

HEARTBEAT SPONSORS TWO FAMILIES FOR FORCE BLUE OCEAN CONSERVATION SCHOOL



June 2024: Heartbeat sponsored two families to the Force Blue Ocean Conservation School. Pictured here are Wounded Warrior RJ and his daughter Rue.

Pictured below on the far left is Daniel Henderson III. Daniel also sent Heartbeat a note regarding his experience with the program and his father.



Daniel's write up:

*Good Morning,
My name is Daniel Henderson III. I recently participated in Ocean Conservation School with Force Blue. Force Blue is a non-profit organization that repurposes former special operations combat divers to work in marine conservation. I was sponsored by Heartbeat Serving Wounded Warriors. My father is a retired Green Beret/disabled veteran that is now serving as a diving instructor with Force Blue. I was given the opportunity to participate in OCS in Palm Beach Florida this year. This experience was truly one that I will never forget. I participated with other veteran children learning how to scuba dive and training in ocean conservation specifically relating to sea turtles. All of the instructors were former special operations veterans like my father and I felt like it helped me connect with what he used to do in the military. I made friendships and bonds with other veteran children that will last a lifetime. I am eternally grateful to Heartbeat for providing this opportunity to me and another family.*

*Thank you,
Daniel W. Henderson III*



Participants in the Force Blue Ocean Conservation School with the Force Blue Banners and the Loggerhead Marine Life Center. The combination of learning to Scuba dive as well as preserve and protect the marine ecosystem is overwhelming to all of the participants. It is a very fulfilling program and Heartbeat was thrilled to sponsor two families.

HEARTBEAT'S EQUINE THERAPY PROGRAM



Heartbeat's BITS Warrior Program is Equine Therapeutic Riding for Wounded Warriors and our BITS Kids is Equine Therapeutic Riding for special needs children of Wounded Warriors, including autism. The horse is a valued partner to assist in healing for both programs. Equine Therapy works with a therapist and equine specialist to help the warrior. Sitting on a moving horse allows the warrior's body to move naturally while strengthening muscle groups, being present, improving balance, flexibility, self-

awareness and decreasing pain. Equine Therapeutic Riding teaches riding with an emphasis on improved posture, balance and muscle strength. It also involves a grooming component that is a calming rhythm for the brain and decreases the warrior's emotional numbness. This is very important to assist with the healing of PTSD and TBI in our warriors. BITS Warriors' primary goal is to enable warriors to navigate through their injuries, both physical and psychological, and to assist them in reintegrating back



into their families and their community.

BITS Kids utilizes the horse to improve joint mobility, balance and coordination, muscle tone and learning. Their grooming component also helps to calm the child's brain. Our statistical analysis each year as to the effectiveness of the therapy continues to amaze us. The ranch our therapy occurs on also has rescued horses that can be utilized in our program. What a wonderful combination, a rescued horse and warrior, both are getting a second chance. Pictured here is one of our warriors with a new rescue horse.

A BEACON OF HOPE FOR OUR WARRIORS

Karen Christensen, Licensed Clinical Social Worker for Wounded Warriors

As a dedicated advocate for our military personnel, I've witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on countless soldiers. It's a condition that can rob individuals of their peace, their relationships, and their sense of self. That is why I'm so grateful for the organization Heartbeat Serving Wounded Warriors.

The equine therapy offered by Heartbeat has proven to be a powerful tool for healing. I've been fortunate enough to refer numerous soldiers to this exceptional program, and the results have been nothing short of remarkable. The horses provide a unique form of therapy, offering companionship, unconditional love, and a sense of calm that can be difficult to find elsewhere.

Many of the soldiers I've sent to Heartbeat have arrived with a range of PTSD symptoms, including anger, panic, and trust issues. Through their interactions with the horses, they've been able to develop a deeper connection to themselves and the world around them. The program has helped them to address their trauma in a safe and supportive environment, fostering resilience and emotional well-being.

I've witnessed firsthand the transformative power of Heartbeat. The program has given countless soldiers the tools they need to rebuild their lives and find meaning and purpose again. It's a testament to the dedication and compassion of the staff and volunteers who make this incredible work possible.

If you're looking for a way to make a real difference in the lives of our soldiers and veterans, I urge you to support Heartbeat. Your generosity will help ensure that this vital program can continue to provide hope and healing to those who have sacrificed so much for our country.