

Faith's

## ROADTRIP



### Serving those who served

**P**ost-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that is caused by an extremely stressful or terrifying event. According to the National Center for PTSD, an estimated 7% of veterans have experienced PTSD at some point in their life after returning home from war. On average, 22 veterans per day commit suicide.

Gary Shuck, an Assumption native, served in the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1967. "I never brought up anything to do with the war for 20 years," he said. "On a Monday I was in Vietnam and by Wednesday I was sitting at the supper table with my wife and folks."

Over the years, he has researched PTSD extensively, trying to better understand it. "They didn't 'deprogram' us when we came home from the war. A lot of the things we saw doesn't just go away once you get home," he explained. "You never forget what you saw and experienced. Anything can trigger it, whether it's a song, date, the weather, that's just how PTSD works."

After being home from Vietnam for 30 years, Gary got diagnosed with cancer caused by Agent Orange, which is an herbicide and defoliant used by the U.S. military during the war to remove



*Soldiers and Dogs crew pictured front row left to right: Rosie Shuck, Mandy Moore, Tank, Avery Houk. Back row from left to right: TW Houk, Chesty, & Gary Shuck.*

vegetation. "You know, you work hard, raise a family, and work multiple jobs when all of a sudden the doctors say that you have cancer and are going to die," he shared. Shortly after he received the news from the doctor, the animal shelter called him about a dog they had and wanted to know if he was interested in adopting her. "That dog taught me more about loyalty than anyone ever had," he laughed. "Dogs don't care what

your problems are, they are a comforter and can sense so much about a person."

Throughout the next couple of years, Gary began studying service dogs and how they can help people. One Sunday at church, the sermon was called "What Breaks Your Heart," which really inspired Gary to start Soldiers and Dogs. He began forming a board of directors, went through the steps of forming a nonprofit, and spent a year

*Continued on 18D ►*



AGE 6  
LIAM STRUDWICK



AGE 9  
LOGAN LIKES



AGE 10  
AMELIA CASNER

## Coloring Contest Winners Announced

This summer, our annual coloring contest once again provided kids, ages 4-12, a chance to decorate a fun picture, as well as learn a safety message. This year, we featured a page from the website [ElementarySafety.com](http://ElementarySafety.com). By visiting this site, kids were able to learn about safety and become a safety expert in an educational and fun way.

Out of the many creative entries submitted, 6-year-old Liam Strudwick, Stonington; 9-year-old Logan Likes, Stonington; and 10-year-old Amelia Casner, Rosamond, put their coloring skills to work and were named winners of the Shelby Electric Cooperative's 2025 coloring contest. "Our three winners took home an assortment of fun items from Simply Yours and a coupon from Original Burger," noted Jill George, who has coordinated this contest for the cooperative for the past six years.

Every child who entered the contest received a \$5 gift certificate from Original Burger. "It was fun to be able to provide these kids with something creative to do this summer. They also learned a safety message about flying a kite. The best part was seeing the winners' excitement when they came in to claim their prizes and have their picture taken!" exclaimed George.

For more information about Shelby Electric Cooperative's youth programs, visit the "Community" tab on [www.shelbyelectric.coop](http://www.shelbyelectric.coop).

# SHELBY News

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**Shelbyville, IL 62565**

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**Office Hours:**  
**Monday - Friday**  
**7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**



**Shelby Electric**  
**Cooperative**

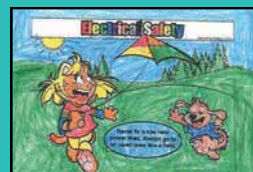
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Coloring Contest Winners

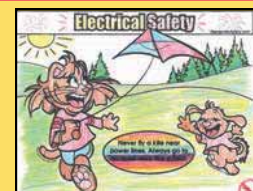


AGE 6  
LIAM STRUDWICK



AGE 9  
LOGAN LIKES

AGE 10  
AMELIA CASNER





## October 10-12, 2025 Columbus Day Weekend

### 10.10 | Friday Evening

Event Kickoff | 4-7 PM | Willow Ridge Winery  
Some balloons will inflate and do a short glow if weather permits  
Bubbas, Eddie's Sweet Island Taco Truck, and Donut Dollies  
Entertainment by Josh Holland Band  
Sunset time: 6:23 PM

