



**Tunnel to Towers Foundation**  
T2T.ORG

# Get Up, Get Out, Get Going!

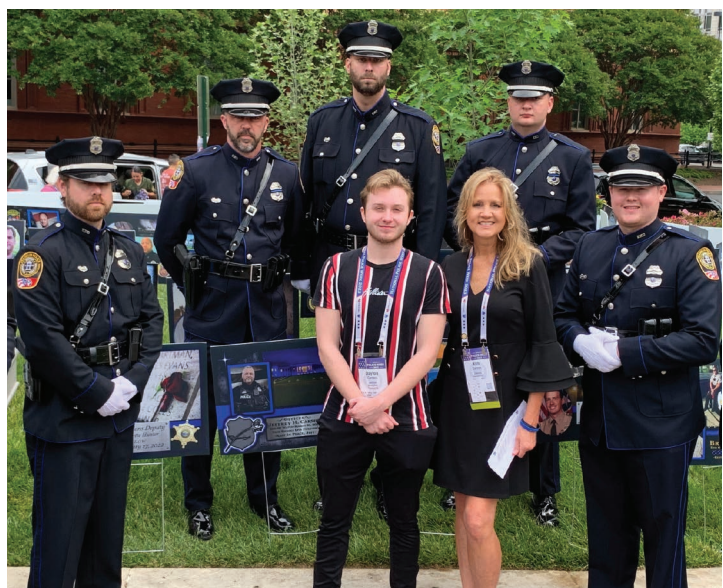
## Move Forward

I hope that summer is still bringing you all hope. Enjoy all this season has to offer while it's here.

Our son and I have been enjoying summer since he is home for college — and this Mom is loving that! It is most helpful having him around. I love that my house is always full of friends and noise!

We hit the year mark in March making it one year since Jeff passed away. I was so dreading it, but the City of Franklin and the Franklin Police Department did such a wonderful job on the memorials, commemorative events, lighting up the police department in blue and more in memory of Jeff. They are just wonderful and have not left our side.

Shortly after Jeff's first anniversary it was time for us to head to DC for National Police Week, and it was full of emotions. We just could not believe everything that was done. It was amazing.



While it is still very hard, it was wonderful to see the recognition for us along with so many other fallen law enforcement families. We are so thankful for all that the National Police Week organizations did. Jeff's family was with us which was so helpful. I will treasure this time for recognizing all first responders.

After all of these events we planned a fun-filled beach trip with Jeff's family. Just as the theme says — **Get Up, Get Out and Get Going!** — we did just that. We wanted to do something uplifting and fun, and just get some vitamin "SEA".

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It was a nice trip and fun to be with Jeff's family. We took a few pictures that we will cherish forever, and we will proudly look back at this trip with smiles. Everything is still so hard, and at times I am just mad at being sad and sad at being mad. I am trying to work on this. It's still just so hard and it just takes my breath away at times that Jeff is gone. We also lost my Mom as well this last year, so the most difficult times for sure have been all around.

I pray each day for strength and guidance, and I certainly know to be thankful.

Thank you to Tunnel to Towers for all that you have done for us along with so many others. We appreciate everything so much!

I pray to be in a better place and hope to continue to gain strength to **"Keep Going"**— trust that I am working on it! I am hopeful that when summer officially ends and our son heads back to school that I keep making progress.

Love to all!

**Kim Carson**  
**Police Officer Jeffrey Lee Herndon Carson**  
**First Responder Home Program Recipient**



I am SrA Kenneth Hernandez, a New York native from Brooklyn. Growing up, I enjoyed playing baseball, basketball, and football as well as listening to music.

I graduated high school in 1996, and I enlisted in the military in 2002 due to the events of 9/11. I served in the **United States Air Force** for five years but was medically retired due to a lower back injury I sustained during a training exercise. I later joined the **New York and New Jersey Port Authority Police Department** as a Port Authority Police Officer.

