

2024



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 was another successful year for Holbrook Farms! Our team remains committed to serving military survivors by providing wellness retreats and helping our guests develop life-long relationships with those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The weather cooperated and provided a beautiful Minnesota summer for the Holbrook Farms guests, and the retreat venue & agenda quickly formed powerful connections.

19 Women Served

Our Holbrook force!



Operational Highlights

- 2 successful retreats in Detroit Lakes, MN
- Hired 2 paid staff members for the first time
- Partnered with John Deere-Fargo to install composite deck with aluminum railing
- Upgraded to "National" CFC nonprofit status
- Launched new logo and impact videos
- Successful Global "Run for Holbrook" Campaign
- Created YouTube channel

John Deere volunteers not only performed tree removal and reconstructed our entire deck in just 2 days, but also presented Holbrook with a plaque that captures the purpose of our mission: *"A place to restore balance, connect with nature and ensure you are never alone."*



2024 Retreat Highlights

In June, a group of military widows were hosted for five days of wellness activities, rest, relaxation, and fun! They bonded over art activities, paddle boarding, conversation, and spending time outside in the beautiful Minnesota lake setting. They supported each other in every way from quiet conversations by the water to a late night dance party. We had our most last-minute roster changes, with one widow having a family emergency and another taking her place with 11 hours notice!

In July, we hosted our fourth Sisters of the Fallen Retreat and continued to see community build among women who can support each other in very unique and special ways. For the first time, we went on a Troll Hunt which was a fun adventure, and half the group stayed at Lake Day past sunset sharing their stories and hurts.



Sisters of the Fallen Retreat

So much support was shared, and the group went from strangers to close friends seemingly overnight. This summer showed the importance of Holbrook Farms and the essential community we build here as a Holbrook family.



Survivors of Heroes Retreat

Holbrook is connection, peace, family...

"I've felt isolated and haven't met anyone else in my shoes til this retreat. Holbrook... helped me feel the genuine love and compassion of others. Thank you!"

"Having an opportunity to come to Holbrook Farms has been a life-changing experience. For the first time since my husband passed, I felt like I truly found a group of women that understand wholeheartedly what I was going through and know that they will continue to be a part of my journey moving forward for the rest of my life."

"I came here not knowing what to expect and carrying a heavy load of sadness and unprocessed grief. I'm leaving with a full heart, with happy memories and new sisters who I know will be there for me."

Witness their stories on **YouTube** @HolbrookFarms-r9d

A Milestone Moment: Holbrook Farms Expands to Paid Positions

As Holbrook Farms continues to grow and expand its impact in supporting Gold Star families, we've reached a significant milestone in our organization's evolution--we made the decision to hire two paid positions for the first time in our history. We've always believed in the power of community and the strength of volunteers, but over time, it became clear that we could not continue to rely on an all-volunteer board to do more and more each year. Paid staff would allow our board to focus on strategic planning for the future, while ensuring that we continue to provide the highest level of support to our Survivors.

With this in mind, we made the decision to hire Sarah Merwin, one of our co-founders, as our first Executive Director. Sarah, who has served as our long-time Survivor Representative and Retreat Coordinator, has been the face of Holbrook Farms to all of our guests. We have complete faith that she will provide top-level leadership and operational support to guide our expanding mission. Our second hire was Beth Priddy, our new Retreat Coordinator. Beth is a dedicated supporter of Holbrook Farms and will oversee all aspects of retreat planning--from travel coordination to volunteer management, community engagement, and more. Living locally in Detroit Lakes, Beth will also amplify our mission within the community.

With Sarah and Beth on board, we will be able to continue providing transformative experiences for Gold Star families, while ensuring our organization's continued growth and sustainability.

