

NEW MEXICO
HUMANITARIAN AWARDS DINNER

2014

New Mexico
Humanitarian Awards



Benefiting Children's Programs,
Scholarships, and Services at the JCC

Sponsored by Dreamstyle Remodeling

Thursday, August 21, 2014

5:30 pm - Cocktails • 6:30 pm - Dinner & Live Auction

Embassy Suites Hotel
1000 Woodward Place NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico



Rick Iannucci & Nancy De Santis

Horses for Heroes

Rick Iannucci, a retired U.S. Marshall and former Green Beret, along with his wife, Nancy De Santis, established “Horses For Heroes” (HFH), a non-profit organization based in Santa Fe, NM. Horses for Heroes utilizes a unique horsemanship, wellness and skill-set restructuring program offered completely free to post 9/11 veterans and active-duty military who have sustained physical injuries and/or combat trauma, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, during their time serving our country.



Rick is fond of saying that “there is no one size fits all PTSD, whether you are a man or a woman. Not everyone’s personal experience fits neatly into the traditional definitions of PTSD and many times defies it. We like to call it Post Traumatic Spiritual Dissonance.”

Horses For Heroes has a self-paced, outcome-based program—“Cowboy Up”—that has a tremendous success rate with its participants. “We train to standard, not to time,” says Rick. Veterans get to be hands-on with horses and learning other aspects of ranch life, helping the participants to learn professional skills while also supporting these combat warriors to recuperate, re-create, and reintegrate into society. Rick, Nancy and the other instructors successfully use and adapt the skills, training and language of the veterans’ military training to the program.

As veterans mentor with working ranch cowboys, they learn to raise and train the horses that work with future participants in the program. Eventually, veterans can become program instructors themselves. Horses For Heroes works with veterans and active duty military personnel to “forge a new path to Post Healing Strength.”

“Horses are quite spiritual animals,” says Nancy. “When you groom a horse and feel its heart beat, hear it breathe and see its flesh twitch when a fly lands on it, you’re connecting with something greater. These creatures help our veterans to get back in touch with a living being, which helps them to connect better with their spouses, friends, and all of society.”

The HFH “Cowboy Up!” program is staffed entirely by volunteers and is privately funded by community donations; 100% of contributions go to keeping heroes on horseback. Not surprisingly, Rick and Nancy’s approach has created numerous partnerships and has earned HFH endorsements from the NM Department of Veterans Services, the Wrangler National Patriot Program, the Gold Star Mothers of America, NM Cattle Growers Association, and others.

Rick, Nancy, and the other Horses for Heroes team members are examples of the selfless giving that makes a difference in the lives of others. Their work is positively impacting service members, their families, friends, and the community as a whole.