

Wounded Warrior Project and the Lakeshore Foundation Team Up to Help Injured Veterans **WWP Independence Program Participates in Adaptive Sports Camp**

Jacksonville, Fla. (August 19, 2015) — Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) took 50 injured veterans, family members, and caregivers from its Independence Program (IP) to “Operation Down Home,” a weekend adaptive sports camp at the Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, Alabama. The Lakeshore Foundation serves all people with physical disabilities, but, in partnership with WWP, its Lima Foxtrot programs – which include Operation Down Home – are focused on providing physical rehabilitation services to injured service members at no charge.

During the camp, injured veterans participated in a variety of activities, including cycling, rock wall climbing, scuba, tennis, group nutrition sessions, swimming, wheelchair rugby, and more. These activities are designed to promote physical health and wellness while encouraging engagement and peer support. For these injured service members, Operation Down Home was an opportunity to participate in the types of meaningful activities others take for granted.

“I wasn’t really sure what I was getting myself and my family into, and I worried that my kids might pity me or not understand,” Percell Devery, a Navy veteran enrolled in IP, said of his experience at Operation Down Home. “Coming to Lakeshore with my family helped my children understand my situation. They learned about their dad that week. If it wasn’t for the Independence Program, I don’t know where I would be. My life is the best it has ever been since my injury.”

IP is an innovative program created to help injured service members and veterans design their own paths from surviving to thriving. IP is a partnership between WWP, the warrior, and his or her family, and is uniquely structured to adapt to their ever-changing needs. IP pairs warriors who rely on their families and/or caregivers because of moderate to severe brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, or other neurological conditions with a specialized case manager to develop a personalized plan to restore meaningful levels of activity, purpose, and independence into their daily lives.

“Independence, along with physical health and wellness, are major focal points in WWP’s approach to recovery, and the Independence Program aims to cultivate those elements in the lives of our more seriously injured veterans,” said Mike Richardson, independence services and mental health executive vice president at WWP. “This is why our comprehensive approach to addressing mind, body, engagement, and economic empowerment is so impactful: all of these factors are connected to the long term success of the veterans we serve. Camps like Operation Down Home are vital for helping seriously injured veterans regain abilities, learn new skills, build self confidence, and take those tools back home where they can put them to use in their communities and daily life.”

“The Independence Program is letting me know that there are places out there I can go, and things that I can do, and I don’t have to be afraid to try,” said Pearlette Godfrey, a U.S. Army veteran also enrolled in IP, who attended the retreat with her mother and six year old son. “There was rock climbing, swimming, wheelchair rugby, shooting ranges, scuba diving – all these activities that we’ve never tried before – and we did it all. It was great to be around other veterans, where we could share our stories and experiences. It was so nice to know that you really aren’t out there by yourself – there are people who care about you.”

WWP’s Independence Services programs – IP and the Long Term Support Trust (LTST) – focus on providing long term support to injured service members and veterans living with moderate to severe brain injuries, spinal cord

injuries, or other neurological conditions. Since the two programs' inception, WWP has committed over \$65.4 million to the long term support of our most seriously injured veterans.

To learn more about the Independence Program or other services and programs provided by WWP free of charge, contact the WWP Resource Center at 888.WWP.ALUM ((888.997.2586) or resourcecenter@woundedwarriorproject.org.

Contact:Amanda Jekowsky

Email:ajekowsky@woundedwarriorproject.org

Phone:202 644 9150

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP's purpose is to raise awareness of, and to enlist the public's aid in meeting, the needs of injured service members; to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist one another; and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved or learn more, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

About Lakeshore Foundation

Lakeshore is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization which serves people with physical disabilities throughout Alabama, across the country and around the world. Since 1984, Lakeshore has helped advance and promote the impact of positive, long term physical and emotional effects of physical fitness on people with disabilities. From infants to seniors, to injured soldiers and elite level athletes, every participant is free to discover his or her own potential. For more information, please visit <http://www.lakeshore.org/>.

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2015-08-19-Wounded-Warrior-Project-and-the-Lakeshore-Foundation-Team-Up-to-Help-Injured-Veterans>