

140 veterans receive day of reprieve and hope at JFCS Stand Down event

By Community Submitted

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JFCS and more than 50 other local business and partner agencies came together at the 8th Annual JFCS Stand Down Event, where 140 veterans, including 54 homeless veterans, were given a day of reprieve and hope. Held at the Sarasota Fairgrounds Potter Building, the turnout represented a more than 40 percent increase over 2018.

Veterans were provided with a backpack filled with daily essential items, including hygiene, clothing, blankets and non-perishable food. They were also able to get fitted for footwear, meet with legal, housing and counseling professionals, receive health screenings, access VA benefits and registration, enter a bike raffle, take a shower and wash clothes. In addition, pending court cases were reviewed by Veterans Court Judge Owens who erased tens of thousands of dollars in fines.

“Stand Down is a grassroots community-based intervention program designed to help homeless veterans on any given day “combat” life on the streets,” said JFCS President/CEO Heidi Brown. “It was a tremendous show of support from more than 100 JFCS volunteers, 50+ partners and Judge Owens to provide veterans with some new-found solutions and opportunities to help them address their challenges.”

— *Submitted by Holly Johnson*