On January 25th, 2014, during my 6th year with the police department, I was involved in a car accident that left me paralyzed from the chest down with a brachial plexus injury to my right arm. Thanks to the heroic actions of an off-duty EMT named Kareem Littles, I was pulled to safety from the burning car. This heroic act saved my life.

My family has been a significant source of motivation in my recovery journey, and they have been there for me every single challenging time after my accident. I turned to fitness as a coping mechanism and a way to continually progress.

Despite the difficulties, I remain committed to my goal of regaining the ability to walk again. It has been emotionally and physically taxing, and impacts not only myself but also my family — especially my son who wonders if I will walk again. I follow a weekly workout regimen to help me keep progressing in my recovery.

I pride myself on being disciplined and motivated, but I do have days when procrastination gets the better of me. I've learned that discipline doesn't have to be rigid; it requires some flexibility and self-accountability. **Rest days** are essential for the body's well-being. I track my progress to stay motivated.

Working out at the gym has become a way to clear my mind and improve my determination. It makes me emotionally happier and less stressed, and I look forward to it daily. Fitness has become a significant part of my life; it helps me push myself and achieve my personal milestones.

**Kenneth Hernandez**  
**U.S. Air Force Senior Airman**  
**Smart Home Program Recipient**

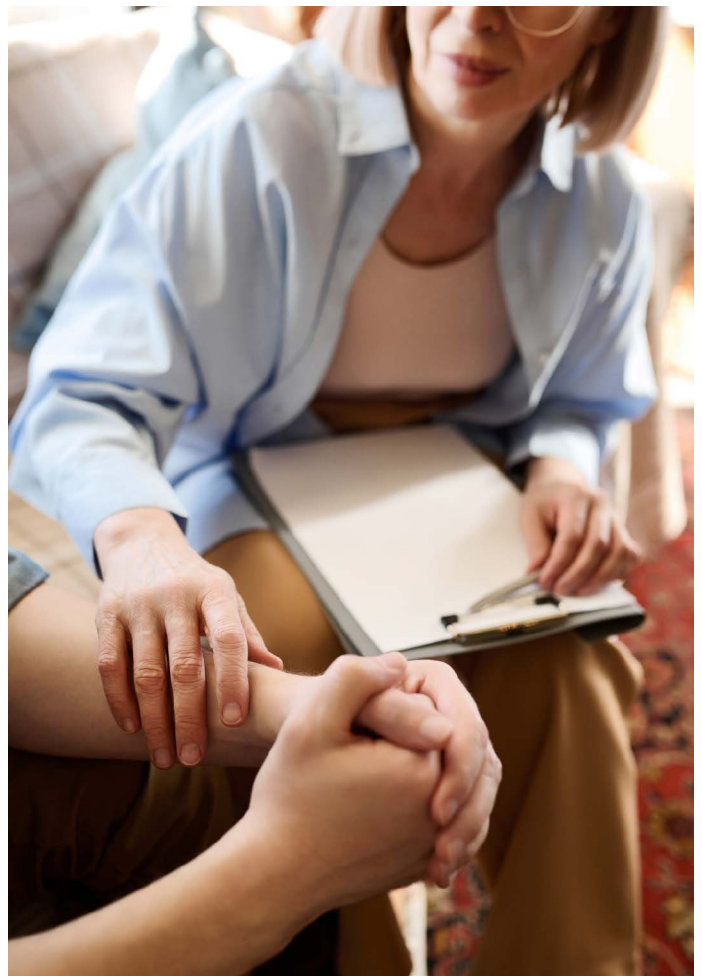


# Mental Health

The Tunnel to Towers foundation has been steadfastly helping the families of Fallen First Responders and Military, as well as catastrophically injured Veterans for over 20 years. Last year the foundation began to extend its reach to helping our homeless veteran population, with the hope of eradicating homelessness among our nation's heroes. Ensuring that our recipients have financial stability and that they no longer need to worry about having a stable home is the cornerstone of our mission.

