



FROM OUR FOUNDER

DEAR FRIENDS,

IN 2024, WE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF MEETING MANY OF YOU - INCREDIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING VETERANS. WE WERE TRULY INSPIRED BY THE NUMBER OF GROUPS IN OUR AREA WORKING TOWARD THIS SHARED MISSION. PROJECT GALLANTLY FORWARD IS PROUD TO BE AMONG THEM, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO UTILIZING OUR FARM AND RETREAT AS A HUB TO BRING THESE ORGANIZATIONS TOGETHER, MAXIMIZING OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT.

WE ARE EXCITED TO SHARE OUR PROGRESS, AS THE CABINS ARE NEARING COMPLETION, AND THE RV SITES NOW HAVE FULLY FUNCTIONAL WATER AND POWER. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SHOWCASING THESE DEVELOPMENTS AT OUR UPCOMING OPEN HOUSE AT THE END OF MAY. THANK YOU TO EACH OF YOU WHO HELPED MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

EACH DAY, WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH NEW VETERANS WHILE STRENGTHENING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS. IN 2025, OUR GOAL IS TO EXPAND OUR REACH, SUPPORTING EVEN MORE VETERANS AND DEEPENING OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THOSE ALREADY INVOLVED IN PROJECT GALLANTLY FORWARD.

