



**Veterans Coalition of North Central Texas**

**"Thanksgiving for Veterans 2012"**

**After Action Report**

**Saturday, November 17, 2012**

**9:00-1:00pm**

### **Committee Members:**

Nekima Booker	Operation Healthy Reunions	Chair
Cassie Morgan	Center for Brain Health	Vendor Chair
Lisa Waitemon- Moss	Aids Arm	Volunteer Chair
BJ Sessions	Bread of Heaven	Volunteer Co-Chair
Loretta Brown	REACH of Dallas	Site Director
Wanda Hardeman	Dallas Vet Center	Team Member
Chalisa Warren	City of Dallas Fair Housing	Team Member
Linder Smith	Bread of Heaven	Team Member
Stephanie Tutill	Center for Brain Health	Team Member
Reginald Loftin	Photography	

The Veterans Coalition of North Central Texas (VCNCT) hosted its second annual Community Initiative Event "Thanksgiving for Veterans 2012 ". The event took place at the Dallas VFW Post 6796 at 9179 Garland Rd. The purpose of the event was to provide Thanksgiving dinner for Veteran and their family members, a one year free membership into the VFW, and to educate the Veterans on a list of available resources. Sponsoring organizations provided the following items:

1. Veterans Coalition of N.C. TX.: 271 Bags and monetary funding
2. Operation Healthy Reunions: Overall Event Coordination
3. Kroger Grocery: Food (at a discounted price)
4. Dallas Jr. League: Monetary Donations for the purchase of food
5. Manna from Heaven Catering: Free samples of homemade dressing
6. VFW Post 6796: Location and food storage
7. Dallas Vet Center: Mobile Vet Bus

The coordination and preparation of the event took approximately two months. There were 250 turkeys totaling approximately \$4,500, and 260 bags of food with one food order with approximately 17 different items, totaling approximately \$6,500 for a total of approximately \$11,000 worth of food given away, additional in-kind food was donated. A complete inventory of all delivered food was taken at the bagging session. There was one bagging session with 20 volunteers bagging, 18 different Coalition members(organizations) and community partners, 2 VFW Post, Garland and Dallas, with a total of 4 volunteer hours for bagging. Participating Coalition members and community partners included the following organizations:

1. Operation Healthy Reunions
2. Equest Ranch
3. VA of North Texas
4. VFW Post 6796
5. The Center for Brain Health
6. REACH of Dallas
7. Dallas County Veterans Court

8. Operation Healthy Reunions
9. S.W. Elevator
10. Dallas Jr. League
11. Aids Arms
12. Grace After Fire
13. Hawthorne-Smith House
14. TXMF Program
15. Devry University
16. Dallas Vet Center
17. DARS
18. Center for Brain Health

Primary recruitment and registration for participating Veterans took place at the Seagoville Medical Battalion, Army National Guard Headquarters in Grand Prairie, and the Dallas VA. Additional Veterans were recruited by Dallas County Veterans Services Office, Dallas County Veterans Court, and Operation Healthy Reunions. The event provided food to 198 Veterans and of the Veterans 775 family members were supported. Of the Veterans served, there was a total of 506.41 reported combined years of military service. Ten Veterans did not report their branch of service and thirteen Veterans did not report years of service. The Veterans represented every war time era from Vietnam to the present war. Employees of “Freddie Mac” donated 50 handmade feminine bags for female Veterans. A “Gold Star Family”, who’s fallen Soldiers birthday was on the day of the event, donated 5 iPods, in custom made coffee cups, that were given as special door prizes. Of the Veterans served 48 different cities were represented and 96 different zip codes represented. Of the attendees, over 56 units and or Duty Stations were represented. The following is a breakdown of served Military Personal:

Army:	124	Family Members:	775
Marine Corps:	10	Combined Years of Service:	506.41
		Unidentified Reported years:	13
Navy:	19	Cities Served:	48
Army National Guard:	6	Zip Codes:	96
Air Force:	16	Units Represented:	~56
Army Reserve:	23		
Total:	<b><u>198</u></b>		
Unidentified Branches:	10		

There were a total of 42 turkeys and 52 bags remaining after the event. The remaining turkeys were held at the host VFW Post 6796 and the remaining bags were held at Mental Health America of Greater Dallas for Veterans that later identified themselves as in need.

