



November 2023

# Legacy of Honor NEWSLETTER

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***Mission Statement – We exist to serve those who serve us by coming alongside them in the everyday. The first responders, military, and veterans always have our six, it's our turn to have theirs.***

## Letter from the founder:



***“First of all, my name is Dan Riggs. I am sure many of you know who I am or at least know of me. I guess you could say I am the man behind the mission, that is LOH. Myself and my late father, Ross Riggs, made it our goal in life to take care of those who so selflessly help others. We expanded this idea, to include those families who back the service men and women in our communities. Over the last 4 years we have grown exponentially. Now this year is a great reflection of what God can do with those who listen. We feel like we are barely able to keep up with the demands, but we are also growing in the community. This community has come along side, and we actually are stronger than ever! Our staff is also growing. We have a team of three employees and a full board ready to do some great work. Our doors are always open!”***



**WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU!**

**CONTACT LEGACY OF HONOR  
330-871-4692**



## CURRENT PROGRAMMING

**Operation Bootstrap** – The purpose of this program is the original concept on which we were formed. In this program, we assist veterans, first responders, active military, AND their families through filling everyday needs. From a cup of coffee, tank of gas, cleaning up leaves to adding a deck we connect about the need and figure out the best way to fill that need. We work with other partners and community agencies to fill the needs that come our way. In this program, it's like a first responder, we don't know what the need is until it comes in, but we will do our best to find a solution to fill the need.

**Operation RAK (Random Acts of Kindness)** – The purpose is just as it says, the goal is to let the men, women, and families we serve know that they are appreciated and supported. We have appreciation days, surprise visits, and our biggest program Operation Christmas Blessings. Through the Blessings program we spread the joy of giving, love, and cheer for the holidays to our first responders and families.

**Operation Access** – This program is our newest program and the focus is mental health and wellness for first responders. This is working alongside them to address the concerns that they face. Our focus is to come from a peer standpoint.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

2023 brought some major highs and major lows for Legacy of Honor. To start 2023, Operation Bootstrap saw an influx of families and \$45,000 from the Pro Football Hall of Fame to help ensure these projects got handled. In 2022, we helped 76 families and YTD in October we had helped 63 families.

For 2023, as of October we are at 45 families and growing. This decrease is in part due to our most difficult challenge of the year in which we unexpectedly lost our co-founder Ross Riggs.

Through the next couple months we were still able to handle referrals, however, the focus was on caring for Ross's family and resetting in the areas in which he was working within the agency. Towards the end of summer, we began to again see an increase in requests for Operation Bootstrap. Our focus is to end the year strong ensuring that each need that comes our way is served in the best way possible. During this time we also participated in a partner agency's 5K, National Night Out, and other events hosted by our partner agencies.

November 2023

## Program updates continued:

In the second quarter of 2023, we received a large grant of \$124,000 to work with Canton Police on wellness. We are working with the officers currently to focus and build this partnership with the officers. Our first responders run into danger and tragedy on a regular basis and in order for them to thrive and have the resiliency to face these challenges, we want to make sure that they have someone focused on them after the day ends. These first responders are moms, dads, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends, and they truly deserve the best so they can be the best. Police officers and firefighters are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty and if we can help reduce that risk among our own, we will do that. We utilize data to help us as we build the programming. As a part of this we are working with Cleveland Clinic Mercy Hospital to start a Stark County Peer Support Team for first responders. It is in the early stages of growth, but we anticipate to have people trained early in the new year.

Also in the second quarter, we had the opportunity to move into a larger office that is more accessible and accommodating to our growing needs. One of the most exciting parts of this is an apartment that we are able to use to fill the needs of the families we serve. Whether it's a temporarily displaced family, someone in between housing, or maybe a person or family that just needs a little respite, it's an incredible opportunity to provide another tangible resource within our community. Currently, we have had a family that was in need from July through early November and we have been able to provide the space. We look forward to being able to bless other families with this small apartment. We have had requests over the last couple years for something similar and so this apartment is an answer to prayer.

