

August 10, 2023

Hello,

I am writing to you on behalf of Veterans Bloom at Zekiah Ridge Farm (VB@ZRF) a 501c3 non-profit I am creating in honor of my father, Alfred Thomas. He was a Marine, and he loved his farm, his family, and his people. In his memory, VB@ZRF was created to provide Veterans with a healthy space and holistic opportunity by offering post-traumatic growth through flower farming.

Why flower farming?

After losing my husband, Glenn, on August 20, 2019, and my father Alfred Thomas August 27, 2019, both to dementia. I had to do some soul-searching and find myself again. It was the hardest mental journey I've ever taken. Through this journey, I created a flower business on Zekiah Farm to keep my father's beloved farm in our family. Quickly, I realized the demanding physical work, ongoing planning, flower arranging, and interaction with people cleared my mind and provided a new perspective on life. There is great healing in digging in the dirt, planting a seed that grows into a beautiful bloom, and watching someone's face light up when they see it, it's a gift. In fact, there are numerous studies that support the positive outcome of Veterans utilizing gardening practices to improve their mental health and well-being. Our goal is to provide a therapeutic experience where Veterans can grow and care for flowers in a serene farm setting.

How can you help support?

On Friday, October 20, 2023 Bliss in the Barn, LLC is hosting a Farm to Table dining experience and the proceeds will be donated to VB@ZRF nonprofit. Our goal is to acquire sufficient funds from sponsorships to help fund the start-up and material costs required for a profitable 2024 flower season.

Attached is a copy of our sponsorship flyer. I hope you will choose to become a sponsor for the evening. Join us to honor our Veterans, make new friends and business acquaintances, and enjoy the local fare of Southern Maryland!

Thank You,
Cindy Bliss
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