

## Charitable Recipient Testimonials

*"From the bottom of our hearts, Gander, George and I thank you and Troop Dreams for your incredible act of kindness to help support our Planned Acts of Community Kindness (PACKS). Raising money to purchase a new used van and trailer to replace our old worn-down van with 180,000+ miles is just amazing. Your generosity will allow us to continue our life mission of traveling the USA to visit schools and VA hospitals to educate them about the realities of PTSD and the continuing battles we Veterans and our families face everyday. Just amazing!"*

**Mr. Lon Hodge**, Executive Director, PACKS/Operation Fetch, U.S. Army

*"Thank you, thank you, thank you! The last few weeks have been the best years of my life! I won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the rhythm and blues singing competition at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (Yeah!) and I couldn't do it without your help getting me a new laptop computer. I was so stressed that my computer crashed and didn't know what to do since all my instrumentals and background music was on it. The new computer was a lifesaver! Even better, it was so amazing to sing God Bless America and You Raise Me Up at Lakes HS and then feel so much love from the players, cheerleaders and students. I haven't stopped crying thinking about how all these people helped me with my dream of performing my music and I really look forward to performing at their variety show. God Bless!"*

**-Ms. Angela Walker**, United States Navy

*"I just can't find the appropriate words to express my true feelings and appreciation for what Troop Dreams and these young players have done for me. I'm probably 75 years older than these players and to know that they care enough about me to do what they've done...to make this dream come true for me, I just don't know what I can ever do to thank them. I'm just so blessed!"*

**Norval Nelson**, UDT, Force O

*"What you and Westminster Christian School did for our father was truly a dream come true. He never really spoke about his WWII service until recently when his doctor only gave him a few more months. We found out what a true hero he really was when you granted his wish to return to the Navy Seal Museum with his best buddy, Mike. He always kept his emotions to himself, but he couldn't help it when 300 flag-waving students gave him a hero's welcome and the mayor of Fort Pierce Florida gave him a key to the city and the museum director detailed his incredible heroics on D-Day. And the fact that Comcast Sports shared his story and honored him on TV was just the icing on the cake. Thank you for granting our father such a special wish!"*

**The family of Norval Nelson**

*"While Michelle lost her fight, our family is so appreciative to Geneva High School and The Charity Stripe for allowing me and my boys to spend the last several weeks with her. The M.D. Anderson staff was wonderful and the experimental drug gave us all a ray of hope. While Michelle is now in a better place and no longer in pain, we're thankful that you provided the means for all of us to be with her and enjoy quality family time together. Please thank everyone who helped make this wish possible"*

**George Posejpal**

*"Just thought you'd like to know that every one of the 18 veterans' helped by your Charity Stripe organization are now back on their feet and fully employed. It's amazing that relief from foreclosure, back rent and shut-off notices are a huge emotional boost to these vets and their families. These are all hard-working vets who sometimes just need a break or two to go their way...Troop Dreams and all your participants are the break they desperately need!" Keep up the fantastic work!"*

**Mick Mills**, Illinois Dept. of Employment Security

*"Our heartfelt thanks The Charity Stripe. The donation of 4 large 32" flat screen televisions were a true blessing. While thankfully no one was hurt, the July fire was devastating to the patient viewing area which is such a popular gathering spot for our recovering vets. It was a terribly sad loss for them. But, your televisions will be placed in our rebuilt patient viewing areas and many, many veterans will once again benefit from your thoughtfulness and generosity. Please relay our thanks to all involved in Troop Dreams for thinking about these veterans in this very special way"*

**Jan Filicsky**, Danville VA Community Affairs

*"You're like an angel from heaven. It hurt me when I lost my gym membership at XSport Fitness, but I could not afford to pay the monthly dues because of my past due utility bills. I was so shocked and relieved when you got my membership back for a whole year with a free trainer to boot. They gave me a "Welcome Back Thomas" welcoming event and it made me cry. Thank you so much for giving me my life back and believing in me."*

**Thomas Wilson**, Captain, U.S. Army  
(proud paraplegic Veteran with no limits)

*"Thank you for donating the 6 basketball hoops and equipment and especially all the contributions you have made to the 33<sup>rd</sup>. We're proud to provide you with the Golden Cross to recognize your invaluable support."*

