

Citizens Commission on Human Rights of Florida Hosts 4th Annual Banquet Honoring Purple Heart Day

Mental Health Watchdog promises to fight for veterans mental health rights at event held to honor those injured during their military service.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, US, August 8, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On August 3rd, in a ceremony attended by 300 military and civilian guests, the Florida chapter of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) hosted its 4th Annual Purple Heart Day Banquet at the historic Fort Harrison in downtown Clearwater. This yearly event is held to honor those who have been wounded or killed while in service to this country, and to expose the destructive psychiatric drugging of U.S. veterans.

Acting as Master of Ceremonies, the Executive Director of CCHR Florida, Samuel Guillard, opened the event by reviewing the history of the Purple Heart and introducing the Military Tribute. The U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard presented the colors with full ceremony followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Reverend Alan Cutter, past president for the International Conference of War Veteran Ministers. The opening ceremony concluded with a trumpet version of the National Anthem followed by Rev. Cutter leading the audience in prayer.

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Diane Stein, President CCHR Florida



97-year-old retired Master Sergeant Andres Vergara who, in 1953, was stationed in the South Pacific where he rescued one hundred children from a burning house. Sgt Vergara was awarded the South Korean Medal of Honor for the brave act. Here he receives a standing ovation

In attendance at the event was 97-year-old retired Master Sergeant Andres Vergara. In 1953, Sgt. Vergara was stationed in the South Pacific where he rescued one hundred children from a burning house and was awarded the South Korean Medal of Honor for this bravery.

“This gentleman is a living example of someone dedicated to service and the protection of not just this nation but of the innocent so often harmed during times of war.” said Guillard.

The keynote speaker was Purple Heart recipient and CEO for the Tampa Bay Veterans Alliance Father Bob Swick who told stories of some of the heroes who were killed or wounded while defending this country. He also told the audience that the Fort Harrison served as barracks for soldiers slated to fight General Rommel in the North African desert during World War II.

Brett Miller, veteran and Community Veterans Engagement Board member, said, "CCHR can play an important role in improving outcomes for veterans by continuing to question the validity of any mental health treatment that does not first seek to address underlying physical causes or real-world stressors that can result in transient mental health issues."

The final guest speaker, Ms. Diane Stein, president of CCHR Florida, ended the event by shedding light on the staggering suicide rates afflicting the veteran population.

"More than 6,000 veterans die by suicide every year. That is about 500 every month or around 16 every day, including today," said Stein. [1]

Stein noted that while Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie recently told Congress that the VA is stepping up efforts to prevent veteran suicides and highlighted the problem of firearm-related suicides, what he didn't discuss was the increasing prescription of psychotropic drugs to veterans and how many of those committing suicide by firearm were taking and withdrawing from psychotropic drugs. [2]

Stressing the need for full informed consent in the field of mental health, Stein promised that CCHR will continue to fight for alternative solutions to assist veterans while pledging to work with the different veteran's organizations in Florida to protect and improve lives.



The Marine Color Guard help 300 military and civilian guests at the Fort Harrison honor Purple Heart Day organized by CCHR Florida.



Over 300 Tampa Bay military and civilian guests paid tribute to the those who were injured or died in service to America.

“CCHR will not idly sit by while those who gave so much for this country are subjected to abuse promoted as help,” said Stein.

In order to make good on this promise, CCHR Florida is hosting a seminar on Veteran’s Rights this Saturday August 10th, at 1:00pm at their center at 109 N. Fort Harrison Ave, Clearwater. To learn more or to reserve a seat at the seminar, please call 727-442-8820.

About CCHR: Initially established by the [Church of Scientology](#) and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR’s mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. [L. Ron Hubbard](#), founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: “Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the ‘free world’ tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of ‘mental health,’” he wrote in March 1969. For more information please visit www.cchrflorida.org.

SOURCES:

[1] <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/verify/verify-do-500-veterans-on-average-die-by-suicide-every-month/65-a71a300f-f6e2-4236-86d5-30ea551a232c>

[2] <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/449444-va-chief-pressed-on-efforts-to-prevent-veteran-suicides>

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