

The Legacy Hero Hunt
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PRESS RELEASE

Fundraising begins for annual Legacy Hero Hunt; sponsors, donations needed for day of free upland hunting for veterans and current service members.

*Fundraising has begun for the 11th annual Legacy Hero Hunt and Military Appreciation Day slated for March 2020, at Caribou Gun Club and Hunting Preserve in Le Sueur, Minnesota.

The Legacy Hero Hunt provides veterans and current military personnel a day of upland hunting and camaraderie with fellow servicemen and women. In addition to the hunt, the day includes rounds of sporting clays, prizes, a catered lunch, and more. All expenses are paid.

“The Hero Hunt is our small way of honoring and saying thank you to our veterans and current military personnel,” said Kelly Melo, president of Legacy Hero Hunt. “Considering the sacrifices they’ve made for us, this is the least we can do for them.”

The Legacy Hero Hunt was launched in 2009. Since its inception, more than 500 veterans have enjoyed a day afield hunting pheasants and other game birds. In many cases, hunt-participants have been reacquainted with the outdoors, a lifestyle they left behind or were forced to put on hold while serving. For many veterans, their shared military experiences, including combat, have helped them forge new friendships and reintegrate into civilian life.

“There’s a healing power in being outdoors and we want to tap into that with our veterans, many of whom have had traumatic experiences that have gone unaddressed,” said Melo, whose husband, a U.S. Army combat veteran, did tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. “We want them to know that we are here for them and that they haven’t been forgotten and that we want to help. The feedback we’ve gotten from former participants has been amazingly positive. We want to build on that momentum.”

A necessary part of putting on the annual hunt is fundraising. Melo said she’s seeking hunt sponsors and individual and business donations to cover expenses and provide prizes for veterans. Hunt costs run roughly \$10,000 each year. If donations exceed annual costs, the remainder is rolled over for next year’s hunt.

“We need the help of our business community and anyone else who is willing to support our veterans and donate to this important, worthy cause,” said Melo, adding the eight-person Hero Hunt committee of unpaid volunteers have been instrumental in the success of past hunts. “Our existing sponsors have been incredibly generous and we appreciate their continued support.”

The founder and driving force behind the Legacy Hero Hunt, Stacy Dvorak, passed away on May 9th, 2015. Melo said Dvorak's passion for veterans, bird hunting and the outdoors will never be forgotten and is a constant source of inspiration.

"This hunt is her legacy—and we just want to build on it and make her proud," said Melo. "We honor her great work and the veterans she loved and supported and helped get back outdoors. Like she used to say about our veterans participating in the hunt, this day is all about them."

For more information about the Legacy Hero Hunt and Military Appreciation Day, contact Kelly Melo at kelly@thelegacyherohunt.org