



## VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

### ***THE WALL THAT HEALS***

*Sponsored by*

*Disabled American Veterans Charitable Trust, Harley-Davidson Motor Company,  
FedEx Corporation, GEICO and New Century Transportation*

#### **Healing legacy**

On Veterans Day 1996, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) inaugurated *The Wall That Heals*, an exhibit featuring a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that travels to communities throughout America. *The Wall That Heals* is the **only** traveling replica that is directly affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Like the Memorial itself, *The Wall That Heals* has a profound effect on those who visit it. Bringing The Wall home to communities throughout our country allows the souls enshrined on the Memorial to exist once more among family and friends in the peace and comfort of familiar surroundings. The traveling exhibit also allows the many thousands of veterans who have been unable to cope with the prospect of “facing The Wall” to find the strength and courage to do so within their own communities.

#### **Traveling museum**

The tremendous response to *The Wall that Heals* inspired the addition of a mobile museum in 1998, providing a comprehensive educational component to enrich and complete the visitor experience.

The traveling museum was redesigned in 2009 by the same firm that is creating the exhibits for the Education Center at The Wall, an underground learning facility being built on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The traveling museum displays reflect the concepts being developed for the Education Center, making *The Wall That Heals* a traveling ambassador for the Education Center.

The traveling museum shows the pictures and tells the stories of some of the men and women who served and sacrificed during the Vietnam War. It helps visitors understand the war and its era, as well as why the Vietnam Veterans Memorial offers powerful healing to so many. Displays feature some of the more than 150,000 items that have been left at The Wall since it was built and also feature photos and biographical information on some of the more than 58,000 individuals whose names are on The Wall. Other displays chronicle the history of The Wall and facts about the Vietnam War.

### **Information center**

An information center located on site features computer stations outfitted to assist visitors who are searching for names on The Wall and to provide source information for veterans' issues. Staff members are also available for guests who have questions.

### **Photo collection**

VVMF is collecting photos for use in the Education Center of each of the more than 58,000 individuals whose names are on The Wall. *The Wall That Heals* is equipped with a scanner, so that families, friends and veterans who are visiting the traveling replica can have their photos scanned and contributed onsite. They also have the opportunity to share a story or remembrance about the person whose photo they have contributed.

### **A hometown welcome home**

Since 1996, *The Wall That Heals* has visited more than 350 cities and towns throughout the United States and has also visited Canada and Ireland, spreading its healing message to millions.

When The Wall comes to town, community members often organize programs related to the Vietnam War and its era, allowing citizens to honor those they lost and learn more about this long and divisive war. Community-led events bring together local dignitaries, congressional representatives, veterans' groups and the general public for parades, motorcycle escorts and special ceremonies at *The Wall That Heals*. Which activities are pursued is up to the individual communities, so each stop on the tour schedule is different. These events present another example of The Wall's ability to unite and impact communities.

### **An opportunity for education**

Many community events around The Wall's visit have an emphasis on educating students. VVMF staff members assist host organizations in coordinating middle and high school visits to *The Wall That Heals*. The *Echoes From The Wall* curriculum, produced by VVMF, is distributed to each site, and schools are encouraged to integrate lessons from *Echoes* with visits to The Wall. VVMF has also developed the *Hometown Heroes Service Learning Project*, which helps teachers bring veterans into the classroom to tell their stories. A *Wall That Heals* visit provides the perfect opportunity for teachers to connect with the veterans community in this way. Both of these education resources are available to teachers free of charge.

### **Summary**

*The Wall That Heals* traveling exhibit is endless in its potential. Today, Americans are poised to re-examine the Vietnam War with the wisdom and objectivity gleaned over more than 40 years. As *The Wall That Heals* crisscrosses the country, it offers a powerful gift of honor, healing and education to communities nationwide.