**Colonel Paul Hastings**, IL ILARNG  
33<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team



## Charity Stripe Partner Testimonials

*"We're proud to support The Charity Stripe and are very happy that our high schools have taken advantage of your charitable programs to help show kids the bigger picture of how their skills and talents can significantly help others through sports"*

**Kurt Gibson**, Associate Executive Director  
**Beth Sauser**, Assistant Executive Director  
(IHSA) Illinois High School Association

*"We are thrilled to partner with The Charity Stripe. This tremendous program provides our coaches with a cause to ensure that we teach valuable life lessons to our players beyond just winning...giving back to those less fortunate through the great sport of basketball."*

**- Chuck Rolinski**, Executive Director, Illinois Basketball Coaches Association

*"A lot of young people will have the opportunity to come together and give back to those less fortunate all through the great sport of basketball and the IBCA is very proud to be a part of such an outstanding cause"*

**- Jim Tracy**, President, Illinois Basketball Coaches Association

*"Our membership is extremely committed to high school sports in Illinois and we try to do all we can to give back to the game that has given so many of our members so much fun and success. The SBO cares greatly about high school athletics and we feel contributing to The Charity Stripe and Troops Dreams is a positive way for our members to demonstrate this commitment."*

**- Fred Allman**, SBO director

*"We were blessed to have shared this experience with you. We look forward to working with The Charity Stripe next year to provide even greater help to all our brave troops and their families who are so deserving."*

**Boys & Girls Basketball Coaches**, Reavis High School

*"It is with great pleasure and honor that Oregon HS participates in Free Throws For Heroes Events...I feel our players have a deeper appreciation for just how fortunate we are to be able to live each day under the blanket of freedom, and gain a better sense of what is really important in life."*

**Kip Crandall**, Oregon Activities Director

*"The Charity Stripe is a terrific program which allows student athletes to have an opportunity to serve others in their community. As a coach, our time is valuable as we are pulled in many directions, I greatly appreciated the small amount of time it takes to be a part of The Charity Stripe."*

**Alex Renchen**, Bradley Bourbonnais Community HS

*"The Lincoln-Way East Boys Basketball program is happy to participate in the Charity Stripe fundraiser every season. It allows our players to reach for a goal much larger than winning basketball games. The Charity Stripe is about winning the game of life. This was especially true this past season when one of our players was diagnosed with Stage 4 Lymphoma. His daily battles made the fight against cancer real and provided an added impetus for raising funds for this worthy cause. If we can all join the team to fight this disease and play our small role, we will find a cure and win the game of life. We are thankful for the opportunity to be part of the team"*

**Rich Kolimas**, Varsity Basketball Coach, Lincoln-Way East HS

*"For the past several years, Geneseo boys basketball has teamed up with The Charity Stripe. It is a great way that our players can put forth some effort to something bigger than ourselves - which is always a good practice in life."*

**Brad Storm**, Varsity Coach, Geneseo HS

*"The Charity Stripe allows our players to shoot free throws and know that they are helping other people at the same time. It is a great lesson in life for our players and some of them have really done a nice job promoting this program. Mitch Salzstein has done an outstanding job of running this program and working with the high schools."*

**Dave Weber**, Glenbrook North HS Head Basketball Coach

*"The decision to back Free Throws For Heroes was a no-brainer. Any time you devote yourself to something bigger than you, you become part of something great. We've always tried to create ways to make free throws mean something and now they really will."*

**- Bruce Firchau**, Westminster Christian High School Varsity Coach

*"I wanted to take the time to thank you for allowing us to be a part of such a great cause...and for letting us be a part of something so special."*

**- Josh Knuth**, West Carroll High School Basketball Coach

*"This is a great charity, something close to me as I have a cousin serving in the military. Thank you on behalf of military families like mine and from all of us at Anna-Jonesboro High School."*

**- Brian Matzenbacher**, Anna Jonesboro HS Head Basketball Coach

*"I try to teach my kids that basketball is more than just playing a game. It's about being a good student and a good citizen...and Free Throws For Heroes certainly reinforced this goal. Thanks for allowing us to participate."*

