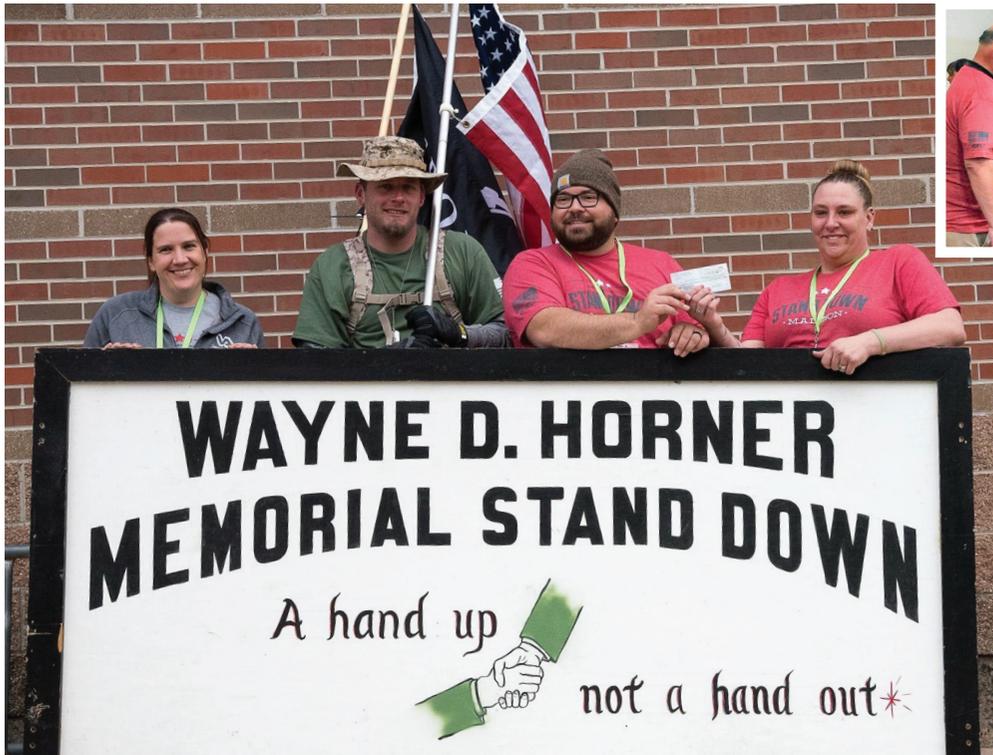


Standing Down to Lift Veterans Up



past president of Stand Down Madison, who served in the U.S. Army for four years following 9/11. “The homeless experience is pretty far outside the social sphere, and we’re trying to humanize it.”

As such, Stand Down Madison seeks businesses to volunteer as a veteran’s “buddy” at the event (or work it in some other way), donate money or new or near-new clothing such as jackets and socks, and even provide employment opportunities.

“I was able to put a smile on somebody’s face and visit with that person — even if just for 15 minutes,” says Betsie Thompson, current president of Stand Down Madison and a longtime event volunteer.

Sponsored by WPS Insurance, Stand Down Madison is part of a movement by the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans. The local history dates back to the early Nineties, when Vietnam War veteran Wayne D. Horner wanted to find a way to help homeless Madison-area veterans. When he passed away from complications related to Agent Orange exposure, several of Wayne’s fellow combat veterans joined together to host the city’s first Stand Down in 1993.

Last year’s Stand Down Madison event brought in 175 attendees, 55 more than anticipated and about 70 more than in 2016. This year’s Stand Down Madison event will take place Saturday, Oct. 27.

HOW TO GIVE

The mission of the organization of veterans and community members of South Central Wisconsin is to provide a day of relief to those struggling veterans to exit homelessness in our area.

INDIVIDUALS can contribute in many ways. We are always looking for monetary donations and needed supplies. Donors can contact the organization to get a list of needs. Also, there is time to volunteer during the event.

CORPORATIONS also can contribute money and needed supplies, and they can send an email to get a list of things that are needed for the event.

An estimated 130 veterans in Madison live without permanent housing, and the need is great for everything from clothing and bedding, to food and bus passes, and to medical care and employment.

With a shortage of affordable multifamily rental units in the city, one group is doing the next best thing to help these men and women. Every October, the Wayne D. Horner Memorial Veterans Stand Down at the Salvation Army of Dane County on Madison’s Darbo Drive offers homeless veterans from Dane, Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson, Rock, Green, Iowa, and Sauk counties the opportunity to meet with a broad range of vendors. Goods and services provided include: food; clothing; medical, legal, and mental health assistance; job counseling and referrals; tailoring and barbering; and — most importantly, event organizers say — companionship and camaraderie.

“We’re not the organization to help veterans find a home, but we want to get all the right people in the room,” says Adam Howarth, recent

The 2018 Memorial Stand Down event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 27.

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