

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

Looking Back and Moving Forward: New Year, Same Mission

### **Wounded Warrior Project looks back on 2014 and ahead at what is to come in 2015**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Jan. 6, 2015)** – 2014 has truly been a year to remember for Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), and 2015 promises to be even more memorable as WWP continues in its commitment to honor and empower this generation of injured service members. As the organization looks ahead to serving more warriors, caregivers, and their families in the year to come, it is important to reflect on the past year and all the organization was able to accomplish with the support of a grateful nation.

## 10-Year Anniversary

In 2014, WWP recognized its 10-year anniversary by reflecting on a decade of service and reaffirming its commitment to serve injured veterans for a lifetime.

As part of this commemoration, the WWP documentary film series, “Wounded: The Battle Back Home,” ran throughout 2014 with monthly episodes airing on MSNBC. The series focused on issues facing this generation of wounded veterans and their families, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), loss of limb, and military sexual trauma (MST).

## 2014 Alumni Survey

In September, WWP released the results of its 2014 Annual Alumni Survey. Based on the responses of more than 21,000 wounded veterans, it includes the largest sample size of service members injured since 9/11 and is the most statistically relevant survey response of that population to date.

The 2014 survey results produced several key findings, including an indication that recent passage of sweeping legislation to improve care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) comes at a time when more and more injured veterans are seeking that care as they move further away from their military service. The two most common problems in accessing both physical and mental health care were difficulty in scheduling appointments and lapsed or inconsistent treatment because of canceled appointments and switches in providers. The results of this survey allow WWP to measure the impact of and inform changes to WWP programs and services to better serve warriors in the future.

## Long-Term Support Initiatives

As part of its ongoing commitment to provide for those who have honorably served, WWP committed \$30 million in 2014 to cover both the immediate and longterm needs of 250 of the most severely injured veterans who, without funding, are most at risk for institutionalization. The funding supports two innovative programs — the Independence Program and Long-Term Support Trust — to safeguard care and support as injured veterans, caregivers, and their families confront their long-term needs and goals.

The Independence Program works with service providers in each warrior’s community to assist in identifying and achieving individualized goals to restore meaningful levels of activity and purpose into their daily lives.

Each warrior's roadmap is developed to their interests and goals for independence and quality of life, as are the resources brought to bear.

The dedicated funding placed in the Long-Term Support Trust ensures that the most severely injured warriors will have access to quality support and services in the least-isolated setting possible after their family members or caregivers are no longer able to provide it. The goal of the Trust is to empower each warrior to live as independently as possible, with the highest quality of life and the finest, most compassionate care available.

## Economically Empowering Wounded Warriors

Through WWP's Economic Empowerment pillar and its subsequent programs, the organization has helped thousands of injured service members transition from military service into the civilian workforce.

Transition Training Academy™ (TTA) is a high-touch, "learn-by-doing" style of instruction that allows warriors to explore the information technology field as a possible career choice. All TTA courses and class materials are provided free of charge, and last year TTA served 1,876 warriors.

TRACK™ is the first education center in the nation specifically for injured veterans, with facilities located in Jacksonville, Florida and San Antonio, Texas. The 12-month program gives warriors a jump-start on meeting their educational goals, while also supporting goals around personal health and wellness, mental health, and career development. Students enter as a team, or cohort, and continue through the program together, offering the ideal environment for students at all ability levels, including those who might not have been successful in traditional academic settings in the past. TRACK™ students support one another during their journey and leave the program with the skills and supports necessary to continue their education and/or enter the civilian workforce. Through this comprehensive program, 92 warriors were served in 2014.

The Warriors to Work™ program provides career guidance and support services to warriors by matching their skills and expertise to the needs of hiring managers. It also supports employers by connecting them with qualified candidates; providing information and education about combat-related injuries (such as PTSD and TBI) and reasonable accommodations; facilitating a productive onboarding process; and developing a long-lasting relationship throughout the life cycle of employment. In 2014, the average salary of warriors placed in employment was \$40,500, and 1,929 warriors with disabilities obtained meaningful employment through the Warriors to Work™ program.

The Benefits Service program helps warriors make the most of their benefits and successfully transition to life after injury, providing the tools needed to become financially secure. The warrior's individual needs are identified and the team ensures warriors, caregivers, and their families have the support and education they need. Warriors and family members are walked through every step of the process by WWP benefits staff, and receive information and access to their government benefits, as well as WWP's full range of programs and community resources necessary for successful integration. Through the Benefits Service program last year \$12,752,563 veterans' benefits dollars were secured for warriors.

