

# THE RESILIENCE REPORT

*help. healing. hope.*

## ★ The Holidays, Healing, and Choosing to Stay Present ★

### A Note From the Director... *m*

The holidays are often the hardest time to slow down, especially for first responders. The expectation to keep going, keep providing, and keep it together doesn't pause because the calendar says December. This year, I had the opportunity to sit with several men in treatment who spent Christmas and New Year's here. What stood out wasn't just their resilience, it was their honesty. They spoke openly about missing family, about the discomfort of being away, and about the quiet strength it took to stay committed to healing during a season that usually pulls people in every direction. These conversations were a reminder that choosing treatment isn't about stepping away from family or responsibility. Often, it's about stepping toward them; with more presence, clarity, and intention than before. I'm grateful to the men who shared their experiences so candidly, and to the families who supported them through a difficult season. My hope is that this piece offers reassurance to those considering treatment, and affirmation to those who are walking alongside someone they love. ~ Madden ☕

The holidays tend to magnify everything we already carry: stress, loss, expectations, and responsibility. For first responders and veterans, that weight can feel especially heavy. Shift work doesn't pause for Christmas, trauma doesn't wait for the New Year, and stepping away from family during the holidays can feel almost impossible.

This year, several first responders at Magnolia Meadows did exactly that. Men from different states and careers, law enforcement, fire, and EMS, spent Christmas and New Year's in treatment, choosing long-term healing during a season that typically demands togetherness.

For many, family visits became a turning point. One officer shared how inviting his family in helped them see that treatment wasn't what they had feared. "It felt normal. It felt safe. And it helped my wife see that I was working toward something better." For another, missing Christmas morning with young children was painful, but purposeful. "If this Christmas is the sacrifice that gives me many more with them," he said, "then it's worth it."



When families left and the holidays grew quiet, the men leaned into connection rather than isolation. They stayed together, watched movies, played games, and made a conscious choice to support one another. "We decided we were going to be our brother's keepers," one shared.

A paramedic who arrived just before New Year's described how overwhelming it felt to be away from home during his first days in treatment, but emphasized how quickly staff and peers helped him feel grounded. "It doesn't feel like an institution," he said. "It feels like a home."

None of the men minimized how hard the holidays were. But all shared the same belief: sometimes being fully present in the future requires stepping away in the present and that choice can be one of the most meaningful gifts a family ever receives.



To view (or read) the whole article (and many other relevant topics) visit <https://www.magnoliameadows.com/articles/>

# FLAVOR BRIEFING with Chef Andy

## Christmas Family Dinner



Chicken with  
Mushroom Bearnaise



Salted Caramel Cheesecake



Pomegranate Glazed Duck



Italian Lemon Cookie Persimmon Biscotti  
& Espresso



Caprese Salad



Casey



Kali's  
Korner

## Meet Casey!

K9 Casey became part of the Hollywood Police Department family in 2021. An American Foxhound with an AKC Therapy Dog title, Casey works alongside his handler, Officer Doklean, as a Certified Therapy K-9 Team. The pair completed specialized training at the Law Enforcement Investigative Therapy Dog program at Paws and Stripes College in Brevard County. Casey's "casework" covers everything from forensic interviews and critical incidents to cases involving children or vulnerable adults. He's also a regular at special events, community outreach programs, and school demonstrations. Whether he's on or off duty, he's a fan of back scratches, working for treats, and brushing up on his skills in training classes—because even the best comfort-giver knows there's always more to learn.

## January 2026 EDITION THE RESILIENCE REPORT

# GRIT TEAM spotlight



Matt 2026

As our Program Manager, Matt plays a key role in keeping daily operations running safely and smoothly. He provides steady support to both staff and clients while maintaining high standards across the program. Matt is always willing to step in, handle challenges as they arise, and approach situations with clear judgement and consistency. His reliability, professionalism, and leadership make a real difference every day. Our program is stronger because Matt is here. 🧰🔧

## Wellness RESOURCES

**Books:** *Bulletproof Spirit* by Dan Willis

**Podcasts:** *First Responders' Bridge*

**Websites:** [www.ffbha.org](http://www.ffbha.org)

**GRIT**

Gaining Resilience in Trauma



2026  
Happy New Year!

Residential Treatment for active or retired First Responders and Military Service Members

"HEALING IS NOT WEAKNESS. IT'S GRIT."

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[www.magnoliameadows.com](http://www.magnoliameadows.com)

1750 Halls Creek Road Waverly, TN 37185