SINCERELY,

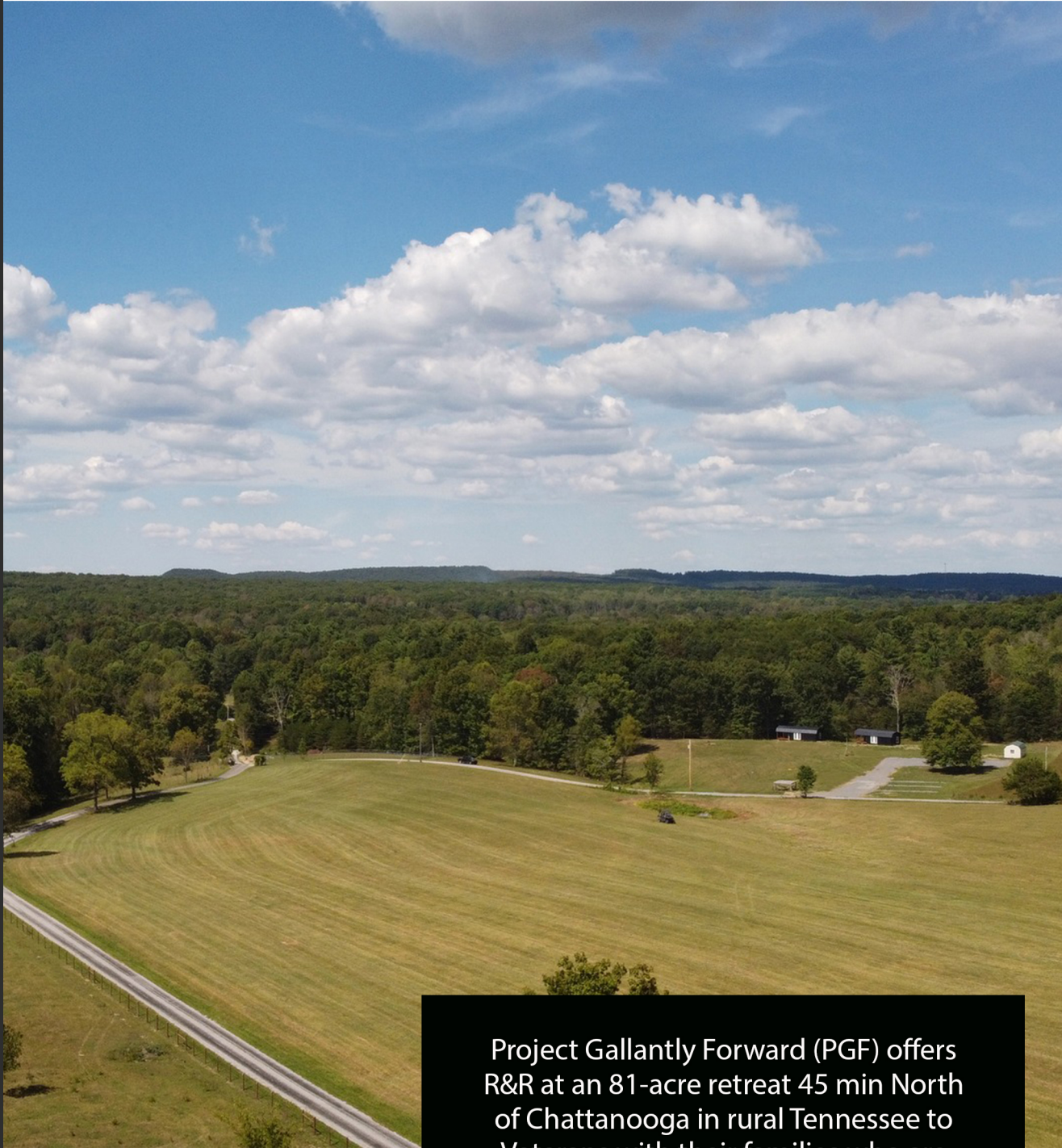


FOUNDER, PRESIDENT



*"CULTIVATING PEACE AND PURPOSE.
A RURAL RETREAT WHERE VETERANS CAN MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER."*

MISSION



Project Gallantly Forward (PGF) offers R&R at an 81-acre retreat 45 min North of Chattanooga in rural Tennessee to Veterans with their families who are located nationwide, as well as opportunities for local Veterans to connect. Through these programs, PGF provides time and space for Veterans to begin healing while in the company of other Veterans who are on the same path.

SETH'S STORY

Seth Kizer, USMC Veteran and PGF Board member, shared his moving story at the Ugly Sweater Party.

He has agreed to share his personal story below:

"My name is Seth Kizer, I am on the Board of PGF. I served in the Marine Corps from 2003 to 2007. I went through all my schools, went through basic and combat training. As soon as I got to the fleet, they asked for volunteers. Well, I figured I'm already here, let me volunteer. Fourteen of us from my company got sent over to Iraq, and we didn't really know where we were going. In Kuwait, they didn't even know we were supposed to be there...and then we got trucked into Fallujah. The very first couple seconds of pulling into the FOB there we started getting mortars: sirens going off, bombs going off. It was pretty scary. Especially for a punk teenager like me, right?

"There was a choice of staying there, or going back to where we just came from. And I was praying to God that I would go back to where we just came from because the first couple seconds in Fallujah was not fun. However, I got picked to stay in Fallujah. Long story short, one of my buddies that deployed with me did get to go back to where we started, and he was the only one of the 14 of us that didn't make it back. I've seen all kinds of other stuff, and I'm sure the other Veterans in here have, too. The only important part of that story is that leads into the rest of this is that I had survivor's guilt for that. For years. Even subconsciously sometimes.

"In the Marine Corps I married my beautiful wife. We had my first daughter. And then after getting out of the Marine Corps, I had my second daughter, and now I've got a son too. We got out and went back to Michigan, and there were no jobs at all so then we ended up in Tennessee. I ended up working for TVA, who is one of the sponsors of the event, which I'm super grateful for. And that's where I met Lucas.



"Life was awesome. Normal marriage struggles and me being a dumb husband and stuff like that, but then I fell on hard times. I lost a position that I got and tried really hard to get in my professional career and almost lost my job.

"He was the only one of the 14 of us that didn't make it back...I had survivor's guilt for that. For years. Even subconsciously sometimes."

"PTSD is something that I always thought was just an excuse. For years, it was an excuse for all your life problems.

SETH'S STORY

“That’s why I consider myself the OG of Project Gallantly Forward.”

“It didn't hit me until that time, and I started blaming everybody for my problems. I fell into depression, became an alcoholic. It was rough. We moved from apartment to apartment. I was fighting with the managers of the apartments, everything. I just blamed everybody else for my problems.

“When I fell on hard times and I had no other options, Lucas gave me a place to stay on the property where the Project is located now. That’s why I consider myself the OG of Project Gallantly Forward. I didn't know I needed help, but I did. All the way back then, Lucas and Christine extended their hand out to me. Man, I was rough. I was a drunk. I was angry at everybody. It was bad. I probably wasn't pleasant to be around even for Lucas and Christine, but they still showed me welcome, showed me love, and showed me friendship.

“Because of that, and my family sticking by me, I'm pretty successful now. My family's doing really well. So this Project that I'm so grateful to be a part of, it saved me in a lot of ways. And I didn't realize it back then. I probably never told Lucas and Christine thank you for it. But I am now. I owe them a lot.

