

## 16. Billy Henson

Updated at Sep 22, 2023

Submission Date

Sep 22, 2023

I am nominating on behalf of:

- Myself

Date

Sep 22, 2023

Your Name:

Billy Henson

Organization name

Phone Number

(757) 348-0076

Your Email

billy.hensoniii@gmail.com

I am nominating an:

- Organization

Name

Organization

DoYouGiveARuck?

I am nominating this person or organization for (pick one):

- Contributor of the Year

Address: Of the person or organization you are nominating

PO BOX 650164 Vero Beach, FL, 32965

Phone Number: Of the person or organization you are nominating

(772) 584-5157

Why are you nominating this person or organization?

DoYouGiveARuck? (DYGAR) is a veteran volunteer run 501(c)3 based on the Treasure Coast, with a focus on helping veterans in our community. While founded and based in Vero Beach, DYGAR has had an active presence in the City of Port St. Lucie for the last 3 years. DYGAR operates a weekly veteran event at Hop Life Brewery to bring local veterans together in an effort to give us that sense of military family we all miss from our time in the service. Each week we meet up, go for a ruck (walking with a weighted pack, something we all did in the military), then return to the brewery for a social hour. I can personally attest that this weekly event has helped me and my mental health issues. The comradery and sprit de corps that this event provides matches what we all felt while serving our country. I have also had multiple veterans state the same sense of belonging that they have missed.

Each of the last 3 years, DYGAR has produced large events in Port St. Lucie, in conjunction with local Keiser in 2021 and Indian River State College last year and this year. Each year their goal was to raise funds to provide direct services to local veterans and collect non-perishable items to donate to local food pantries. Over the last 3 years, DYGAR raised and donated over \$75,000 to veterans, schools, and other non-profits to support veterans who live within Port St. Lucie. Additionally, they collected and donated of 6 tons of non-perishable items to local food pantries.

Mental health within the military has been a known issue. DYGAR focuses on providing our veterans with support and safe ways to help coup with their mental illnesses. They also bring attention to this issue each year by conducting Operation Shell Shock. Named after the Shell Shock Syndrome from World War II, a predecessor to what is commonly known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder(PTSD), this 20 mile awareness march is dedicated to those who last lost their battle with PTSD, are fighting PTSD, and to let everyone know that this is a critical issue within the veteran community. The first year DYGAR expanded its operations into Port St. Lucie, they started their march at City Hall and walked to Fort Pierce City Hall in an effort to raise awareness and let local veterans know they are not alone.

DoYouGiveARuck? continues to work tirelessly to support the veterans in our community. Providing local veterans with support in various ways, DYGAR will be a shining light in the darkness. Each member of the executive team is an un-paid volunteer. Most have day jobs, families, and other commitments, yet they all have the loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and professional courage to be their for their fellow veterans. Their sense of service and love for their community brings great credit upon themselves, the City of Port St. Lucie and the Treasure Coast.

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Optional documents or images upload to support your nomination

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I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.I understand that false or misleading information in my application may result in disqualification.

