

## Connie Gibson

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**Subject:** FW: McKinney is year-long partner resource for the Army's GRiffon publication

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**From:** Beth Shumate [<mailto:bshumate@visitmckinney.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 13, 2013 10:44 AM

**To:** Dee-Dee Guerra; Vanesa Baggett; 'Christine Hockin-Boyd'; 'Angela Bado'; CoCo Good; Anna Clark; 'Brian Loughmiller'; Cindy Schneible; 'Jaymie Pedigo'; 'Peggy Smolen'; 'Jodi Ann LaFreniere'; Jim Wehmeier; Ken Wiegand; Cayti Huston; Ty Lake

**Subject:** McKinney is year-long partner resource for the Army's GRiffon publication

Back in April, a U.S. Army resource director approached the MCVB to request information about McKinney and its resources for soldiers, both active and retired. They contacted us again after committee review of the information to let us know they would like McKinney to be a year-long resource for their publication, The Griffon 108, which is distributed to 50 battalions of 300-1000 soldiers each. (It is required reading for them!)

The MCVB and MCDC partnered for the year-long sponsorship/resource program in which we get an ad and 1000 or so words of copy plus photos for each of the four quarterly issues. The first has just published online and in print. The online link to the article itself is below and the magazine should be arriving by mail in the next week or so. The entire online issue is not yet loaded, so we can't see yet how it laid out with the ad, but the editor told me yesterday that we got two pages! The online issue flip-book should be loaded by tomorrow or Monday.

<http://www.thegriffon108.com/articles/article-detail/articleid/3093/mckinney-honors-and-supports-our-soldiers.aspx>

Their editor asked that we keep it with heavy military focus in this first article and picked out the topics I had sent them that they specifically wanted covered, which you'll find in the article.

Big thanks to Cindy Schneible at MCDC for partnering with us on this. Future issues will cover things like community events that provide R&R to the soldiers, our recreational amenities (specifically the newest in the way of parks – dog park, skatepark, new ballfields at Gabe Nesbitt, and Bonnie Wenk/Wilson Creek trails) and services in the area that appeal/help servicemen and women.

*Beth Shumate, CTA*

Communications Manager

McKinney Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCVB)

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## McKinney honors and supports our Soldiers

06/07/2013

Texas has long been a place where veterans and active duty military personnel find relaxation, interesting places to explore, and communities in which to settle when they are ready to settle into life as a civilian. McKinney is one of the special North Texas cities where military personnel can find all they need and desire, both as visitors and as residents.

Named by *Money Magazine* as the #2 Best Place to Live in America in 2012, McKinney also made the magazine's biannual list at #14 in 2008 and the #5 spot in 2010, largely because of the quality of life provided to its residents. The rapidly-growing city of 141,000 features rich Texas heritage, miles of hike and bike trails, beautiful scenic areas, parks, and oodles of cultural offerings. McKinney specifically shines as a welcoming place for military personnel with programs in place to help veterans and their families.

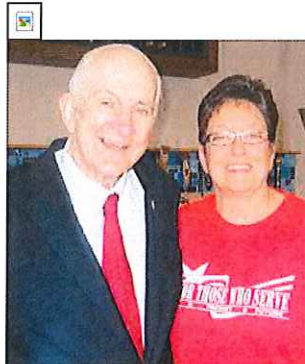


Two Soldiers man a donation station at McKinney's Smiles Concert in 2011.

### Community Lifeline Center Forms the Collin County Veterans Coalition

McKinney is home to the Community Lifeline Center which offers help and hope to residents in managing short term crises - everything from job searches to paying the rent and water bill. CLC is a non-profit organization founded in 1989 by a group of local churches. In the years since, thousands of residents have received assistance in various forms, including veterans who often deal with a new and unique set of issues when adjusting to civilian life.

In November 2012, the CLC, which had already offered some veterans services, created a new program dedicated solely to veterans' needs by founding the Collin County Veterans Coalition. This group of service providers and volunteers work to identify, inform and support veterans and their families. Networking sessions, education and collaborative efforts through organizations including the national WarriorGateway help veterans needing medical and dental services, counseling, housing and utility assistance, and even career training when reentering the job market.



