



**Help Heal Veterans**  
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News Release

## **HELP HEAL VETERANS EXCEEDS ONE MILLION POUNDS OF RECYCLED MATERIALS FOR USE IN THERAPEUTIC CRAFT KITS**

*The Veterans Service Organization Recommits to 'Invest in Our Planet'*

**WINCHESTER, Calif.**, (April 20, 2023) – This Earth Day, [Help Heal Veterans](#) (Heal Vets) announces it has recycled and repurposed more than one million pounds of material. Inspired in part by this year's Earth Day theme, "Invest in Our Planet," Heal Vets is increasing efforts to use repurposed materials by actively seeking new partner organizations that need to find uses for materials they might otherwise discard.

For 50 years, Heal Vets has repurposed unused leather, cloth, and other materials to create therapeutic craft kits that are sent to veterans and active-duty military around the world to help with long-term support and recovery from the wounds of war — delivering thousands of kits to veterans and active-duty military each month.

Heal Vets partners have donated, and Heal Vets has repurposed:

- 395,000 pounds of leather from airplane seats. [Southwest Airlines](#) has donated leather from airplane seats since 2018. These materials are used to make wallets and footballs, and as components such as liners and insoles for moccasins.
- 1,000,000 square feet of leather. [The Elks](#), a partner since 2002, donates leather from Elks Lodge members around the country that is used to make moccasins, wheelchair gloves, dreamcatchers, pouches, and other items.
- 469,500 pounds of upholstery. Since 2017, [La-Z-Boy](#) has donated upholstery fabric that Heal Vets uses in kits to make messenger bags, oven mitts, bowl cozies, and other items.
- 112,416 pounds of cabinets. Since 2019, [American Woodmark](#) has donated cabinets that are repurposed for wood kits to make items like boxes and birdhouses.
- 40,000 pounds of leather from automobile seats from [Magna](#). The leather is used to make purses and bags.

"As our planet faces the challenge of climate change and the ever-increasing demand for resources, we all need to find ways to relieve the pressure on our environment and use the resources we have wisely. For Help Heal Veterans, the answer is upcycling, using donated



materials that otherwise would have gone to landfills to produce the kits that help our veterans heal. It is a win all around--for the environment and for the people we serve," said Capt. Joe McClain, USN (retired) and CEO of Heal Vets. "We are fortunate to work with corporations and civic organizations that share our dual commitment."

Heal Vets has worked with partner organizations to produce **more than 32 million therapeutic craft kits** to aid veterans and active-duty military rehabilitation.

*To learn more about Help Heal Veterans sustainability efforts, [click here](#).*

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#### About Help Heal Veterans

A nonprofit organization founded during the Vietnam War supplies free therapeutic kits to injured servicemen and women and U.S. veterans. The therapy kits often become a part of the patient's treatment plan, providing a creative outlet for stress and boredom and a way to rebuild confidence and self-esteem. Help Heal Veterans has distributed more than 32 million kits since 1971 from hundreds of craft categories.