

WWP Battles Social Isolation Among Injured Veterans

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., April 7, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- According to the Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) 2015 Alumni Survey—a survey that has been completed annually since 2010, making it the most comprehensive and statistically relevant sample of this generation of injured service members—more than 40 percent of Alumni polled identified uncomfortability in social situations as the main barrier when it comes to participating in physical activities. Finding the time to participate is the second highest probable difficulty among wounded veterans, reporting at 39 percent.

With these numbers taking a toll on the injured veteran community, it becomes paramount to ensure injured veterans receive vital opportunities to engage in physical activities with people who have similar experiences and challenges.

The road to recovery sometimes begins with injured veterans getting off their mental couches and getting back into active lives. At WWP, this process begins when warriors enroll with the organization and become "Alumni," referring to the belief that each person is from the same school of selfless service and sacrifice, allowing each to be there for the other in ways unique to service brothers and sisters. The Alumni program is one of 20 free programs and services that provide wounded veterans, their families, and caregivers long-term support and camaraderie through sporting events, outdoor and recreational activities, and educational sessions.

"I don't get to experience many special events with my family," said Mr. Arnulfo Patinoaguilera, a Marine Corps injured veteran who recently attended his first Alumni event with his family at the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga. "Most of the time, we are running to appointments. Finances and motivation are two factors that also take a toll on planning family events."

Arnulfo and his family are among more than 100,000 injured warriors of this generation, along with their families and caregivers, receiving comprehensive services that help with physical rehabilitation, aid in their mental and emotional recovery, assist them to achieve their educational and employment goals, and help them maintain their independence, staying connected with their families, their communities, and each other.

"Sometimes it's easy for injured veterans to feel isolated," said Arnulfo. "We spend so much time in our heads, ensuring our guard is constantly up – always ready. There is a strange calm that comes from spending time with other warriors. It's hard to explain unless you are a veteran, but it's like you are among family. You don't have to say anything, you can just look at each other and that understanding is there."

WWP understands peer support among injured veterans makes a difference when learning to handle day-to-day challenges. All WWP programs and services have an aspect of this support structure, while one specific program, the Peer Support Group program, is dedicated to its goal of ensuring every injured veteran, family member, and caregiver support his or her fellow members in recovery, thus embodying the WWP logo of one warrior carrying another off the battlefield. In February 2016 alone, more than 180 wounded veterans took part in the Peer Support program. <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/peer-support>.

"Before this event, me and my family used to think we were alone, like the tip of an arrow," said Arnulfo. "Now, we realize that we are more like the feathers of an arrow: united among our veteran friends, each of us

stabilizing the other while aiming for one common target – recovery."

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. The WWP purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, 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 and learn more, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

Photo - <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20160406/352147>

Photo - <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20160406/352144>

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

For further information: Vesta M. Anderson, Public Relations Coordinator,
vanderson@woundedwarriorproject.org, 904-646-6864

Additional assets available online: [Photos \(2\)](#)

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2016-04-07-WWP-Battles-Social-Isolation-Among-Injured-Veterans>