**Joni Bass**, Rich East Basketball Coach

*"The real story is two teams with different religious beliefs and from different cultures uniting as one common people to give back to others. There's no greater gift and we hope this will inspire other students, teams, schools and communities to participate in such a worthy endeavor."*

**Rebecca Garrett**, Athletic Director, Hinsdale Adventist Academy

## Charity Stripe/References

### Just a small representative sample of our participants and supporters

#### State Directors, AD's and Executives

Jim Tracy, Executive Director, Illinois Basketball Coaches Association  
Kurt Gibson, Associate Executive Director, Illinois High School Association  
Rich Piatchek, Past President, Illinois Athletic Directors Association  
John Catalano, Athletic Director, Glenbrook North HS  
Steve Rockrohr, Athletic Director, Glenbrook South HS  
Jon Rowley, Athletic Director, Highland Park HS  
Steve Messer, Athletic Director, Hersey HS  
Rick Palmer, Athletic Director, Westminster Christian  
Dan Jones, Athletic Director, Hinsdale Central HS  
Brian Colbert, Athletic Director, Proviso East HS  
Matt Rife, Athletic Director, Harvard HS  
Kurt Rowells, Athletic Director, Lakes HS  
Joe Spagnola, tournament Organizer  
Lou Weisbach, Founder Ha-Lo and American Center(s) for Cures

#### Coaches

Dave Weber, Glenbrook North  
Phil Ralston, Glenbrook South  
Paul Harris, Highland Park HS  
Rich Czeslawski, Crystal Lake Central HS  
Bruce Firchau, Westminster Christian  
Paul Harris, Highland Park HS  
Paul Swan, Stevenson HS  
Pat Ambrose, Stevenson HS  
Marc Condotti, Homewood-Flossmoor HS  
Bob Taylor, Rochelle Zell School  
Gene Pingatore, St. Joseph HS  
Rus Bradburd, New Mexico State  
Rodney Kellar, Ridgeview, IL  
Alex Renchen, Bradley Bourbonnais HS  
Bob Williams, Niles West HS  
Mike McCracken, Amboy HS  
Bryan Ott, Rockford Auburn HS  
Mike Lee, Pearl City HS  
Nick Bumbales, Elgin HS  
Ron Pula, Evergreen Park HS  
Matt Izenstark, Glenbrook North HS

#### Military Contacts

Colonel Paul Hastings  
Lt. Colonel Lenny Williams  
Sgt. Major Mark Bowman  
Major David Pond  
Captain Tony Keel  
Sgt. George Gandera  
John Fanning, Veteran services Officer  
SFC Stacey Long  
1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Chad McDannald  
MSgt Chad Campbell  
Deb Rickert, Exec. Director, Operation Support Our Troops  
Joyce Carrasco, Chapter President, Blue Star Moms  
Sharon McCauley, Chapter President, Blue Star Moms  
Matt Conrardy, American Legion  
Erica Borggren, Illinois Joining Forces  
Jim Dolan, Illinois Joining Forces  
Dr. John Bair, Clinical Psychologist, Lovell Federal Health Center

Through the National Veterans Museum  
Lt. General Randall Rigby, U.S. Army  
Lt. General Richard Newton, USAF  
Vice Admiral James Card, USCG  
Major General Elizabeth Harrell, USAF  
Command Sgt. Major Anthony Williams, USMC  
Sgt. Major Carlton Kent USMC  
Rear Admiral Carlos Johnson  
CPO Joe Campo, USN

## Charity Stripe Media Sampling

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<http://athletics.augustana.edu/news/2016/11/17/troop-dreams-military-appreciation-night-set-for-sunday-november-27-mens-basketball-game-with-washington.aspx?path=mbball>

<https://www.gcmsk12.org/GibsonCity/gcmsk12.org/troop-dreams-january-7-2017/index.html>

<http://www.stlaurence.com/news/viking-basketball-participating-free-throws-heroes>

<http://www.lhs210.net/news/default.aspx?ArticleId=224>

Also, proud to have Governor Quinn announce Free Throws For Heroes Day in Illinois