

The Xena Project

Phone: (832) 451-5982 • ride@xenahorse.com • xenahorse.com
3942 Beasley West End Road, Beasley, Texas 77417



Dear Xena Family,

Thank you for another year of impactful service to our community's warriors.

The Xena Project is a 501(c)3 organization founded and run by military veterans. We facilitate mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing for warriors and their families in both group and individual formats, in a safe, tranquil environment rooted in nature. In addition to the ministry that is our foundation, we offer animal encounters, counseling, and family reunification programs. We run specialized programs for justice-impacted veterans in local courts and jails and for homebound veterans. We regularly train local law enforcement, partner organizations, and community groups on how to more effectively reach warriors.

The Xena Project serves military veterans, law enforcement, first responders, and families. To us, "family" means whatever the warriors says it means – we welcome all relationships. Now entering our fifth year of operation, we have served nearly 2,000 warriors and family members. Approximately a third are veterans of Vietnam, Korea, and World War II. All programs are free of charge. We simply create a safe space to explore spiritual challenges, and walk with individuals and families as they move down their path. The Xena Project focuses on filling voids in services. We link to resources and organizations already doing good work; train law enforcement, churches, and other area groups; and challenge ourselves to grow services to increasingly rural locations, where none exist.

With your support, in 2018 The Xena Project:

Established the Justice Impacted Veterans Program, working in Veterans Treatment Courts and Fort Bend County Jail. Since April, we have run weekly Bible studies and small groups for the approximately 30 veterans in the jail. We support Fort Bend County Veterans Treatment Court as State-approved court mentors to veterans on the docket, and are represented at Harris County Veterans Treatment Courts. Veterans Treatment Court is up to a two-year process, which means we also walk with these veterans through civil court matters, potential incarceration, and family developments. At present we are creating a robust faith-based resource packet to assist in community re-integration, to be provided to veterans discharged from the jail and/or leaving the courts.

Served as subject matter experts in the State. This year, the Xena Team led three working groups on justice-impacted veterans for State Rep. Rick Miller's quarterly Veterans Roundtables, attracting approximately 40 organizations each meeting. In April, The Xena Project traveled by invitation to Austin to participate in a statewide Veterans Summit, and to serve as a Crisis Intervention Expert during a working group on trauma-related issues in Texas families. Spring also took us to Dallas, as a guest presenter at the Texas State Crisis Intervention Conference.

Expanded local community education. This year The Xena Project offered six blocks of instruction in de-escalation of force to law enforcement officials in Fort Bend County and Baytown, impacting approximately 250 officials. In the fall, we were honored to offer training to Fort Bend's Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary on living with a partner with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Throughout the year, we gave special presentations to Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services, Richmond's Citizens Police Alumni Association, Del Webb Veterans Club, Fort Bend Disabled American Veterans, WordServe Church, and Simonton Community Church, and took miniature horse "Star" to Fort Bend's "Out of Darkness" Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk. Finally, it was a delight to host a group of student volunteers from the University of Missouri for a week during their spring break; in addition to local work, they traveled to Beaumont to help an Army family dramatically impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

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Grew weekly groups. Thursday Bible studies at Simonton Community Church continued to grow over the course of 10-week spring, 4-week summer, and 12-week winter studies. January 2019 will mark the start of: 1) a bi-weekly group at Holy Roast Coffee Shop, tailored toward veterans re-integrating into our community after experiences with courts and jail; 2) the first monthly group for EMS Support Staff, developed at their request; and 3) a 10-week course of Financial Peace University.

Opened a library. Thanks to generous sponsorship by Simonton Community Church, The Xena Project is stocking the Fort Bend County Jail Library, creating a traveling library for Veterans Treatment Court, establishing library stations for law enforcement, and making books available to veterans and families in our programs. Titles focus on furthering spiritual development and breaking down earthly barriers that keep individuals and families from spiritual fullness, such as financial stress, relationship troubles, and similar.

