



The San Diego Stand Down

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Stand Downs are one to three day events offered - throughout the year in cities all across the country - to provide services to homeless veterans such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAs, other government agencies, and community agencies who serve the homeless.

The first Stand Down was organized in San Diego in 1988. Eight years ago, Healing Touch was brought to the San Diego Stand Down by Joan Tweed, a pioneering woman who brought with her a small tent, a couple of tables and a big heart. Since that time, San Diego has consistently risen to the occasion providing an ever-increasing number of volunteers from a range of healing modalities resulting in the Alternative and Integrative Medicine tent being the largest tent at the Stand Down – surpassing the Medical Tent.

Based on this, I am optimistic that the presence of Healing Touch at every Stand Down throughout the country will be a reality. It is my hope that Alternative and Integrative Medicine tents will be available at every Stand Down and that Healing Touch will be a major contributor.

I am here to render guidance and support for anyone wishing to take a step in that direction. To learn more about Stand Down go to -- <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=6>. Please check the website periodically as cities are continually being added.

The following are some of the personal experiences of the HT students and practitioners who volunteered at last year's 20th weekend Stand Down in San Diego. It's not just the Veterans who are served -- it's the practitioners as well. Clearly, a win/win!!

Please consider serving those who served for US as they get their lives back on track.

With gratitude,
 Carole A. Sarian, LMT, HTCP
 HT Volunteer Coordinator for the STAND DOWN

The following are “debriefs” written by several of those who served this year.

“There were a variety of both Veterans and family members of the Veterans, mostly older men (perhaps of Vietnam era) with whom I worked -- most seemed experienced with Stand Down.

C. represented himself as having to “sell his body for a testosterone study” so as to maintain basic needs for room and board. His stomach was huge and he said, “but I eat well!” He was grossly obese and complained of numbness in his toes. I began with a Chakra Connection and then pulled off energy using Magnetic Passes: Hands in Motion, paying close attention to his extremities. He spontaneously reported less numbness.

J., who reported several problems, spoke of a ‘bad back’ and radiating pain down his left leg. As I worked on him, I ended with Magnetic Passes: Hands Still to his left kidney area, applying gentle pressure. He said that ‘felt good’ to him.

A. spoke of sinus problems and pain across his brow and high cheeks. I began with Magnetic Passes: Hands in Motion and Modified Mind Clearing, concentrating on smoothing his brow and face. I then asked Diane Cole to do a Mind Clearing - concentrating on his sinuses so that I could begin working on M.

M. was an experienced Stand Down vet and volunteered to help with security this year. I believe he represents a real success story of Stand Down resources. He reported that he was bipolar with PTSD symptoms. He was found after having ‘hit the bottom,’ by an Advocate who encouraged/supported him through his disabilities. He proudly reported he only had ‘seven credits to go’ until he could actively work, under mentorship, as an alcohol and drug counselor. After balancing and smoothing him, I encouraged him to complete his goals so that he can use his skills to offer hope of recovery to others.

I then worked with M., the wife of a veteran, who said she was aware of Healing Touch. As she lay on her back, her head was tilted to the right and she reported having pain on the left side of the base of her neck, just above her collar bone. As I worked on her, I suggested that she could do Healing Touch on her husband just as I was doing for her! She seemed surprised and

may consider it. Within a few minutes, M’s eight or nine year-old granddaughter, shyly came over to the table -- perhaps to see what was going on? I invited her to join me in ‘doing Healing Touch on her grandmother’. She seemed to bask in her newly acquired skills and easily and happily duplicated my movements. I wondered at the quick study of children -- or was she teaching ME!??

After about two hours I began to feel very tired. A practitioner I didn’t know came over and gently reminded me that as healers we also need to care for ourselves. She reminded me to drink water and rest a tad. I thankfully brought my chair into the shade under the Alternative Medicine tent, sat down and closed my eyes as I enjoyed the quiet of many healers working around me. When I felt rejuvenated I prepared for my next client, realizing that my three hour volunteer shift would soon be complete.”

