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Carlisle, PA. - The Rotary Veterans Initiative (RVI), a project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities, donated \$25,000 to Penn State Harrisburg and \$10,000 to the Central Penn College Education Foundation in recent weeks to fund scholarships and textbooks for military student veterans.

For more: <http://abc27.com/2017/03/10/return-the-favor-helping-veterans-go-back-to-school/>

The RVI donation will fund six scholarships at Penn State Harrisburg---three for \$1,500 to entering student veterans (need based) and three for \$1,500 to continuing student veterans (need and performance based). The remaining \$16,000 will enable 32 student veterans to each purchase \$500 worth of course textbooks.

presented the check at the weekly meetings of the Rotary Club of Mechanicsburg North and the Rotary Club of . The RVI donation will fund two scholarships at CPC---one for \$1,500 to an entering student veteran (need based) for \$1,500 to an continuing student veteran (need and performance based). The remaining \$7,000 will be used to student veterans to purchase digital devices for downloading textbooks.

Noah John Roufos-Abbey, director of major gifts with Penn State Harrisburg's Office of University Development, said, "Since Penn State Harrisburg's founding 50 years ago on the grounds of decommissioned Olmsted Air Force Base, the college has a proud history of serving veterans and reservists as they pursue their educational goals. We are exceedingly grateful for this powerful new partnership with the Rotary Veterans Initiative and The Foundation for Enhancing Communities. It has been a pleasure to work alongside them, and this generous commitment will create many new opportunities for deserving individuals on campus."

Penn State Harrisburg representatives at the check presentation included student veterans Michelle Becraft and Mike Raymond.

Michelle Becraft served eight years on active duty with the U.S. Army as an ammunition specialist, achieving the rank of staff sergeant. She served two tours in Afghanistan, one with the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade from Ft. Hood, Texas and one with the 45th Sustainment Brigade from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Having earned an

associate's degree in electrical engineering technology, Michelle is working toward a bachelor's degree in the same field. She has three children and is an active member of Chi Gamma Iota (XGI), a scholastic honor society and veteran's organization at Penn State Harrisburg.

Mike Raymond attained the rank of Sergeant in the U.S. Army, served two tours in Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne Division as a forward observer, has hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, and is now a criminal justice major with a 3.88 grade point average. Currently serving as the president of the Penn State Harrisburg chapter of the National Criminal Justice Honor Society and as the social media/public affairs Officer of XGI, Michael has an infant son, expects to graduate in one year, and seeks a career in federal law enforcement.

Rick Coplen, chair of the Rotary Veterans Initiative, said, "We believe in the young men and women veterans at Penn State Harrisburg. We believe in their hopes and dreams and we are investing in them. Our mission is to help veterans succeed by supporting their education, training, and job search opportunities. We will soon announce initiatives supporting veterans attending other colleges, acquiring valuable trades skills and certifications, and starting new small businesses. As we invest in these veterans and their families, we also strengthen the economic vitality of our local communities."

The RVI grew out of the Central PA Chapter of Helping a Hero, which was initiated in 2010 by Bob Egley and Don Jacobs, and has funded the construction of two specially adapted homes for severely wounded U.S. veterans injured in Afghanistan or Iraq. These homes are for Dennis Leonard (Sergeant, U.S. Army, Retired) and Jeffrey Campbell (U.S. Navy, Petty Officer First Class, Retired). Leonard moved into his home in 2013; the Campbell family moved into their new home in February.

The RVI is led by members of the Rotary Club of Mechanicsburg North and the Rotary Club of Carlisle. RVI Steering Committee members include Egley, Jacobs, Coplen, John Anthony, Clarence Asbury, Bill Blankmeyer, Ed Blum, Marsha Burkett, Alden Cunningham, Ed Fetrow, Dave Haag, Carol Lennon, Ray Millen, and Dwayne Parrish. To date, the Rotary Veterans Initiative has donated a total of \$60,000 to support veteran education at Penn State Harrisburg, Central Penn College, and Harrisburg Area Community College.

The RVI encourages golfers, volunteers, and sponsors to participate in its next golf tournament fundraiser on July 28, 2017---shotgun start at 1 p.m. at the Carlisle Barracks Golf Course. Additionally, if people or organizations wish to collaborate with the RVI to serve our military veterans, please email RVI@gmail.com. For those who wish to donate, please write the check to "Rotary Veterans Initiative" and mail it to RVI at P.O. Box 303 Carlisle, PA 17013.