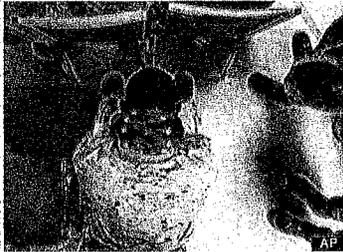


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POST IMPACT

Charity Fraud: Disabled Veterans National Foundation Squanders Millions On Marketing Services

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A charity that claims to offer services to veterans with disabilities has squandered millions of dollars on marketing costs, instead of addressing the needs of its clients, [CNN reports](#).

[Disabled Veterans National Foundation](#) (DVNF), based in Washington, D.C., was slapped with an "F" rating by a charity watchdog group for failing to spend the nearly \$56 million its raised since 2007 on actual veteran services.

[The organization says its mission is to help underserved veterans](#) -- those suffering from PTSD, brain injuries and battling homelessness -- and to collaborate with likeminded nonprofits, but it appears to have been concentrating its efforts on paying for fundraising services and doling out cheap giveaways. But according to CNN, the nonprofit has used most of its donor dollars to pay Quadriga Art LLC, which helps the organization with its fundraising efforts.

"Up to \$2 billion is raised in the name of veterans in this country and it's so sad that a great deal of it's wasted," said Daniel Borochoff, president of [CharityWatch](#), the group that rated the organization. "Hundreds of millions of dollars of our charitable dollars intended to help veterans are being squandered and wasted by opportunists and by individuals and companies who see it as a profit-making opportunity."

CNN has tried to contact the DVNF for more than a year, but hasn't received any specific replies.

But DVNF is hardly the exception.

[Nearly half of the 39 veterans charities rated by the American Institute of Philanthropy in its April/May 2011 report received F grades](#), The Huffington Post reported in June. These nonprofits failed mostly because of their exorbitant fundraising expenses and the fact that they spend a small ratio of their expenses on charitable services.

"[DVNF] sent us 2,600 bags of cough drops and 2,200 little bottles of sanitizer," J.D. Simpson of Alabama veterans charity St. Benedict's told CNN. [His nonprofit was hit hard after last year's tornadoes](#). "And the great thing was, they sent us 11,520 bags of coconut M&M's. And we didn't have a lot of use for 11,520 bags of coconut M&M's."

Feeling inspired to help a veteran in need? Consider donating to the charities below that are working to improve the quality of life of severely wounded vets.

The Fisher House

The Fisher House provides free housing to wounded troops on the grounds of major military hospitals. "It's a terrific program because otherwise, to have my family with me it would have been a hotel or some other strange place," said Bobby Henline, who was badly burned in an IED explosion in 2007 and moved into The Fisher House with his family.

Hero Miles

Through its Hero Miles program, the Fisher House Foundation also provides free air transportation for the families of wounded warriors who must travel between home and hospital. The program uses donated frequent flyer miles from the public.

Semper Fi Fund

The Semper Fi Fund brings specially adapted clothing to amputees.

Adaptive Adventures

Adaptive Adventures takes disabled veterans on ski trips, organizes adaptive sports, enabling disabled warriors to go fishing, ride horses, mountain climb, even paraglide. Still others provide job counseling and training and help wounded veterans find jobs.

[The Mission Continues](#), [Project Healing Waters](#), [the VA's community-based sports programs](#), and [Disabled Sports USA](#). These organizations organize adaptive sports, enabling disabled warriors to go fishing, ride horses, mountain climb, even paraglide. Still others provide job counseling and training and help wounded veterans find jobs. They also help finance handicapped-adapted cars and trucks, organize volunteers to run errands, buy groceries and mow the lawns of families struggling with a severely wounded and hospitalized loved one.

Wounded Warrior Wives

This nonprofit takes the wives of the severely wounded away from their 24/7 bedside caregiver role and flies them away for a weekend of fun and companionship.

Wounded Warrior Project

The Wounded Warrior Project aims to honor and empower warriors, who were injured on or after Sept. 11, 2001, through its athletic, employment and rehabilitative programs. Their Soldier Ride program is dedicated to getting the wounded up out of their wheelchairs or rehab clinics and out onto bicycles. Both organizations are looking for riders, volunteers and fundraisers across the United States.

United Service Organizations

United Service Organizations aims to boost our troops' morale through its entertainment and educational programming. From its language programs for those stationed in Afghanistan to its touring musical groups in the Persian Gulf, the USO works to provide "a home away from home" for military servicemen and servicewomen stationed in 27 states and 14 countries.

Filed by Eleanor Goldberg |