“I think that PGF is going to help so many people like me. I didn't realize I had PTSD. I didn't realize I had depression problems and stuff like that until it happened.

“A lot of people don't realize that they have issues and they have struggles until they're at the bottom.

“This Project means so much to me because I lived it. It's hard for me to talk about because I don't ever want to just offer up that I went through that stuff. And that's what a lot of Veterans face right now. They don't realize it until they get into legal problems or they think about much worse solutions to their problems. And that's what this is all about, right? What this Project is offering Veterans is going to be huge. I just so fully believe in this. I lived it before it was even Project Gallantly Forward. Lucas has had this in his heart way before this ever became a thing.

“From a Veteran that was in need, that didn't know he was in need, I'm telling you, this is going to change people's lives.”



IMPACT

31

VETERANS

BY PROGRAM:

22

VETERAN R&R

9

GRIT TRAINING

VET-TO-VET

11

SUPPORT PAIRS

...AND
WE'RE JUST
GETTING
STARTED

While work on building the retreat was underway, PGF sought innovative ways to connect with Veterans. In 2024, PGF was able to share the serenity of the Veteran Retreat with twenty-two Veterans through RV Camping, events like the Veteran Appreciation Concert, and participation in work days.

Cindi Sanden of Keep Soddy Daisy Beautiful partnered with us to provide GRIT Training, resiliency training.

It was customized for Veterans and co-facilitated by PGF Board Member and US Army Veteran, Psychologist Dr. Mark Miller. **Nine Veterans participated** in the course.

Behind the scenes, PGF facilitated **11 pairs of 1-on-1 Veteran to Veteran support**. This can look different on an individualized basis, but provides an avenue for Veterans to connect with someone who has a shared history.



100%

Veterans said they were **“Very Satisfied”** with their experience with PGF programs.

100%

Veterans stated PGF’s programs were **“Very Effective”** at addressing the mission to help Veterans move forward together.

100%

Would recommend PGF to other Veterans.

“I had fallen in a really dark place early in the spring and had plans to end the pain. By the grace of God, He prevented that and led me to help. My therapist recommended getting involved with Veterans to help with coping, that’s where PGF fell in place...The connection that Veterans have with each other is the best therapy.”

- PGF Veteran Participant

“[PGF] most certainly dragged me from the gutter.”

- PGF Veteran Participant

“It’s amazing they have done so much for veterans in such a short time.”

- PGF Veteran Participant

OUR PEOPLE

3525

Volunteer Hours in 2024

72

Volunteers

89%

Hours completed by Veterans and their family members

100%

Volunteer Workforce.
0 Paid staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LUCAS LEWIS
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER
US ARMY VETERAN

CHRISTINE LEWIS
SECRETARY/TREASURER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CO-FOUNDER

DR. MARK MILLER
US ARMY (RET.)

SETH KIZER
USMC VETERAN

ZACH LATHAM
ETHICS OFFICER

CHRIS WELCH

 **CHRIS DOOLEY**
USAF (RET.)

NEW IN 2024!

 **TRAVIS UPTEGROVE**
US NAVY VETERAN

HONORARY BOARD

CARL PENDERGRASS
US NAVY VETERAN

STAFF

 **ASHLEY LATHAM**
FUNDRAISING COORD.

NEW IN 2024!

 **JASON LANE**
VOLUNTEER COORD.

SPECIAL THANKS!