Tellwell Partnership

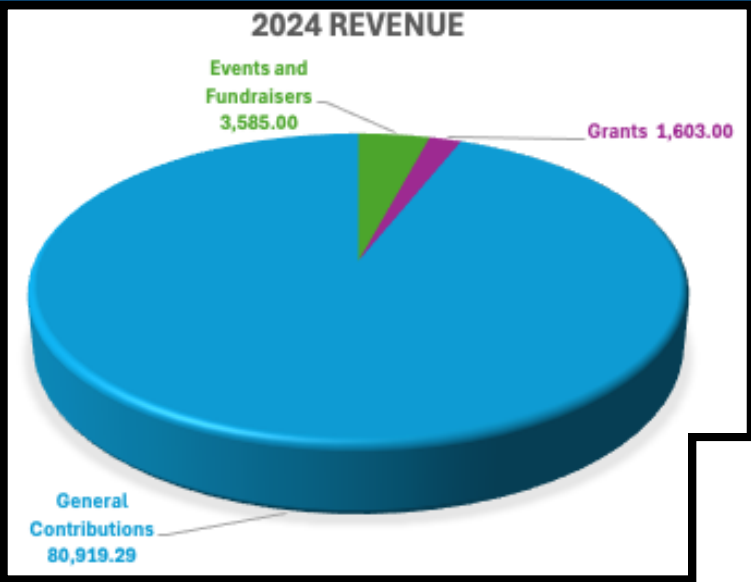
As we celebrated our 10th anniversary last year, we felt it was the perfect time to reflect on the growth and impact of Holbrook Farms. To bring our vision to life, we partnered with Tellwell, a creative studio based in Fargo, to create beautiful new videos that capture the impact of Holbrook Farms. The result is something we're incredibly proud of--a stunning new look that showcases our mission. You can watch our new videos on **YouTube @HolbrookFarms-r9d**, or on our Facebook page or website. Working with Max and the entire Tellwell team has been a truly enjoyable experience. Their professionalism, creativity, and kindness made the entire process seamless and enjoyable. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to our continued collaboration!

*Become a Holbrook
Patron!*

Our Survivors attend our retreats for free but we cannot do this without continuous support! Every dollar supports our guests & we still are not fully funded for our 2025 retreats... visit us at www.holbrookfarms.org



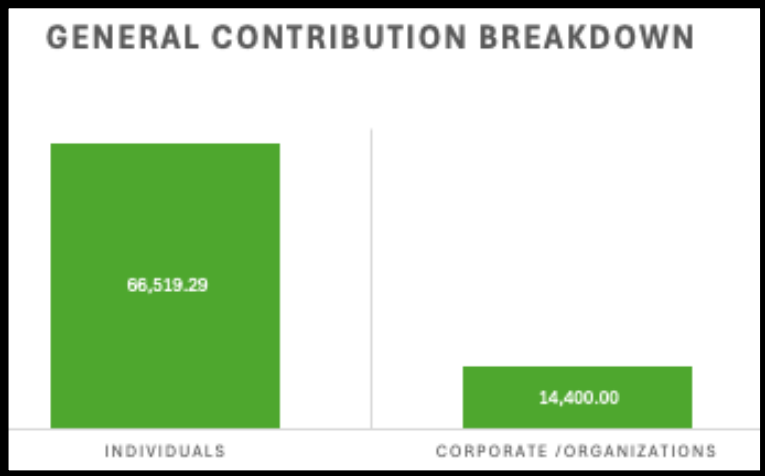
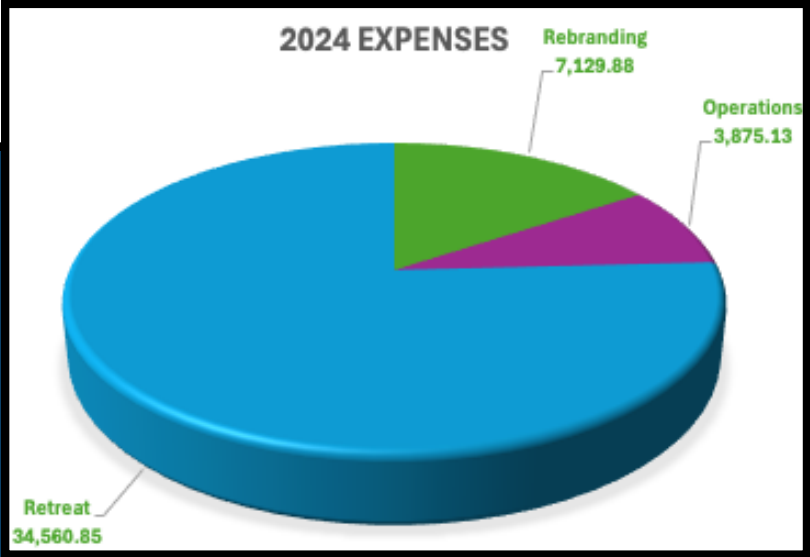
2024 Financial Report



