

24 February 2023

I first had the pleasure of meeting Jack Champaign in August 2019 when one of my nonprofits, Get Wet for a Vet, was holding our annual function near his subdivision in Mishawaka. One of the elements our fundraiser involves is an escorted motorcycle ride which that year had over 400 bikes in attendance, causing quite a wait for any local traffic prior to us departing for the ride. Later in the day after the ride had returned and the event was in full swing, Jack stopped by requesting "to speak with who is in charge" of the event. When introduced I got the impression he was joking around when expressing concern for being held up for 45 minutes to depart his residence because of the line of bikes, to which I was correct he was just having fun with me. He and I spent roughly an hour together that day where I shared with him the history of our nonprofit to which at that point we'd raised over \$200K which every dollar stays locally to aid / assist local Veterans here in Michiana, he was so impressed before leaving he generously wrote our organization a \$5,000 check.

Because of the wonderful donation to GWFV, we invited Jack and Yuko to our Appreciation Dinner in December of that same year. Since I have always had a dream of eliminating Veteran Homelessness, each year during our dinner I speak to my dream of one day constructing a tiny house village right here in the Mishawaka area that will not only house homeless vets, we would also provide educational, financial, spiritual and other services to prepare them to provide for themselves in our community. We again thanked Jack and departed for the night hoping to see him again in 2020 with another donation! To my surprise two weeks later I received a call from Jack asking if we could meet to "chat" about something. When we met I was ecstatic to learn that he and Yuko had found a property they felt would work perfectly for my dream tiny house village and graciously gave me a \$50K check to begin the process. It would be easy for someone in Jack's financial setting to simply write a check, that's truly not what he is about. He has been so instrumental in so many aspects of my project that I will forever be indebted to him, he has mentored me, has pointed me in directions I need to go, has put me in contact with individuals of influence and so many more things I'm failing to mention. Each time I speak about Mishawaka Troop Town, with pride I tell the story how Jack and I came to know each other.

His kind passionate heart doesn't stop there, with open arms he invited as many of my leather wearing biker Veteran brothers to his Memorial Day gathering at his home and treated each one as if they were his own children. Another time invited as many Veterans that wanted to attend the South Bend Orchestra July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration at Four Winds Field.

In closing, if the actions I've seen from Jack in the 3.5 years I have known him represent what he has done over the last 40 years locally, the South Bend Hall of Fame would be lucky to have him.

Regards,

Jim Metherd

Disabled United States Army Veteran

President, Mishawaka Troop Town

President, Get Wet for a Vet