



HELMETS TO HIVES

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Beekeeping has been shown to provide numerous therapeutic benefits.

Beekeeping is a unique way to reconnect with nature and spend time outdoors. When practiced in a safe and supportive learning environment, the hobby has been shown to:

- Aid in PTSD recovery
- Increase self-sufficiency
- Improve social connections among veterans
- Relieve anxiety
- Foster emotional well-being

While anyone can struggle with mental health issues, isolation, or difficulty engaging with others, these issues are often more prevalent in the veteran community. Helmets to Hives was created by veterans who have found the hobby of beekeeping to be therapeutic. Sensitivity to the unique experiences that a veteran brings to the program is at the heart of everything the program offers. From working together to care for a colony, to spending time re-engaging with the natural world, learning the hobby of beekeeping in a therapeutic environment can provide countless opportunities to lessen the weight many veterans carry with them.

Steve Krumm, founder of the Helmets to Hives program, is a Vietnam War veteran and retired horticulturist. He states: "Honeybees are disciplined and regimented, they each have their duties, they support each other as a full unit. The same thing is true of those who served in active service, reserves or National Guard. You learn to act as a group and learn to help each other out."

So, as it turns out, bees have a lot in common with veterans.

When the program launched in 2018, it was originally a "veterans only" initiative. Then the program eventually opened enrollment to non-veterans. Founder Steve Krumm expanded the scope so veterans could reintegrate into society as active community members rather than remaining isolated in veteran-only groups. The program pairs veterans with community members who learn and work side-by-side. While the program remains **free for veterans**, community members pay a fee (approximately \$250 for the full season or \$50 for classroom only) to help support the initiative.

How can we support the initiative to help keep this program free to all Veterans?

There are several ways we can do this:

A “bumblebee” bank will be distributed to each District President to collect donations at their District meetings. Then bring the bank to me at the Spring Conference.



Fall Conference:

Start your morning with a reminder to **always bee kind** by enjoying your favorite hot drink in your very own “Helmets to Hives” bee coffee cup. \$10.00 each. Buy one for home and one for the office to keep the 'bee happy' vibe going!

Spring Conference:

We are asking auxiliaries to bring a “Spring” themed basket to be raffled. Tickets will be sold at 10 for \$5.00.

*****T-SHIRTS*****

In the Presidents packet, you’ll find a “Helmets to Hives” t-shirt order form. Orders placed will be delivered at OMTI, Fall and Spring Conference on a first come, first serve basis.

Prices as follows:

T-Shirts – Small, Medium, Large X-Large = \$25.00. 2XL, 3XL, 4XL = \$30.00

Long Sleeve – Small, Medium, Large X-Large = \$30.00. 2XL, 3XL = \$35.00 (4XL not available)

Unisex Polo - Small, Medium, Large X-Large = \$30.00. 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL = \$40.00