Sisters of the Fallen Retreat



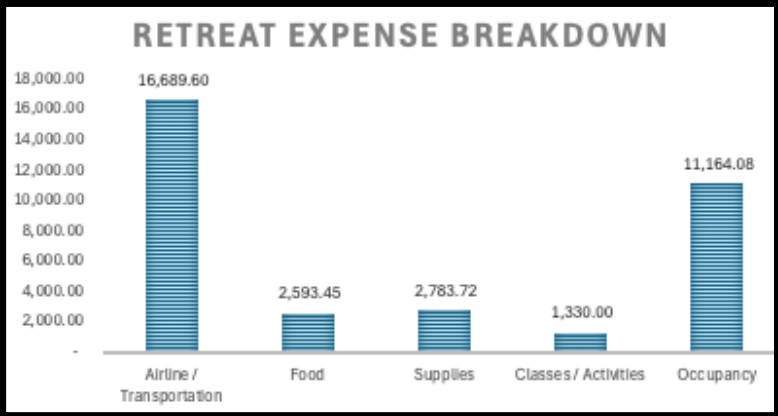
Run for Holbrook in Misawa, Japan



Survivors of Heroes Retreat



Sisters of the Fallen Retreat



2024 Fundraising Report

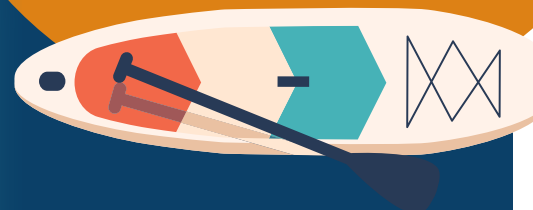
In addition to our annual appeal, we sought numerous grants from military base spouse groups, Scheels, the United States Air Force Academy Class of 2003 campaign and we conducted a Global Run for Holbrook. We continue to seek out corporate sponsorship and grants.

We were honored to receive grants from the following military spouse clubs:

- Beale Spouses' Club - \$1,000
- Cannon Spouses' Club - \$2,000
- Hickam Officers' Spouses' Club - \$1,000
- Holloman Spouses' Club - \$2,000
- Hurlburt Spouses' Club - \$1,000
- Kirtland Spouses' Club - \$1,000
- Luke Spouses' Club - \$2,000
- Malmstrom Spouses' Club - \$500
- Mountain Home Officers' Spouses' Club - \$1,000
- Team Seymore Spouses' Club - \$2,000

HOLBROOK & SCHEELS

We are so grateful for the continued support of Holbrook by Scheels-Fargo. In 2024, they donated \$1,000 in equipment--we purchased 4 inflatable paddle boards and 2 life jackets! Thank you Scheels!



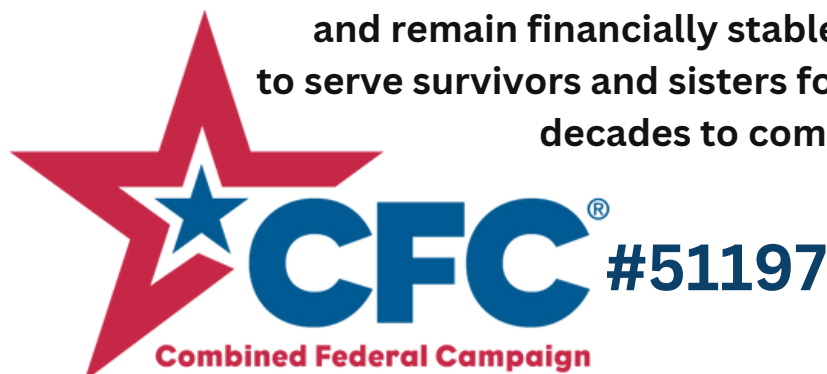
Our first-ever Global Run for Holbrook raised \$2,700!

United States Air Force Academy's Class of 2003's 20-year Reunion partnered with Holbrook Farms and fund-raised \$9,500 with a additional \$7,600 pledged over the next four years.

Combined, this will pay for an entire retreat!



