

VALOR Clinic Foundation's Veterans Unstoppable Retreat Program March 14th - 20th



The US Mountain Ranger Association will host VALOR Clinic Foundation's Veterans Unstoppable retreat program beginning at 6 PM on March 14 and ending at noon on March 20, 2021. The retreat will be held at Canal Lake Bible Camp located just north of Blairsville, GA.

Veterans Unstoppable (VU) is a confidential, no-cost program and service to warriors and their loved ones fac-

ing post traumatic stress injury and other invisible wounds of military service. Veterans Unstoppable is an individually tailored 5 step life skills development program that fosters healthy life adjustments for Veterans. This addresses differences in each Veterans experiences – we recognize there isn't a "one size fits all" solution to Veteran reintegration. Veterans Unstoppable guides Veterans through the transition process in a supportive and safe environment free from distractions.

5 Step Program: Phase 1: Managing exposures and their effects; Phase 2: Reducing Social Conflict; Phase 3: Finding Closure to reduce

stress and anxiety; Phase 4: Finding Purpose and direction in life by making a plan; Phase 5: Recreational Therapy through Fly Fishing.

Participants will arrive at CLBC around 1800 on Sunday evening and begin the process of healing by interacting with other veterans, receiving focused instruction, and working through tough issues with the guidance of the VALOR staff led by SGM(R) Mark Baylis and Vietnam Vet Glen Lippincott. The participants will graduate and be dismissed around noon on Saturday. Everyone is expected to remain at the retreat location for the duration of the program. All food and lodging will be provided.

Personal Note: I am a recent graduate of VU-17. The experience was truly life changing. Not only do I feel more confident in dealing with my personal struggles, but I also feel more able to talk to vets in crisis in a way that will lead to a positive outcome. If you or a veteran you know is struggling and willing, please, share this invitation to be a part of Veterans Unstoppable - GA.

Contact me at any time: Bob Williams, USMRA Chairman, 706-400-2765 / bob.williams752@gmail.com.

Hope House Board announces new member and thanks outgoing members

At the turn of 2021, Hope House Board of Directors said good-bye to two of its faithful board members whose terms were expiring, Eric Wood and The Rev. Terry Stewart. Mr. Wood served on the board from November 2016 to December 2020 and was the board chair for the last four years guiding the board through successful Super Chef Showdowns, and the organization's recent move to the new Blue Ridge Street location. Rev. Stewart fulfilled two three-year terms on the board and lifted our spirits with his commitment to the needs of our community and his sense of humor. Both men will be missed by their fellow board members.

In January, the board elected Evie Miller as board chair and welcomed the Rev. Tony Neal of First Baptist Church to a three-year term.

Hope House is a faith-based nonprofit organization serving residents of Union County in times of difficulty with basic necessities such as utilities, rent payments, and other financial needs. We rely on the generosity of residents and churches in

Union County to operate.

If you need assistance, please contact us. During the pandemic, appointments are made by phone only at (706) 781-3090. Contributions may be mailed to us at 215 Blue Ridge Street, Ste E, Blairsville, GA 30512. Donations may also be made through our website at www.hopehouse-unioncounty.com. Pam Alexander is the Executive Director.

Michael David Gardner, Navy Veteran, receives Quilt of Valor



Navy Veteran Michael David Gardner

On the 22nd of January 2021 a Quilt of Valor was presented to Michael David Gardner by Linda and Jim Gorman of the Misty Mountain Quilt Guild QOV Presentation Team. Mr. Gardner is a Navy Veteran who served in Vietnam. Thank you for honoring our local military veterans. NT(Feb17.28)CA

Valdosta State University local graduates

Valdosta State University is proud to recognize its graduating class of Fall 2020, which includes the following area residents.

Kelsey Miller of Blairsville earned the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction in Accomplished Teaching and Kerry Rogers of Young Harris earned the Education Specialist in Instructional Technology.

'Share the Love' ...from Page 1A

day period, the businesses decided how worthwhile this is," Wheeler said. "We are not locking them into a specific donation, and next week I will go visit all of them and they will have some kind of donation."