Patricia Fredericks

One of the Veterans with whom I worked was G, a 55 year-old man, who came to Stand Down to have “a little relief from life”. He had, as he called it, “a previous life with a wife, a house and a job” but ten years ago he lost it all. He is currently unemployed – is living in his car -- is facing a court trial for indecent exposure while under the influence of drugs and alcohol -- and may go to jail. His desperation moved me so deeply. I keep him in my prayers and send him unconditional love and healing thoughts every day – setting my intent for his highest good.

Michelle Lemarie

“The experience was monumental. To be part of such an event was humbling and inspiring. One of my clients wanted help with his feelings of anger and resentment, not feeling connected and unable to accept help. During the treatment he told me he was seeing colors -- green, then blue and some red. After the treatment he shared that his heart felt like it opened and there was love he could share. He felt more accepting and connected.”

Donna Magden

"About a year ago I heard about STAND DOWN from Carole Sarian in a Healing Touch Level 4 class. She shared her passion about serving Veterans with compassion and Healing Touch. When I heard that the STAND DOWN served the homeless Veterans, something deep within my heart responded to the call and the rest of me followed. Here is a poem I wrote about the experience."

STAND DOWN

A Divine Healing Exchange of Souls

Camouflage plus green & brown cloth housed the 'city,'
Booths offering services from,
Medical & dental appointments to,
Ministries, social services to alternative modalities,
A Village of Hope.

Housing tents, shower facilities, guarded perimeter,
Abundant food & water, basic needs met,
Calm, tender love,
A drum circle blessing us all.
A Safe Place.

Severe pain on all levels,
Terror filled eyes,
Fight or - fight response,
Desperation, not worthy,
Vulnerable Veterans.

Love in action,
Tender touching, gentle listening,
Witnesses to the truth that,
We are all beloved children of God,
Tears & sighs of relief,
There is a Way Out!

Safe Embrace, Being Seen,
The 'power' from within peaks out,
Like a palm frond unfurling in search of the sun,
Awakening to the true Self,
Awakening to Love.

Cathyrose Johnson, Minister, HTPA

"As I first stepped foot on the grounds of Stand Down on Saturday morning I said to myself, "Marilyn, why haven't you been here before this?" I was in awe of all that I saw, the sincere intent of everyone to assist others and the Veterans apparent gladness in being there. I have just completed a Level 1 Healing Touch class and to be able to take part in Stand Down was emotional for me and such a privilege. To be able to give something so very good to complete strangers -- Veterans who have given much of their lives, in time and health, to help others, to help our country hold on to freedom and to help provide justice for others throughout our world was very humbling. I was nervous and at first worked with Barbara Lester (Bless her) and then went solo. It was an eye opener to realize I could do something so profound for others. Saturday morning was a gift to me and I can only hope it was a good and lasting gift to our Veterans and all the Volunteers."

Marilyn Duba, Level 1 Student

"Just as I experienced at Stand Down last year, the rewards were huge. Marilyn Duba and I did a short session on a man who had been shot in the shoulder over 20 years ago. The loss of his arm and hand, and the pain as he ages were profound. He is confined to a wheelchair. With our very simple hands-on session he relaxed and fell asleep. He reported a much lower pain and stress level after the treatment - which had allowed him to sleep. For me, that was enough of a reason for being there."

Barbara Lester

"Just being at the Vietnam Veterans Stand Down is an experience that anyone can appreciate, but as Healing Touch practitioners, we really get the best of the event. The people with whom we work are so appreciative, and often the work can have dramatic effects. Just being there without even working has a healing effect, as well.

Working with T. who was in a "temporary situation" that he found challenging, apparently homeless, and unhappy about others that just weren't doing enough to help themselves, was one of those dramatic sessions! His hands jerked some while I was doing a Mind Clearing, and after about 15-20 minutes he fell into a deep, relaxing sleep. It was timely in that no one was

waiting for the table at that time, so Kathy Allan and I watched over him for another half hour or more. When he did stir...very slowly...he had a curious look in his eyes, as if he was in a state of euphoria, and all was well! A new view of the world! He was so very grateful for the experience, and truly seemed to be a different person when he left – feeling very peaceful.

