



# the **LONG RUN**

## The First Annual Veteran’s Home Run

By Jack Anthony



**H**ow would you like to make this year’s 4th of July weekend more than a barbeque or just an attempt at another PR? Why not make it as well a patriotic salute to our veterans and those who serve in the military, and at the same time showcase your running ability or indulge your zeal for walking to support a special group of local veterans who need some help!

Sunday, July 2nd, the place to be is Memorial Park

**Jim didn’t know it at the time, but not far up the family tree grandpa was an American record-holder in the 5-mile.**

(Prospect Lake). On behalf of your PPRR board, I would like to invite and encourage you to participate in the 1st Annual Veterans’ Home Run. The purpose of the run is to bring awareness and support—on a financial as well as an emotional level—to the Crawford House, a home for Veterans who are often struggling with serious life issues. They have served and honored our country, and now we can honor and serve them by participating in this benefit race/walk. Be sure to mark the Veterans Home Run on your calendar!

The Colorado Veteran’s Resource Coalition manages the Crawford House. The coalition, a non-profit organization serving homeless military veterans in southern Colorado, seeks to provide a supportive living environment for veterans desiring to improve their lives. They provide vets with a room, meals, employment counseling, mental health services, alcohol/drug dependency counseling and medical support. They also provide avenues for the veterans to acquire gainful employment so they may step confidently back into the community. The coalition recently opened two adjacent homes that serve as transition residences. So far this

year, 53 veterans have made Crawford House their home. Nineteen have moved on from the program, acquiring needed confidence and finding jobs. They are renewing their community involvement as they restructure their lives. Their success serves as a role model for those Veterans still in the program.



About a year ago, Jim “Groucho” Beckenhaupt, PPRR’s newsletter mailing coordinator and volunteer extraordinaire, became aware of the program. He conceived the Veterans’ Home Run as a means to provide the Crawford House with both financial and moral support. He has since been passionately laboring to make the event a reality.

Ol’ Grouch is Vietnam Veteran himself. Memory of his own struggles upon returning home from the war motivated him to take a tour of Crawford House to discover how the program worked. He met with some of the residents and readily empathized with the difficulties they experienced re-integrating into society upon their homecoming, especially those of his Nam brothers.

When Jim returned home from Vietnam, he



Jim Beckenhaupt is all smiles as he chats with Steve Kidd prior to the start of the first Winter Series race in Fox Run Park.

## Veteran's Home Run

returned to a society largely unappreciative of the service he had given his country. The war was enmeshed in political turmoil and he received little help in finding a meaningful path to walk. So instead of walking, he decided to run! He quickly took to the sport and felt it was a natural fit for him.

Jim's body responded readily to the physical challenge, but running provided more than a means of losing weight. It nourished his soul with a sense of purpose and gave him something to strive for. Jim didn't know it at the time, but not far up the family tree, grandpa was an American record-holder in the 5-mile. Running was in his genes, more than a recreational pastime, it was a part of his himself newly discovered. Ol' Grouch's running has stuck with him ever since. We can always count on him to help staff a race or to be there at the start line ready to stride on and do so with a smile.

Jim brought the Crawford House program to the attention of the PPRR board, representing it as a very serious, goal-oriented, and well-structured program that provides substantial support to struggling veterans. Jim's eyes watered as he told the PPRR board about the veterans' courage and their current needs. Several board members are now assisting and mentoring Jim as he learns how to organize and direct the Veterans Home Run, his first race.

The Crawford House receives very little outside financial support. Proceeds from the Veterans Home Run will go directly to the Crawford House to fund home improvements, purchase computer and other equipment, and provide the bus passes needed for successful job searches. The Veterans Home Run will also raise awareness and appreciation of America's heroes and heroines in the southern Colorado region. Already, residents in the program are thrilled at the recognition of their need and

the effort Jim and others are making on their behalf.

These veterans who have served our country need our service in return to help them heal the wounds that remain long after the visible scars have healed. The PPRR board backed Jim in his desire to help the Crawford House. We now invite you to join us in this worthy effort simply by spreading the word and showing up to run on July 2nd at Memorial Park. Ol' Grouch is hoping that hundreds of local runners turn out to hit a home run for the Crawford House, one that will bring tears of joy and tangible assistance to our deserving veterans.

*Look for more information about and entry forms for the the Veteran's Home Run in June's issue, or go online to [PPRRun.org](http://PPRRun.org)*