There was a total of 21 Veterans Service Organizations present to provide resources and information to the Veterans and their family members. Vendors arrived at 7:30am to set up and prepare to serve the attendees. The following organizations set up a Vendors booth:

AIDS ARMS, Inc.
Bread of Heaven Cornbread Dressing
Center for BrainHealth - PTSD
Center for BrainHealth - TBI
City of Dallas Fair Housing Office
Community Council of Greater Dallas/ 2-1-1
Dallas Vet Center
Hawthorne Smith House
Heroes 2 Remember Project (H2RP)
Keller Center for Corporate Learning of DeVry University
Texas Veterans Commission
US Department of Labor
Equest Therapeutic Horsemanship
Starlite Recovery Center
American Red Cross
Dallas County Veterans Services
Joining Community Forces/Texas Military Forces
Parker University
REACH OF Dallas
New Benefits

The event was advertised on CBS Channel 11 at the 5:00pm and 10:00pm news hour as well as Clear Channel radio.

There was a total of 132 attendee evaluations completed and turned in. Of the collected evaluations, 39 questions were not answered. The following is a breakdown of the evaluation:

1. Overall how would you rate the event?
  - 92% Excellent
  - 8% Good
  - 0% Fair
  - 0% Poor
  - 0% Terrible

2. Based on your experience, would you attend another VCNCT event?  
 100% yes  
 0% no
3. Were the volunteers helpful?  
 98.9% yes  
 1.1% no
4. How did you find out about the event?  
 0% Radio Station  
 18.2% Email  
 28.3% VA  
 19.2% Veteran Service Organization  
 3% Website  
 20.2% Word of Mouth  
 16.2% Other
5. What can we do to make this event better for you next year? A total of 68 responses were recorded. The responses can be provided up request.

There was a total of 10 Vendor Evaluations submitted. Of the 10 the following results were reported.

1. Overall how would you rate the event?  
 100% Excellent  
 \_\_\_ Good  
 \_\_\_ Fair  
 \_\_\_ Poor  
 \_\_\_ Terrible
2. Was the event organized?  
 100% yes  
 \_\_\_ no
3. Did you enjoy volunteering?  
 100% yes  
 \_\_\_ no
4. Do you feel your time was well spent?  
 90% yes  
 10% no
5. Would you volunteer for another VCNCT event?  
 100% yes  
 \_\_\_ no

6. Are you a Coalition Member?

100% yes

\_\_\_ no

7. How can we make this event better for you next year? 3 skipped this question. Responses available upon request.

Pictures of the bagging and event can be found on the Coalition website, [www.vcnct.org](http://www.vcnct.org) or [facebook/vcnct.com](https://www.facebook.com/vcnct.com). The following are responses from attendees, thanking the Coalition for support. Additional attendee responses available upon request.

1. Hi Nekima

It was an honor to work with you and the entire VCNT staff. I can't wait to do it again. God bless you all and everything you do to care for Veterans and their families.

Reginald C. Smith

2. I just want to thank you all for this program. It really helps a lot.

I have been unemployed since March and the last thing on my list or well, it never really gets on my list of bills, is to buy food.

My priorities are to pay bills with what I have from my savings each month and food is really never a thought or last thing on my list.

So thank you.

I almost didn't come since I'm only by myself, and a huge turkey would just be too much for one person.

I was thinking that instead of me signing up, that the program would be more beneficial to a family and I didn't want to take food from a family less fortunate.

At least I have unemployment benefits and I am still in the Army Reserve, so I am getting some kind of income.

I still have a home even though it's on the market now because I cannot afford the mortgage.

Then I thought that if I cook the turkey and freeze it that I would at least have food for the rest of the month.

I don't feel as guilty now since there is still food left over.

I am very thankful that I participated in your program.

3. ENJOYED the event. it made vets fill special. thanks again.let me kno of future events.