Over time we recognized there was a need for another form of support, the kind of support a person needs to process and recover from grief and injury, so that they can live a joy filled life. Therapeutic services, whether it be talk therapy, family therapy, medication management, or life coaching can be costly and hard to find in many areas of our country. The Tunnel to Towers foundation is proud to be able to offer our recipients and their children comprehensive Mental Health services at no cost to them. The foundation has been working with mental health professional, Dr. Shayna Popkin, who has vetted and organized a network of mental health providers who were chosen for their sensitivity and expertise.

The process is very simple and confidential, and all services will be virtual. If you have any questions please contact me at (347)352-1582, or amy.slaven@t2t.org. I would be happy to discuss the program in more detail and also offer some moral support.



*"Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that's mentionable can be more manageable. When we talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary."*

– Fred Rogers

Warm Regards,

**Amy Slaven**  
**Manager of Mental Health Service**  
**In the Line of Duty**  
**Tunnel to Towers Foundation**



Summing up how amazing Tunnel to Towers has been to my family isn't a small task.

My husband, SFC Ofren "AC" Arrechaga, was killed in action in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, on March 29, 2011. It was the day after our son's third birthday.

I first heard of Tunnel to Towers when another widow I knew became a recipient. She had never been to New York City so I booked a flight to join her.

When Tunnel to Towers learned my husband was killed in action they only had two questions, "**do you have kids?**" and "**do you have a mortgage?**" Yes and yes.

And just like that my home was paid for.

Tunnel to Towers is adamant that once you're in, **you're family**. They stepped up in huge ways when they learned my son was having a mental health crisis. I had been trying to get my son into therapy for months to no avail. Within one week my son, my stepdaughter and myself all had therapists and psychiatrists. It's been a life saver — literally. They also helped with my son's medical bills.

I am happy to report that my son is doing much better, largely in part due to the help we received through Tunnel to Towers.

We can never thank our T2T family enough for all the love and support they've given our family!

**Seana Arrechaga**  
**U.S. Army Sergeant First Class Ofren Arrechaga**  
**Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient**



Tunnel to Towers is honored to share an offer from Neal Slaten, who is a very kind-hearted and generous St. Louis, MO based artist who has offered to paint portraits of our fallen military and fallen first responder heroes. Neal has offered to do this at no cost to our home recipients.

Each portrait takes a month or two to complete, and Neal works on requests in the order of receiving them. Visit his website at [www.nealslatenart.com](http://www.nealslatenart.com) to view samples of his work.

If you'd like to receive a beautiful portrait of your hero, below is a form that needs to be completed and sent to him directly. Please read the bottom of the form which gives clear instructions on what to do and how to submit your request. Once you gather your loved one's pictures and fill out the form, you should send everything directly to Neal.

Several of our home recipient families have already received portraits of their heroes painted by Neal.

These portraits are a beautiful tribute to honor and remember your hero that will be beautifully displayed in your home, or could be a gift to your hero's children or parents that they will cherish forever.

We are pleased to have the ability to offer this thoughtful gift.

Please contact Neal Slaten directly if you have any questions.



# TUNNELTO TOWERS FOUNDATION PORTRAIT REQUEST FORM

Phone Assistance: (636)-273-9111

## FALLEN/INJURED HERO INFORMATION

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service/Fire/Police  
Department/etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

Hero's Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Hero's Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Casualty: \_\_\_\_\_

## REQUESTING IMMEDIATE FAMILY INFORMATION

Requesting Family Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Requesting Family Member Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing/Shipping Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Primary): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Alternate): \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

I require 3 to 5 color digital images (or prints) of your fallen hero. Images in uniform are not necessary if not available or not desired. Prints, if sent, will be returned to you with the completed portrait. Face & Head images are especially important. The quality of the finished portrait depends on the quality of the photos you send me. All portraits are Oil Paintings approximately 12 x 16 inches of the Head and Shoulders only.

Mail or email the above material via certified or registered U. S. Mail to:  
Neal Slaten, 18618 Hardt Road, Wildwood, MO 63038

**OR** E-Mail: [nnmslaten@att.net](mailto:nnmslaten@att.net)