"I get some people that will do a percentage of their sales, others have a specific thing they sell and donate the money to us, and some just write a check."

As for Habitat, the group is taking the year to work on smaller projects while watching the price of building materials, which are way up due to increased demand in the housing market.

"We are not really building right now," Wheeler said. "We have a house site ready to go, but with the cost of building materials and the weather and all that, we are just kind of sitting on it."

"We are doing these Helping Hands projects where if someone needs a wheelchair ramp or a roll-in shower, we can come out there and donate the labor and materials."

"Share the Love" participant Michelle Rowe,

co-owner of from me 2 u, said she enjoyed being part of the event and is grateful to be in a community that supports local organizations.

Rowe believes in the cause of Habitat and building homes for people who maybe can't afford them, as, in her eyes, first God, then the home are the foundations for a family.

"We did it last year and felt it was something really good that we could give back to the community," Rowe said. "Tourists that come in and second home residents can also give back this way by shopping local. It is a win-win situation for everybody."

Union County local Bryan Davidson is proud to have the program in his town and for Habitat for Humanity to be here when people need them the most.

"This program is wonderful," he said. "I am glad they have something like this in the community. People need homes, especially now when we don't have many around here. It is a great cause, and I am glad people here care about it."

In 2020, "Share the Love"

raised about \$3,000, and plans are in the works to approach Towns County businesses next year, as fundraising efforts benefit residents in both counties.

Participating 2021 businesses from Union County included: Keen Creations & Co., Mike's Seafood, The Skillet Restaurant, Spry Dry Cleaners, Rustic Mountain Décor, Mary Kay – Roberta Ford, The Vacuum Store, Ambry's Attic, Blairsville Restaurant – Grits & Greens, Seasons Inn Motel & Plaza; Michael Lee's Restaurant; Budget Blinds, Blairsville Printing, Mountain Top Furniture, from me 2 u, Logan Turnpike Mill, Pat's Hallmark, Mountain Life Mercantile, Grinds & Glazes (G & G Café), The Aviator Restaurant, 15 Below Boutique, Abide Coffee, Cabin Coffee, Granddaddy Mimm's Distillery, and General Supply.

For more information on the local Habitat for Humanity, including how to volunteer or for program info, visit https://www.townunionhabitat.org.

Crime Spree...from Page 1A

the glass demanding to be let in, Osborn said.

Elkins was gone when deputies arrived on the scene a short time later, though Staff Sgt. Brandon Hogsted found him sleeping outside another nearby business, Osborn said, adding that Elkins was "out of it" upon waking and had with him two duffel bags filled with random household items.

He was initially charged just with misdemeanor loitering and disorderly conduct, as authorities didn't realize anything had been stolen initially, and Elkins later claimed he did not know how the bags came to be in his possession, Osborn said. The Sheriff's Office

discovered the spree after other 911 calls began coming in that day, alerting them to the entering auto on Harkins Young Road and the property taken from Meeks Road and Roberts Drive, Osborn said, after which investigators brought the other charges, all felonies.

From a home on Roberts Drive, Elkins allegedly took a motorcycle and pushed it to Worley's Tires to stash, Osborn said.

Over at Meeks Road, Osborn said Elkins entered the home after the residents left for work, locating two duffel bags and stuffing them with items like a PlayStation, perfume, hair clippers, bed sheets, cosmetic jewelry, etc., and he carried

a 65-inch TV from there to Worley's to stash behind some storage containers.

All stolen property was recovered, and Elkins remains in the Union County Jail on a \$44,000 bond, Osborn said. He has been charged only and is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

"The patrol deputies did a great job, making our lives easier by finding him," Osborn said. "All of them: SSgt. Brandon Hogsted, Lt. Doug Brackett, Deputy Alan Patton, Deputy Dave McGregor and Lt. Josh Berry.

"Maj. Shawn Dyer was out there, too. Everybody worked together on it, and it was good teamwork."

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