Holbrook Farms is now a *nationally recognized* Combined Federal Campaign nonprofit and will continue to be eligible to receive donations. We aim to expand our reach in 2025 so we can grow and remain financially stable, to serve survivors and sisters for decades to come.



Thank You

We extend our deepest gratitude to all of our volunteers, partners, and Board of Directors for helping us fulfill our mission. We are honored to share the names of the following individuals and organizations that have continually supported us in 2024.



Kiwanis volunteers

"Thank you can't even express the gratitude for this amazing experience you have provided us, surviving sisters. When the world barely sees us, you have provided us a space to connect, share our love and memories, and to get to live our life while creating new memories and experiencing new things in our lives."

-Survivor

- Sue Anderson
- Greg Bailey
- Drew & Meg Barker
- Tim Bell
- Raenelle & Mike Bentson
- Bobby Blisterfeldt
- Larry & Kristi Boyes
- Brandon Brancato
- Danielle Charles
- Noreen Clarke
- Judy Cosset
- Carrie Davis
- Jayne Dunnum
- Amanda Eidenschink
- Emily Espey
- Hannah Eure
- Amanda Evans
- John Fesler
- Laura Goodman
- Nick Hebekeuser
- Sarah Hudson
- Susan Kotte
- Larry Kroshus
- Liberty Pumps
- Melissa Lorentz
- Let's Go Fishing
- Stephanie McWhorter
- Kari Marine
- Mona Mendez
- Bob Merwin
- Jerry Merwin
- Erikka Mitchell
- Mike Moyle
- Emily Newkirk
- Gilbert Nortz
- David O'Connell
- Jordan Olson
- Erin Petersen
- Heather Phillips
- Kim Potter
- Roger & Anita Price
- Beth Pridday
- Jadee Purdy
- Dr. Rachelle Reinisch
- Ram Reddy
- Ashley Schafer
- Laura Schlauderaff
- Jason Schmidt
- Kathy Schulte
- Jess Steuwe
- Michael & Joy Summers
- Andre Toman
- Raymond Turcotte
- Twin Cities Chapter of the Association of Air Force Academy Graduates
- Mary Wichmann
- Danielle Yeager
- Lynn Ziegler
- Val Ziegler

Answering the Call....

Our mission is not possible without the generosity of multiple groups of supporters, local and national! Your selflessness enabled us to change the lives of our military survivors, children, and siblings. Thank you especially to:

•Kiwanis Club of Detroit Lakes



•Horace High School PaY (Philanthropy and Youth) Organization





Volunteer of the Year



Judy Cosset

Since 2015, Judy Cosset has played a vital role in setting the tone for Holbrook Farms' Survivors of Heroes and Sisters of the Fallen retreats, offering her incredible culinary talents to provide the opening dinner for each event. In some seasons, Judy's contributions extended to both retreats, ensuring that our guests enjoy a delightful and thoughtful dining experience from the moment they arrive.

Her meals, known for their variety, taste, and attention to dietary needs, have become a cherished tradition at Holbrook Farms. The opening dinner serves as a first welcome to our Survivors and Sisters, offering not just nourishment but also a taste of the care and community that will define their time with us. As our guests gather around the table for their first meal together, it's more than just an opportunity to break bread—it's the first step in creating connections, sharing stories, and finding encouragement in a warm, welcoming environment.

We are deeply grateful to Judy for her unwavering generosity and commitment each year. Her support has been instrumental in creating a space where healing, support, and camaraderie can thrive. Thank you, Judy, for your continued dedication to making our retreats a meaningful experience for all who attend.

FUTURE FOCUSED

Forging ahead in 2025



- Improve retreats through increased productivity and local community engagement via new paid employees and Tellwell partnership*
- Expand Combined Federal Campaign marketing*
- Utilize professional grant writer to increase capital*
- Launch a streamlined website and strengthen social media presence to boost brand recognition and engagement*
- Expand our continued care for Survivors through virtual opportunities and resources*



Micaela Brancato
CEO/Co-Founder



Matthew Brancato
President/Co-Founder



Jessica Domitrovich
Vice-President



Sarah Merwin
Executive Director



Patty Mastel
Treasurer



Bethany Keller
Secretary



www.holbrookfarms.org