

Healing Vets Weekend with Ride for Rose Haven Goes Virtual

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The third time is the charm. After rescheduling our annual Healing Vet Weekend from May to October, COVID gave us a final nudge. The third annual HVW will now be mostly virtual and all events will occur over October 9th weekend. Going virtual allows participation for many well beyond eastern North Carolina.

Bob Woodruff Foundation recently published a report that highlighted the consequences of COVID-19 on Veteran populations. Many of them, already effected by PTSD and other traumatic experiences from their military service just as the pandemic was hitting its stride.

"The COVID-19 pandemic creates a "perfect storm" that threatens the mental health of many veterans, particularly those with pre-existing mental health conditions," the report summed up. Job loss, greater financial uncertainty, and social isolation and loneliness accentuate for underserved and at-risk Veteran populations what already was for many a daily struggle to get by."

That was March, four months ago, and if anything, the report was prescient, without the hyperbole. The COVID perfect storm if anything has become more perfect.

One of our vehicles to help raise awareness of Veteran issues, especially during the virus is our annual Healing Vets Weekend. This year's weekend will feature four events, with two events honoring local Washingtonians. On Friday, October 9 at 6 pm, the **Tony Weichel Veteran and Active Military Virtual Art Exhibit will go live**. Tony Weichel is a Korean War Air Force Veteran and served in the local Coast Guard Auxiliary. He is also a member of DAV Chapter #48. His artwork appeared in the first two Veteran art exhibits. The featured artist for the exhibit is Army Veteran Robert Harrell. His work, *Healing Hands*, will be auctioned off over the course of the 30-day exhibit with all proceeds going to Rose Haven. *The exhibit is open to all Veterans and Active Military service members and their families.*

At 7 pm on that Friday, **VET Talks - IBX** will feature a live Zoom presentation on the topic of resilience and Veterans.

The Treva Inzerillo Ride for Rose Haven: Supporting Women Veterans bicycle and motorcycle rides occur on Saturday, both featuring social distanced local in-person activities. Treva Inzerillo is currently on a 13-week solo cross-country bicycle ride with a major motivation for her trip to raise funds for Rose Haven.

The Ride for Rose Haven is the annual fundraising event for Pamlico Rose, riders and bikers across North Carolina and beyond can register online and receive a Ride t-shirt for the bike ride and a patch for the motorcyclists. Riders and non-riders can purchase a first-ever Ride for Rose Haven bicycle jersey. All the proceeds go towards the rehabilitation of Rose Haven and its programs supporting women Veterans. At 8 am, a brief live-streamed ceremony from Rose Haven Center of Healing kicks off the bike ride and is open to the public. With no official routes, local and virtual riders are welcome to customize their routes and ride to show their support for women Veterans. The motorcycle ride will start at 11 am from Boneyard Harley-Davidson in Winterville and end at Rose Haven. Periodically through the day, riders and bikers will be able to post videos and photos of their own rides on The Ride for Rose Haven Facebook page.



In lieu of our in person Veteran Outreach Fair, usually held on the day of Ride for Rose Haven, a virtual format was developed to help connect Veterans with organizations and businesses that serve Veterans. The digital Veteran Service Directory will go live following the opening ceremony for the bike ride and will include descriptions of services, photos or videos if provided and contact information for Veterans to access. The Directory will be open for a year at no cost to businesses.



To register for either the bike or motorcycle, submit art or find out more information on the Healing Vets Weekend, Pamlico Rose Institute or Rose Haven Center of Healing, visit www.pamlicorose.org or contact Kaitlyn O'Donnell at kaitlyn@pamlicorose.org.

This year's virtual Healing Vet Weekend is in part made possible by a grant from East Carolina Veterans Coalition and National Veteran Intermediary.