

WWP News & Media: Veteran Group Outings, Charity Events, Helping Vets

Wounded Warrior Project Takes Veterans and Service Dogs Out on the Water

MIDDLE RIVER, Md., Aug. 4, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- During a recent Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) program event, a group of wounded veterans took to the waters of Dundee Creek to try stand up paddleboarding (SUP) for the first time. It was a new experience made more special by the guests the warriors were asked to bring – their service dogs.

Participants spent the afternoon at Gunpowder Falls State Park for the "SUP Dog" experience. They learned paddleboarding techniques with the help of Ultimate Watersports, strengthened the bonds they shared with their animals, and forged new bonds with fellow warriors.

Army veteran Michael Carrasquillio said that while he tries to make it to as many WWP program gatherings as he can, he was particularly drawn to this one because he could include his service dog in the fun.

"It was the first time I had seen something specifically for warriors and their service dogs, and I thought it was such a great idea," he said. "I don't always let my dog interact with other dogs, but knowing that we'd be around actual service dogs and warriors, I felt safe."

It was a great opportunity for Michael to strengthen the relatively new bond he shares with his service dog – a black lab named Ojai.

"We have been a team for a little more than three months," Michael said. "The process to get him was more than two years, but it was well worth the wait."

These fun activities support the long-term recovery needs of injured warriors by reintroducing them to the unique bonds experienced during military service. The connections formed during these outings can go a long way in healing wounded veterans.

"These programs are important for many reasons," Michael said. "First, it's great to just get out of the house. Second, it's important to connect with other warriors. Socializing is a crucial part of the recovery process. There are just tons of good reasons to get involved in WWP programs."

WWP staff closely interact with attendees during these program gatherings, advising them of additional services that can assist their recovery. Program donors make it possible for wounded veterans, their caregivers, and their family members to participate in these activities at no cost.

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.

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