Ben Lewis had most
volunteer hours in 2024!!*

*Excludes Board and Staff

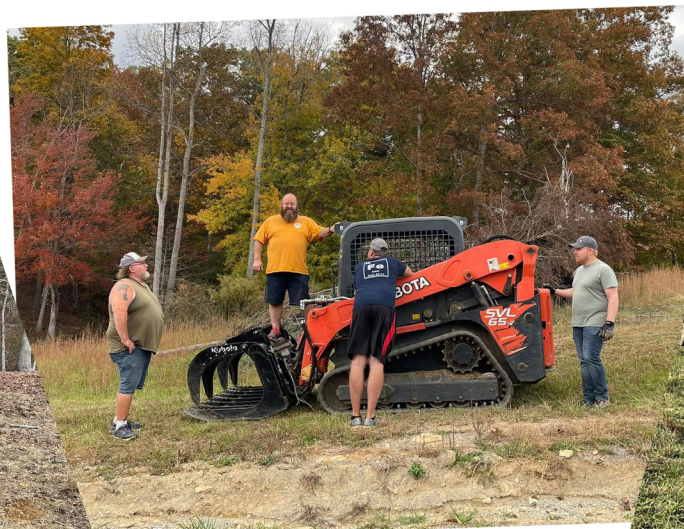


BUILDING

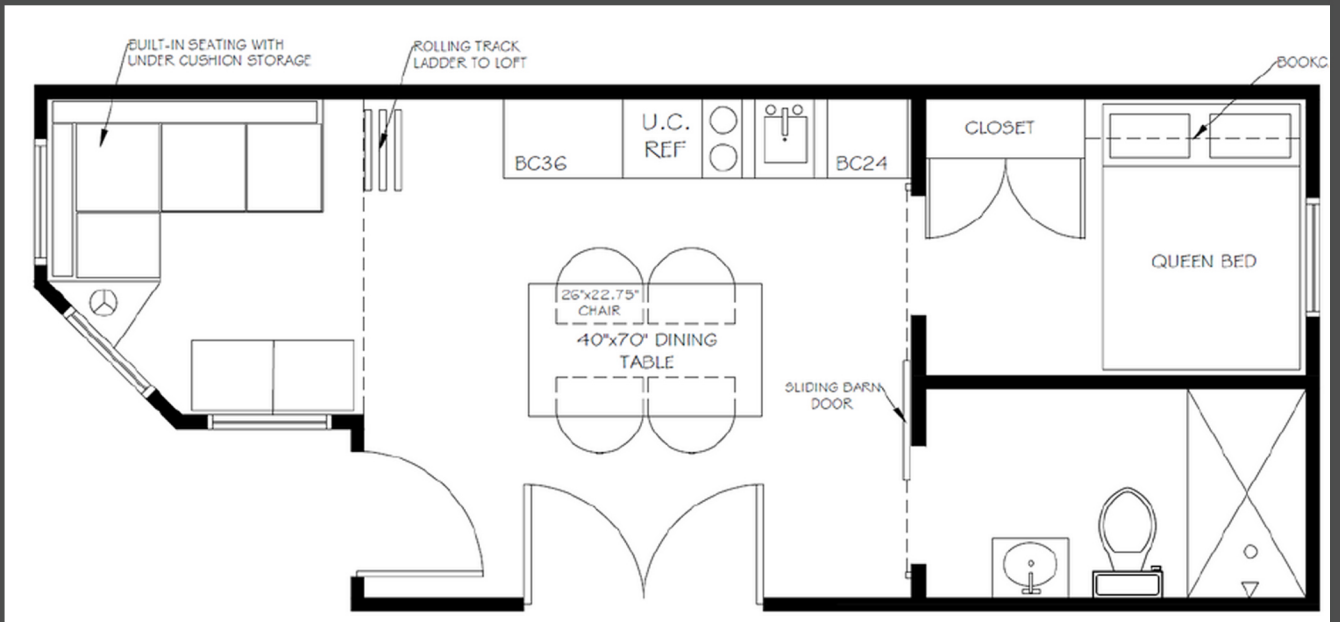
- ✓ 2 CABINS ON-SITE WITH PORCHES READY TO BE FINISHED
- ✓ FIELD DEVELOPED: 3 RV SITES AND PARKING LOT
- ✓ SEPTIC AND WELL WATER INSTALLED
- ✓ MULTI-PURPOSE STORAGE BUILDING ON-SITE
- ✓ OFFICE IN SODDY DAISY
- ✓ ENTRANCE SIGN
- ✓ VETERAN MEMORIAL FENCELINE
- ✓ FIRE PIT BUILT



The word "building" fits 2024 in so many ways. We received our approval for 501(c)3 status from the IRS on 10/31/23 which perfectly positioned us to hit the ground running in 2024. Our volunteers came together and built Project Gallantly Forward from the ground up. Together we built programs, infrastructure, and last, but certainly not least...buildings.



VISION



UTC's School of Architecture and Interior Design's Responsive Design Class partnered with us in the Fall 2024 semester to complete layout and design recommendations as their senior project. They included general recommendations as well as those most pertinent to the Veteran population such as trauma-informed design and ADA compliance. They provided some amazing visuals and we plan to use several in our designs, such as the cabin layout above.

