



Purple Heart Homes
Golden Corner Chapter
PO Box 562
Anderson, SC 29622

March 08, 2019

Dot Sheehan
President/CEO
Operation Hat Trick
1 10th St
Hampton, NH 03842

RE: Endorsement of Clemson University for OHT Excellence in Service Award

Dear Ms. Sheehan,

The Golden Corner Chapter of Purple Heart Homes enthusiastically endorses Clemson University for OHT Excellence in Service Award for 2019.

President Clements has often iterated his intent of making Clemson University “The #1 Veteran Friendly University in the United States.” From the Golden Corner Chapter’s perspective, Clemson University has wholeheartedly embraced this vision with several key events and commitments in 2018.

Here are some of the highlights:

1. AFROTC, Army ROTC, and Pershing Rifles cadets from the University have been key volunteers in helping to build ramps and make much needed basic home repairs for three veterans’ homes in the local area, also engaging the veterans and their families by asking them to speak about the veterans’ experiences.
2. Brennan Beck, the Director of Military and Veteran Affairs took charge of another major project (Wayne Cooper – Purple Heart recipient) to clear, clean, and help complete the unfinished house that Wayne had attempted to build. Brennan brought several student veterans (including several Purple Heart recipients, more than 30 volunteers) one Saturday morning to do all of the work.
3. Brennan also served as Senior Advisor/Non-Executive Director of the Chapter for 2018. As a Purple Heart recipient and Bronze Star Valor Awardee for combat operations in Iraq, he provided valuable input and guidance concerning reaching out to more veterans in the local area, especially those younger veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and connecting them with our projects.

4. Finally, Clemson University was instrumental in helping to coordinate the funding for the Jason Livingston project, our “flagship project” for 2018. Jason, who was severely wounded in Afghanistan had a non-functioning bathroom (shower and bathtub) and was reduced to taking sponge baths, severely impacting his quality of life.

The cost of rebuilding his bathroom to make it suitable for his unique needs cost over \$28,000, far exceeding the Chapter’s annual budget. Clemson University used its prestige and influence to promote this project; garnering funds, producing a short videoclip, and honoring Jason as “Hero of the Game” at the Military Appreciation Day Football Game on Nov 17, 2018.

Specifically, the University recognized him and his family at a special ceremony during the game before a standing ovation of over 80,000 spectators in the stadium. It was a life-changing moment for Jason and his family, which would not have happened without Clemson University’s support.

In conclusion, Clemson University acting as a leading national advocate for veterans and their causes is a worthy recipient of OHT Excellence in Service Award for 2019.

Our Chapter unanimously and enthusiastically supports this nomination.

Yours sincerely,

Tom von Kaenel
Tom von Kaenel, Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Army (retired)
President, Purple Heart Homes, Golden Corner Chapter
PO Box 562, Anderson, SC 29622

