

## Northern Nevada Business Weekly

### Nonprofit spotlight: Veterans Guest House | Serving veterans today, tomorrow and the future



The Veterans Guest House began two decades ago when a mother and her children were discovered sleeping in their car in the parking lot of the VA Medical Center in Reno. They were supporting their loved one who was receiving care at the hospital, but had no means to stay in a local motel.

Today, the Guest House provides temporary lodging to U.S. military service veterans and their families while they are receiving medical treatment in Reno-Sparks area. Whether a veteran or their family member is in need of medical treatment, the Guest House stands ready to remove the burden of lodging from their shoulders.

The guests who stay with us can be receiving treatment from any doctor or medical facility including long-term care facilities, not just the VA Hospital. Our guests typically live at least 30 miles away and fall into three categories:

Veterans receiving outpatient care

**We know many of our guests would not be able to afford lodging, if not for the Guest House. Many would forgo treatments they need; stay in an unsafe place, like their car; or take on a significant financial burden.**

Families supporting veterans who are hospitalized

Veterans whose immediate family member is receiving medical treatment as an inpatient or outpatient. Anyone who has served in our military knows that the family serves, too.

Although we ask our guests to make a modest donation to help defray operating costs, no one is turned away for lack of funds. We know many of our guests would not be able to afford lodging, if not for the Guest House. Many would forego treatments they need; stay in an unsafe place, like their car; or take on a significant financial burden.

To our knowledge, the Veterans Guest House is the only facility of its kind in the country. It is supported completely through the generosity of the private sector and the community. All funds received go directly to support the Guest House and stay local. The Veterans Guest House does not receive government funds or assistance.

We work with many local and regional businesses and service groups that dedicate company-wide fundraisers for the Guest House or participate in payroll deductions and matching gift programs. For some individuals and businesses, cash donations are not possible but a gift of their time is possible. The Guest House has a number of volunteer opportunities for organizations, businesses, and individuals. Volunteers help with on-site projects, for example: coordinating a yard clean up, helping with laundry or providing dinners for our guests. Over 150 volunteers help serve beer at beverage booths during the Nugget Rib Cook-Off and others participate in our other fundraisers.

The Veterans Guest House produces four main events each year. The first one of the year is our Radiothon 2017. It will be held on Friday, March 10 from noon – 6 p.m. at the Atlantis Casino Resort. KKOH News Talk 780 Radio KKOH devotes six hours of free airtime to the Guest House. Callers bid on some amazing auction packages and make monetary donations. We always need items to include in the auction and our other events throughout the year — anything from vacation rentals and professional services, to gift certificates from local restaurants. Use your imagination. We will be using ours! You can visit our Facebook page and website for all the latest information on Radiothon 2017 and other upcoming events. Learn how you can get involved.

With the support of this community, the Guest House provided over 70,000 nights of lodging in the past 22 years. 20,000 of those guest nights were provided in the last four years. In 2016, new annual records of over 5,300 heads were on pillows in the Guest House. The need continues to grow and the Guest House needs to grow to meet that demand.

We kicked off a \$4.2 million capital campaign to expand our facilities during 2016. The expansion will increase our bed count from 17 to 33. This will allow us to provide more than 12,000 nights of comfort annually for the veterans and families we serve. If you would like to help with this project, please contact us. With your help, we will continue to serve our veterans and their families long into the future.

If you are looking for a cause, we invite you to become a part of our family that supports veterans in need. To learn more about the Veterans Guest House, visit us at <http://www.veteransguesthouse.org>, call 775-324-6958, or schedule a tour. We are very proud of our “Home Away From Home!”

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