## Veterans Day 2014

On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, WWP joined “America’s Parade” in New York City with more than 1,600 wounded veterans, caregivers, family members, and friends participating. In addition to the NYC parade, WWP participated in events across the country, with more than 4,200 participants nationwide.

WWP’s #VeteransDayIs hashtag encouraged Americans to support veterans through their social media channels. With the hashtag reaching more than 27 million users on Facebook and Twitter alone, this initiative helped raise awareness of Veterans Day and why it is so important to honor those who have sacrificed for our country.

## Partnerships and Fundraising

In 2014, WWP announced its new partnership with Harley-Davidson by giving six warriors living with PTSD the gift of a lifetime: a brand-new 2015 Harley Davidson motorcycle for each. Additionally, WWP teamed with Nissan to send two warriors to Alaska for an unforgettable wilderness adventure.

2014 was a banner year for community fundraising at WWP, with well over 4,000 events and activities, raising funds for WWP programs. WWP’s student ambassador program continued its success by registering nearly 1,000 groups across the country.

In Cleveland, local Fox television affiliate Fox 8 hosted the “Fox 8 Fox Trot,” a 5K run fundraiser for WWP that raised more than \$140,000. This event also helped raise awareness about WWP by highlighting the journeys of WWP Alumni in the local Cleveland area.

LPGA and CME Group featured Wounded Warrior Project Weekends, a season-long charity program tied into Race to CME Globe. Each Saturday and Sunday at LPGA tournaments, CME Group donated \$1,000 to WWP for each eagle recorded. During the weekend of the CME Group Tour Championship, \$5,000 was donated for each eagle recorded. Altogether, \$300,000 was raised to help fuel WWP programs.

Stanley Black & Decker’s commitment to WWP’s vision permeates throughout the organization and resulted in an investment of more than \$900,000 in the WWP mission.

More than 12,000 people participated in the World’s Largest Golf Outing held at Billy Casper Golf courses around the country, which raised nearly \$900,000 in 2014, for a total of \$2 million raised over the last four years.

Timothy Mellon of Wyoming recently donated nearly \$11 million to initiate the funding of the Long-Term Support Trust. Mellon, who believes he owes a huge debt of gratitude to those who fight and sacrifice for the freedoms and principles unique to this country, chose to invest in the WWP program because he is certain it will result in the best care for injured veterans.

## Growth Garnered and Impending Goals

In November, WWP reached a significant milestone when it officially welcomed its 60,000<sup>th</sup> wounded service member. To date, more than 52,000 service members have been physically wounded in the current conflicts,

and it is estimated that as many as 400,000 service members live with the invisible wounds of war, including combat stress, TBI, depression, and PTSD. WWP has a goal of reaching 100,000 wounded service members by 2017 and is well on its way to meeting that goal.

WWP opened two new offices in 2014, bringing its total number to 22 program offices across the United States and Germany. With eight new locations scheduled for 2015, WWP's accessibility will be greater than ever. These new offices will allow WWP to continue its mission of honoring and empowering Wounded Warriors while working toward its goal of serving 100,000 injured service members by 2017.

## Continuing to Serve

As WWP looks forward to 2015, the organization's new strategic plan will aid in its vision of fostering the most successful, well-adjusted generation of veterans in our nation's history.

## 2014 by the Numbers

- More than 60,000 Alumni registered
- \$30 million committed to Long-Term Support Trust and the Independence Program
- More than \$3.7 million in grants awarded by WWP to 25 organizations that also seek to enhance the lives of wounded service members through specialized programming
- 10,660 warriors, caregivers, and their families served by Physical Health and Wellness program
- 19 Soldier Rides® across the United States and Germany, which served 1,163 warriors
- 1,767 warriors served by Combat Stress Recovery Program
- 80 Project Odyssey® retreats, which served 1,788 warriors
- 1,929 warriors placed in parttime or full-time employment through Warriors to Work™
- 92 warriors enrolled in TRACK™, the WWP 12-month intensive education program
- 106 warriors enrolled in Pathfinder Education Workshops
- 1,876 warriors served by the Transition Training Academy™, a hands-on program that allows warriors to explore the information technology (IT) field
- Nearly \$12.8 million veterans' as a possible career choice benefits dollars secured through Benefits Service program

### Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has a vision of fostering the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation's history. To achieve this objective, WWP is committed to a lifetime of service and commitment through its mission: to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP currently serves more than 60,000 warriors and nearly 9,000 family members through its 20 unique programs and services. The purpose of WWP 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 organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

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<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2015-01-06-Looking-Back-and-Moving-Forward-New-Year-Same-Mission>