Launched a virtual ministry. We are proud to share Xena Armory, an online resource center that equips the spirit of warriors. Led by retired Air Force B-1 pilot and our lead Pastor, Bill Hogan, Xena Armory is designed to reach those who do not yet connect with us in person or those who do not regularly attend events; better serve homebound warriors; and support anyone who is busy, rushed, scattered, tired, overwhelmed, or in need of uplifting respite wherever they are. A blog is currently available, a complimentary podcast is in development, and our supporting social media presence is growing.

Celebrated new relationships with area organizations such as Meals on Wheels, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Fort Bend's Veterans of Foreign Wars, Peace Lutheran Church, Living Water Church and Holy Roast Coffee Shop, Brazos River Sportsman's Club, G2G Family Shooting, Mental Health America, American GI Forum, Catholic Charities, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services, Rice University, and others.

Distributed more than 100 Bibles and hundreds of faith-based tracts, brochures, and study guides throughout the year, both at Xena Project-led events and through organic meetings.

Welcomed "Romeo" Llama to the healing team, where he joins miniature horse "Star" and miniature cow "Sir Geoffrey." Romeo came to us from the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office. After a several-month effort, livestock deputies were finally able to round him up in Kendleton; we suspect he had been homeless since Hurricane Harvey. He is safe, happy, and increasingly secure now. C'mon out and meet him!

We move into 2019 full speed ahead. To sustain and grow this work we need you and your generous gifts of time, resources, and prayers. Together we will continue to support and enhance the mental, emotional, and spiritual well being of warriors and their families when, where, and how we are optimally impactful. Here's to another incredible year to come!

With gratitude and prayers for a blessed holiday season for you and yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Shultis".

Jan Shultis
Veteran, Operation Enduring Freedom
Founding Director, The Xena Project

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From the warriors:

"I needed this today. I just needed this. I thought about going to the zoo, but people stare if you cry at the zoo." - *Army veteran, multiple tours Iraq and Afghanistan, as he hugged miniature horse "Star"*

"I am sorry I disappeared.... and I know I say that every time. You are the only people who welcome me back, though, every time. One day I won't disappear." - *Army veteran, three tours in Iraq*

"God told me to talk to you. Can I please have a hug? I don't know why I'm crying but.... thank you for being here. Thank you for bringing the horse." - *Former spouse of a Marine who committed suicide in 2014, with two young children, upon meeting miniature horse "Star"*

"She has not been out of this bedroom in nearly two months. She is going to be so excited to get this wheelchair and get outside – thank you so much! She is scared, and she is starting to talk about dying. She was a Sergeant in the Army, and that comes out sometimes... I think she feels deeply weak. I think she needs people outside of the family for support. I don't know why I am crying... I cry all the time now. This is hard for everyone." - *Son of an Army veteran awaiting a lung transplant*

"You guys are a breath of fresh air. Most people talk down to these veterans, or they hand out flyers and then they leave. You actually care, and you stay. You care about all of us. I can't explain how much that means." - *combat veteran now working at a partner organization, about the jail program*

"I get why this works. This is the first time my wife has looked hopeful in a very long time. Can I pet that cow? He's coming over here, is he really going to let me pet him?!" - *Air Force, Vietnam era veteran, meeting miniature cow "Sir Geoffrey"*

"Thank you for being here. I did not know I would be this scared. I've heard you are always here, but I appreciate that now." - *Army veteran in Fort Bend County Veterans Treatment Court*

"This is the only place I get a home-cooked meal. I am grateful." - *Cold War veteran, of weekly Bible studies at Simonton Community Church*

"Why is nobody here? Because nobody actually cares. They think 'oh, jail, they got what they deserved, they shouldn't have done what they did.' But you guys realize that these inmates are coming right back into the community.... And you guys care. I didn't believe you at first, but I do now. You care. I will always fight for you, for that right there. You care." - *Army combat veteran and currently serving law official in Fort Bend County*