In the third quarter, we continued to work on the Operation Bootstrap requests coming in and the grant with Canton City. We hosted our 3rd Annual Gala on August 19th at MAPS Air Museum. At the gala we gave awards to our Legacy Recipients. This year's recipients were Eric Brown – Veteran, Jamison Gates – Active Duty Reservist, Deborah Geiger – Police, Ben (BJ) Hershberger – Fire, Matthew Shafer – EMS/Fire, Virgil Schlabach – EMS/Fire, Eric Weisburn – Corrections, Carol Rohr – Communications, and Stephanie Little – Hospital Emergency Personnel. Our 4th Annual Gala will be August 17th, 2024 at MAPS Air Museum. We will be taking nominations for next year's Legacy Recipients beginning in January. We are honored to be able to recognize these incredible men and women. We also participated in the Louisville 2nd Fridays where we handed out cookies to first responders made in partnership with students from Louisville Schools. We had the privilege of partnering again with Louisville Middle School for their Kindness Day in September and the Ohio Heroes Golf Outing benefitting fallen officers also in September. At the end of September, there was a group of Jeep and Mustang owners that came together for a car show to benefit Legacy. We are so thankful for their belief in us and making a difference. These partnerships are such an important part of moving the mission forward.

Although this year has had some major struggles in the passing of Ross, we have also had the privilege of being a part of so many blessings. The work at Legacy of Honor is truly the heart of our founders Dan and Ross and we continue to live that everyday. As we move through the last quarter and into the new year, we look forward to continued growth, change, and making a difference. We hope as you see all that's happening that you will consider joining us in being there for those that are there for us.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## *Pro Football Hall of Fame Veterans Event*

NOVEMBER 11TH 2023 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM



Scan for more info!

## *Mission BBQ Canton Veterans Event*

NOVEMBER 11TH 2023



## *Single Barrel Release Party*

NOVEMBER 19TH 2023 4:30PM - 7:30PM



Scan for more info!

*Trainings and Classes will be added after January 1st for 2024!*



***\*\*If you have events that you would like Legacy of Honor to be a part of, please reach out to Suzanne at 330-871-4692 or [ssnyder@honorthelegacy.org](mailto:ssnyder@honorthelegacy.org).\*\****

November 2023



Currently we have several volunteer needs for our agency. If you are able and willing to volunteer, please reach out to Suzanne Snyder at 330-871-4692 or [ssnyder@honorthelegacy.org](mailto:ssnyder@honorthelegacy.org). Any and every volunteer is so important to being able to make a difference.

### Office:

**Office Assistant** - General office work and assisting with coordinating some of our programming for Operation Random Acts of Kindness.

**Grant Writing and Fundraising Support** – We are in need of someone willing to assist with finding and writing grants to expand the capacity and growth of Legacy of Honor. Also, increasing support for fundraising opportunities.

### Projects:

**Project Coordinator** – Someone to assist our founder in answering calls for Operation Bootstrap and coordinating project efforts.

**Project Volunteers** – We need some volunteers to do physical labor for house repair projects.

**Project Volunteers** – We need volunteers to assist with leaf clean ups and snow removal for clients.

Training:

We are looking for volunteers with special talents or interests to join our trainings list for 2024.

### Respite Apartment:

We need volunteers who are willing to help with cleaning and preparing the apartment at our office when there is a change of people that utilize it.

# Funding Needs

This is the hardest part of the job. There are many worth non-profits out there and each has needs. Legacy of Honor is no different. As a non-profit we rely on the community for support and finding partners that believe in moving the mission forward. Currently, we are in need of multiple areas of funding. We hope that you will consider how you might be able to financially partner with us. Below are some needs.

Building Rent Coverage (this includes the apartment for use) - \$14,400

Operation Christmas Blessings - \$5,000 (10 families)

Program Support (program specific needs, staffing, needed software, training, etc) – Our goal for this quarter is to reach 1000 donations of at least \$150 each. Small donations can make a HUGE difference towards reaching our goals. Will you help us spread the word and reach this goal?

The final ask is support to start the Ross L. Riggs Memorial fund. This will assist with continued capacity building of Legacy of Honor as well as starting a scholarship fund for the children of first responders. Ross wanted so much to help the next generation and encourage them to chase their dreams. This scholarship will hopefully be a kick starter for them to be able to do that. We have a donor committed to matching up to \$25,000 to get this started. We are currently working with the Stark Community Foundation create the endowment that will make a difference for years to come.

Asking for funding or volunteer support, although not the easiest, is key to keeping us moving forward. So as you enter the end of the year, will you consider joining us in this mission. We have so many opportunities to make a difference and to help us move forward. If you will consider joining us, you can go directly through our website [www.honorthellegacy.org](http://www.honorthellegacy.org) to donate, fill out a request for help, or volunteer.



330-871-4692