Decorated Veteran and Texas Congressman Sam Johnson poses with McKinney Community Lifeline Executive Director Christine Hockin-Boyd during the city's Red Shirt proclamation ceremony at Square Burger in downtown McKinney.

Coordinator of the CCVC program is Jennibeth Brackett recently told local news source, [TownSquareBuzz.com](http://TownSquareBuzz.com).

"We are making progress in developing a program for veterans that provides greater support and communication tools for veterans navigating the veteran services programs, as well as increase the communication, partnership efforts and collaboration among veterans' service providers. Our goal is to become the prototype for other counties throughout Texas and beyond, so that when veterans need to find help, they know they have a network of support for them just a click away."

TownSquareBuzz.com launched its own philanthropic branch in 2011, the Town Square Buzz Foundation, and in 2012, kicked off a "Paint the Town Red" campaign that encourages residents to wear red on Fridays in support of veterans. The group sells red T-shirts to the public, featuring a stars-and-stripes logo stating "Honor Those Who Service – Past, Present, Future." Proceeds from the shirt sales go directly to the CCVC program. McKinney Mayor Brian Loughmiller even recognized this program by

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issuing a "red shirt Friday" proclamation in March 2012. Several community and state dignitaries took part in the proclamation ceremony, including decorated veteran Congressman Sam Johnson.

For more information about the CVCV program, call 972-542-0020 or visit [www.communitylifeline.org](http://www.communitylifeline.org).

**Smiles Charity Builds Homes for Veterans**

Another McKinney-based organization, Smiles Charity, raises funds to help build homes for severely disabled veterans and their families. The bulk of its fundraising efforts takes place through their annual Memorial Day Weekend concert and festival that draws thousands from the community and surrounding areas to the outdoor concert arena in the city's Adrialica development . Each year, the concert features three bands (a nationally-known headliner and two local bands)

whose fees are covered by a lengthy list of corporate support including Dr. Jennifer Buchanan Orthodontics (event creator), KLAK 97.5 Radio, Simpson Strong Tie, Baylor Medical Center, and Raytheon and other area businesses. Municipal entities such as the McKinney Community Development Corporation also help support the cause.

The first Smiles concert featured country singer Chris Cagle in 2008 and, at that time, benefitted Habitat for Humanity. Over the years, performers and recording artists such as Little Big Town, Maylee Thomas Band, Gavin Degraw and Uncle Kracker have rocked the stage. In 2011, the organization changed its name and purpose from Smiles for Habitat to simply the Smiles Charity and began partnering with Operation Finally Home to help build homes specifically for severely disabled veterans. Each year, the concert and festival honor a selected local family whose home will be built from funds raised during the event.

The concert is free to the general public, who can make cash donations and buy food and T-shirts and other items at the event, with proceeds from the sales going to the organization's home building efforts. The family festival portion of the event features amusements such as bounce houses, a climbing wall, face painting, and even a test-driving arena for Traxxas high performance radio-control vehicles. (Traxxas is currently constructing its new headquarters in McKinney's Craig Ranch Business Park.)

For more information about the Smiles Charity and its home building efforts for disabled veterans, visit [www.smilescharity.org](http://www.smilescharity.org).

**McKinney's VFW Post 2150**

Veterans calling McKinney home are fortunate to have a very active Veterans of Foreign Wars post located within the city. The long-standing VFW Post 2150 — it was founded in 1938 — takes an active part in the community by offering activities for veterans. These include fundraising motorcycle rallies, floats in community parades, presentation of colors at the county's large Memorial Day Ceremony at historical Pecan Grove Cemetery in McKinney, and plenty of live music, dancing and other social activities at the post location on Church Street.

**More to Come About McKinney**

McKinney provides veterans and active duty military personnel a welcoming atmosphere for resting, recharging, and settling down in the years following active duty.

[www.VisitMcKinney.com](http://www.VisitMcKinney.com).

1

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The McKinney VFW Post 2150 took the First Place cash award for its float in the 2012 Red White and Boom Hometown Parade in downtown McKinney.

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