

Injured Service Members Brave the Cold For Fun On Ice

Wounded Veterans Learn the Basics of Ice Climbing

ESSEX JUNCTION, Vt., Feb. 29, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- A special gathering for wounded veterans who endured the elements to learn a new, unique skill in Vermont. Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) invited a group of WWP Alumni to tighten their ice leashes, pull on the gloves, and brave the chill to learn the basics of ice climbing.

WWP's Alumni program is one of 20 free programs and services offered to injured service members, their families and caregivers. Through social gatherings like these, WWP works to help wounded veterans find each other so they can heal through the power of bonding and camaraderie. Many returning service members face similar challenges readjusting to civilian life; spending time with other combat veterans who have shared experiences is a significant part of their recovery.

Zekiel Brunketurner, Army veteran and WWP Alumnus, said the event went very well. "It was a lot of fun. I had never gone ice climbing before," Zekiel said.

United by positive attitudes and a spirit of adventure, ice climbing professionals provided all the necessary equipment to the injured combat veterans. In addition to learning the basics, participants were instructed on climbing techniques and safety considerations for a special task that allowed them to put their new training to use: taking on the ice wall.

For this kind of task, having a partner-in-bravery helps. "It was a totally new thing for me, but I got to learn a new skill with other warriors," said Zekiel.

Knowing he has access to WWP sports activities is critical for Zekiel. He said, "I feel like there is real support out there and an avenue for outdoor and recreational opportunities. This has given me much-needed inspiration to move forward and do good things. WWP has been incredible for me."

Conquering an ice wall is one way for WWP Alumni to realize they can achieve and maintain independence. During the month of January 2016, WWP engaged with 16,315 warriors through various Alumni program events, activities and outreach efforts. Another important WWP opportunity is the Independence Program (IP). The chief goal of IP is to break down barriers that might limit an injured service member's access to resources and activities in his or her community.

IP is designed for wounded, injured, and ill veterans who rely on their families and/or caregivers because of moderate to severe brain injury, spinal cord injury, or other neurological conditions. The realization that he or she can live on their own terms is significant in any wounded veteran's recovery.

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 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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For further information: Rob Louis - Public Relations Specialist, rlouis@woundedwarriorproject.org, 904.451.5503

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