### 10.11 | Saturday Morning

Sunrise Fun Flight | 7-8:30 AM | Shelby County Airport (W Hwy 16)  
Balloons will fly over airport in a fun flight sponsored by Software Solutions, Inc.  
Music by All Kindz of Soundz  
Best viewing of balloons: Airport | Sunrise 7:01 AM

### 10.11 | Saturday Evening

2 PM-Dusk | Summerskyz helicopter rides: \$40 per person - 3 people maximum per ride  
**Balloon Glow & Cookout** | 4-7 PM | Shelby County Airport  
Balloon Glow sponsored by J & R Collision Centers begins at dusk  
Balloon Glow Cookout benefits the Shelbyville Fire Department  
Several local food & drink vendors, Music by All Kindz of Soundz  
Balloon Twisting by Paddi's Air Filled Fun  
4-6:45 PM | FREE Inflatables/bounce houses for kids sponsored by Family Drug  
Weather permitting tethered balloon rides: \$10 per person to benefit local charities  
Spectacular view of all balloons in one location | Sunset: 6:22 PM

### 10.12 | Sunday Morning

Sunrise Fun Flight | 7-8:30 AM | USACE Visitors Center  
Balloons will fly over beach in a fun flight sponsored by Glenda Sphar Realty  
Music by All Kindz of Soundz  
Best viewing of balloons: Dam West Recreation Area | Sunrise time: 7:02 AM

**Balloonfest admission is FREE & events are open to the public | Donations appreciated**  
Follow the Touchstone Energy Balloonfest at Lake Shelbyville on Facebook: @balloonslakeshelbyville  
Call 217-774-2244 for more information or go online  
[www.shelbyelectric.coop](http://www.shelbyelectric.coop) | [www.lakeshelbyville.com](http://www.lakeshelbyville.com)

\*ALL SCHEDULED EVENT TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE, WEATHER DEPENDENT, & ARE AT PILOTS DISCRETION\*

## Faith's ROADTRIP continued from 18A

and a half learning how to be a dog trainer with his dog, Lieutenant Dan (LT). In 2017, Soldiers and Dogs was officially established. Their mission is to pair veterans with service dogs, and the goal is to prevent suicide for those who suffer from combat fatigue, depression, isolation, and other issues.

Gary focuses on training the veterans who will be receiving a service dog. They must provide Gary with a DD214, which is a discharge paper that shows if they had an honorable discharge. He then schedules 1:1 visits with the veteran, as well as home visits to make sure that the dog will have a good home. Over the years, Gary has kept in contact with every person who has received a dog.

TW Houk and his daughter Avery focus on dog training and initial obedience. "Dogs are easy conversation pieces," TW shares. "They always know how you are feeling, most times even before you know how you're feeling." TW and Avery normally get the dogs at around 5-6 months old and spend time doing informal obedience with treats and formal obedience with consequences. "Most of the biggest battles don't happen overseas," he said. "They happen once the soldiers get home and try to adjust back to regular life."

Mandy Shuck-Moore, who is the daughter of Gary and Rosie, got enlisted to help in the beginning. "The biggest job initially was



*Service Dog, Lieutenant Dan, looks affectionately at Vietnam Veteran & Soldiers and Dogs founder Gary Shuck.*

to raise awareness," she shared. "My sister Tricia was teaching at Central A&M, and I live in Mt. Zion, so it was a great way to tackle different areas." "We all have our jobs. Tricia approaches everything from the perspective of the children of veterans, while my mom (Rosie) approaches everything from the perspective of wives of veterans," she said.

Now, eight years into Soldiers and Dogs, Gary has paired many dogs to

help veterans and has given over 100 presentations. "When I take my last breath, what matters most is that I can tell myself I made a difference. I think that's what it's all about," he shared.

If you or someone you know is struggling with military-related PTSD, please reach out to Gary at 217-821-3738. Keep up with Soldiers and Dogs by liking their Facebook page.

Thanks for riding along. I'll see you down the road!

# Cooperatives Owned by Our Members, Committed to Our Communities

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL  
**CO-OP**  
MONTH