J. was a young man who hadn't been deployed, but had experienced trauma along the journey, and his eyes were glazed and apprehensive. He was really waiting for a massage for his sore back, but accepted the invitation for Healing Touch when Morgan Lehman, our excellent coordinator, brought him over. He agreed to lie on the table, asking for help for his back. He was able to relax during the HT session, and was a little less glassy eyed afterward. He felt better and the back pain was less. Before he left for his massage treatment I said, "It's OK to be OK." I don't quite know what that meant, but it seemed to resonate with him.

I got to work with a couple of women, too. One was a spouse of a vet who was living at a shelter, and was very anxious. She also left with a new perspective! We really will never know what effect we have had on these people, but even if it makes their lives better for just the few minutes we spend with them, it is a gift to all of us. It's probably the closest we get to being angels on earth!"

Victoria Lea

"This is a little story about a lady named Helen (alias) whose life was changed by Healing Touch. It was Sunday, July 13 when Helen came into the Alternative Medicine Tent. As she approached the HT tables, she appeared very nervous, her coloring was pale, dull, not normal, and her eyes were, for want of better words, wild looking. As she talked I could sense a quiet gentleness, a softness deep within. Although, that was not what she was presenting at the moment.

Helen told me she had a hyperactive thyroid and was in a great deal of pain most of the time from a back injury. She had a HT treatment yesterday and had received such relief from her pain that she returned today hoping to receive a second treatment and become even more pain free.



Above: Barbara Lester and Marilyn Duba give Healing Touch to a San Diego veteran.

While I was doing a Full Body Connection, I noticed her right leg was starting to twitch. As I continued the treatment this movement was accelerating and moving throughout her body. At that point, I motioned for Carole Sarian to come over. We did a Magnetic Clearing together, watching her closely. At the conclusion of the treatment, it was difficult to arouse Helen. Carole found her pulse to be 110 and because this was beyond our scope of practice, she called for a Medic.

As Helen was examined she reported that she had worked all night and had come straight to the Stand Down without sleeping or eating anything. The Medics determined that she was dehydrated. As she sat drinking water, I noticed that her nervousness was gone, her coloring improved and her eyes were calm and happy. There was a softness and gentleness in her that I sensed when she first arrived.

Helen was all smiles and practically leaping with joy when she returned an hour or so later to thank us. Her pain was gone!"

Shirley Smalley

Working at Stand Down for the first time, I came away with many thoughts and feelings. First, while listening to the concerns of these homeless Veterans, I couldn't help but wonder

where we had failed so many who have given life and limb for our freedom? Second, I realized the importance of a self-care program for HT students and practitioners so that we can truly give from our hearts without exhausting ourselves. Doing the work of Healing Touch either directly or through a simple smile and compassionate thought serves to propel the world into healing. Extending compassion to just one person at a time is part of the solution. The moment we show up with a compassionate heart -- makes a difference.

Suzanne Weeks, HTP

Just wanted to say a few words about my experience-

I wanted to participate in the Stand Down for the unique experience that I had heard it was. It was indeed unique! I have to say that in my mind I pictured pristine white medical tents and for some reason those brown tents just hit home harder. Perhaps it reminded me of some of the older military pictures that I have seen of war camps. It was really something to see all those tents, volunteers and Veterans in one place. And it was even better to meet some of the Vets-all sizes, shapes, ages and all eager and looking for some "rest for the soul".

From where I stood as I did Healing Touch I could look at the tent for housing and it was an eye opener to see all those cots. There are so many folks out there who need our help and I hope that I offered just a little heart to heart comfort for someone. The day also allowed me to give back to my country, not as a soldier, but as a citizen who really appreciates what I have and the freedom to do such things as Healing Touch in order to support my fellow man.

Linda Huckabee