

Honoring Veterans Through Philanthropy: Patriot Plaza & Legacy of Valor

Grant Type: Dollar

Grant Amount: Patriot Plaza: \$12 million donation plus a \$1 million endowment for structural replacement; Legacy of Valor: \$2 million

Organization: The Patterson Foundation



What was the objective of your grant or initiative?

The Patterson Foundation chose to honor the Patterson family's multigenerational record of honorable military service, as well as the service and sacrifice of all of our nation's veterans and their families, by donating Patriot Plaza, a permanent ceremonial enhancement to Sarasota National Cemetery, and by creating a campaign called Legacy of Valor to galvanize community support for the 100,000 veterans and their families who live and work in the Sarasota, Florida, region.

Nationally, only 12% of veterans take advantage of their burial benefit from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Patriot Plaza provides an example of a public-private partnership that lifts up this underused VA benefit and the opportunity for philanthropy to support the network of 131 national cemeteries.

What was your approach?

Patriot Plaza was created through a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership between The Patterson Foundation and the VA National Cemetery Administration. This is the first time a private foundation has worked with the VA on an enhancement of this magnitude at any national cemetery.

During construction, The Patterson Foundation also launched the Legacy of Valor campaign, which brought together more than 100 community organizations under a common and coordinated theme: to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families. The campaign was driven by these partnerships and substantial capacity-building strategic communications support.



What were the outsized results?

Sarasota National Cemetery is now home to a 2,800-seat ceremonial amphitheater, which features \$2 million in commissioned art installations honoring the service and sacrifice of our service members and their loved ones from the Civil War to current times.

Patriot Plaza was unveiled to a sold-out crowd of more than 2,000 during a community dedication and donated to the VA National Cemetery Administration.

During Patriot Plaza's construction, The Patterson Foundation galvanized the region behind Patriot Plaza's mission through the Legacy of Valor campaign. Our local region is now a place where the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families is known on a greater scale and a place where the stories of that sacrifice will be told for generations at Patriot Plaza.

<http://patriotplaza.thepattersonfoundation.org/>