- Colorado based or Colorado operating arm
- Collaboration with other veteran friendly organizations
- Active board and quality of board
- Quality of website and focus on veterans
- How long has the organization been established
- Number of paid staff versus volunteers
- Fit with VP2H mission
- Risk of failure as an organizations or as a program
- Ability for VP2H to make an impact
- Impact to VP2H marketing, brand, and reputation
- Ask amount
- Annual budget and revenue
- Size of non-profit
- Source of funding/donations



Direct Fundraising:

Using personal contact, along with on-line promotional matter, and sponsorship outreach, VP2H has established and conducted a large amount of direct fundraising outside of our primary fundraising events. VP2H seeks individual, corporate, and foundational donations.

Symposiums:

One of our goals is to encourage cooperation among local veteran charities. The work the VP2H team is doing is far greater than our standalone organization. We are doing far more than what is currently visible on our website. We hold annual symposiums for Colorado based military nonprofit organizations. These have been one of the first symposiums of their kind offered in the state and we are excited to be a leader in the military nonprofit realm.

*Amount of funds going directly to helping veterans and/or their family members versus overhead.