Phase 1: 2 Cabins and 3 RV Spots with Hook-ups

In order to complete the first phase, we need to finish the inside of the cabins. Hook-ups for the RV spots are now available.

Phase 2: Transitional Living Bunkhouse

After completing the cabins and RV Spots, we will begin work on a transitional living bunkhouse. PGF's vision is to use this building for multiple purposes: a conference center, bunks for Veterans in need of more intensive services, space for retreats, and an ADA suite.



THANK YOU

A huge thank to ALL of our generous donors. In 2024, many individuals and organizations made a direct investment in helping Project Gallantly Forward, not all are listed here, but we are grateful for each and every one.

2024 ALLIES OF PROJECT GALLANTLY FORWARD (\$1000+)

Back Road Boys BBQ
Chattanooga Tree Service, Inc.
Olive Branch Woodworking
Soddy Daisy Smiles
Walmart Spark Good Program
Westbound Bar
Great Ginny
Zach and Ashley Latham
Anonymous
Go Baby Go Partners
Jason and Mandy Lane
Wysong Tree Service
The Westin Chattanooga
NNU Fabrication
Consolidated Pipe and Supply Co
Scripps Howard Foundation

Anonymous (4)
Pacific Life Foundation
Woodmen Life
Pat Rogers
Josh Drake
Tennessee Valley Authority
Brushy Mountain Distillery
Rooster Trail LLC
Jay and Lindsay Benson
Yogi's Primo Promo
Chris Welch
Anonymous (2)
Anonymous (3)
Binkley Clark
Mint Chattanooga

2024 PROJECT MOVING FORWARD PARTICIPANTS

(Monthly Donations for at Least
6 months)

Chattanooga Tree Service, Inc.
Zach and Ashley Latham
Soddy Daisy Smiles
Jay and Lindsay Benson
Mark and Brittany Miller

*Thank you,
Lucas & Christine
Lewis*





End of year assets include \$101,612 in cash. The remainder are non-cash assets such as equipment, buildings, etc.

FINANCIALS

	Fiscal Year 2023 (Nov 23 - Oct 24)	
<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>		
Contributions	\$	236,232
Special Events	\$	15,605
Non-Purpose Restricted Grants	\$	3,472
Purpose Restricted	\$	52,155
Total Gross Revenue	\$	307,464
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Total Program Services	\$	78,862
Management and General	\$	3,842
Fundraising	\$	20,417
Total Expenses	\$	103,121
<u>NET ASSETS</u>		
Change in net assets	\$	204,343
Net Assets at Ending Balance	\$	203,581

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We want to do big things here at PGF, but this vision is bigger than us. We are here for the community and supported by the community. We would love for you to be involved.

JOIN US AT THE OPEN HOUSE ON MAY 31

Come see the cabins at the PGF Veteran Retreat Open House! Kicks off at 6p est, and we will be dedicating the flag generously donated to us by Woodmen Life Chapter 6 at 7p. Come enjoy some hot dogs by the bonfire!

Details on this and future events can be found at www.projectgallantlyforward.org/events.

SPREAD THE WORD

Telling people about what we are doing is one of the biggest ways you can help. We want to connect with the right people in the community who will champion the cause of our Veterans and make up the core of our volunteer force, staff, and service recipients. Those are your neighbors and friends!

VOLUNTEER

We will be doing a lot of construction in 2025. We will be posting real-time updates about volunteer opportunities on our social media at facebook.com/PRJGallantlyforward.

MULTIPLY YOUR FINANCIAL IMPACT

PGF'S PROJECT MOVING FORWARD

We had several people commit to monthly contributions in 2024. However, in order to take steps toward long-term financial stability that can provide much-needed support to our Veterans, we are continuing Project Moving Forward. In this program, we are looking for 90 more people who will commit to an entry level donation amount of at least \$25 a month throughout 2025 - less than you would typically spend eating out.

If you know someone who has been impacted by the invisible wounds of war, and could benefit from the Veteran-to-Veteran support we are building at PGF, please consider committing to giving \$25/mo in 2025.

Monthly gifts can be set up on our website at www.projectgallantlyforward.org/donate. As a token of our thanks for joining the Project Moving Forward, we will send a small gift. If you have donated for at least 6 months of 2025, your name will be included on the donor page of our website (unless you indicate you'd like to stay anonymous).

PROJECT



GALLANTLY FORWARD



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