



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 8, 2017

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The Goodness of America

A Man of Action

Army veteran Ernesto Rodriguez decided he wanted to do something to raise awareness about the 22 veteran suicides that take place daily in the United States. To call attention to this tragic epidemic, Rodriguez embarked on a journey to travel 2,200 miles across America, which began in December. That journey continues today, and along the way, Rodriguez has connected with veterans who were inspired by his actions.

Rodriguez, 34, is a father and a veteran of the U.S. Army, having served for 15 years and been deployed on four tours of duty. He told WFAA8 Dallas that he lost friends to PTSD and has twice attempted suicide himself, so this cause is particularly dear to him. "I was in a really bad way after my first tour in Afghanistan and my second," he said in the interview. "I have a daughter, and she would have been without a father. And that's what I think about when thoughts like that creep up."

Rodriguez' trek began in Clarksville, Tennessee, and will end in Los Angeles. He is documenting his journey with the hashtag #Forthe22.

"The number 22 has a huge significance to veteran suicide. The 2012 census actually stated that 22 veterans commit suicide daily. That number has dropped, but not significantly. And it's too many. I mean one's too many, but in the reality it's going to happen. But to have 22 is an epidemic," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez' journey has been documented on various social-media sites, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. In his trek, he has visited various military memorials, where he snapped photos, in which he would blur himself out.

"There is a reason I blur myself out," he posted on Instagram. "It's not about me. It's about us and our heroes! Let's not keep losing more to suicide."

Rodriguez has been meeting with other veterans and their families along the way, and has made them a part of his journey. "Along the way I meet other Veterans and their families. The ones I meet have signed the 60 LB Rucksack and a flag that waves as I pass by," Rodriguez explains. That flag will be planted on the west coast, says Rodriguez, "to symbolize the end of this journey, but hopefully not the end of this message."

Rodriguez refused donations for himself but encouraged people to donate to veteran charities and to reach out to veterans who may be in need of a friend.

Table for Two — Make That Three

When Keshia Dotson witnessed something beautiful during her meal at an IHOP in Springfield, Illinois, on March 25, she decided to take a photo and share it, along with the story behind it, on IHOP's Facebook page: "A man and disabled woman were dining and your server sat down with them and proceeded to help feed the disabled woman while her companion enjoyed his food. My faith in humanity has been restored a little today."

The waiter referenced in the post is Joe Thomas, who has been with the restaurant for 11 years, according to CBS News.



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Thomas explained that the customers in the photo are regulars. The woman has Huntington's disease, which progressively breaks down the nerve cells in the brain. She cannot feed herself, and Thomas observed that her husband would always help his wife eat her food first while his own food would get cold.

On the day Dotson was dining at the restaurant, Thomas decided he would sit at the table and feed the woman so that her husband could enjoy a warm meal. "I didn't really offer. I just started doing it," Thomas told CBS News. "I told the gentleman to 'Sit down, eat your food. I got her.'"

Thomas said he did not expect any recognition for his actions but simply wanted to do something nice for the couple because he hoped one day someone would do the same for him. "I really treat people like I want to be treated," Thomas said. "If I get to be that age and something happened to me I would want someone to help me out."

Dotson's post on IHOP's Facebook page has been shared 5,000 times and has received hundreds of comments.

IHOP spokeswoman Stephanie Peterson said the company is "incredibly proud of the heartwarming moments like this that take place in our restaurants every day."

A Peacemaker Happens By

Ibn Ali Miller of Atlantic City, New Jersey, is being praised for his decision to intervene in a physical fight between two teenagers and establish peace between the boys.

A video has gone viral that captured him breaking up the street fight between two teenagers who were engaged in a brawl while their peers watched and encouraged the fight to continue. Miller approached the group and insisted that the fight stop and that they talk out their problems instead. "You're almost men, you're not kids no more," says Miller. "Start acting like it. You're going to get nowhere like this."

Miller even refused to leave the scene until the two boys shook hands.

The video has been viewed over 30 million times, and even Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian issued a statement about Miller's actions: "A dozen positive lessons could be taught from that four-minute video alone.... He fearlessly spoke so much truth to those young kids. We need more adults in the world that are willing to step in to help pull back our youth from the edge."

Miller was honored by the city council at a meeting on March 22, at which Miller explained that his mother was his inspiration. He said that she kept him out of trouble and that he knew that the boys needed a positive influence like the one he had in her.

"When I was young I grew up in the projects and I would get a punishment. She would make me read books, and I'd get asked about a short story or a poem," he said. "I'm crying because this whole situation deeply saddens me. The fact that it's unbelievable — this should be very believable, this should be a norm, this should be regular."

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