

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

Birds on a Wire Move Wounded Veterans toward Recovery

Wounded Veterans gather for Group Painting Class and Healing

PROVIDENCE, R.I., March 3, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- A group of injured service members and their guests recently came together to experience the joy of painting during a Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Alumni gathering. As the group tapped into its inner Van Gogh, the relaxed atmosphere invited them to open up and bond with other wounded veterans.

Many wounded service members face similar challenges adjusting to their injuries and civilian life. The WWP Alumni program is one of 20 free life-saving programs and services offered to wounded service members, their caregivers, and families. This program creates support through shared experiences and brings injured veterans together to build camaraderie. By bonding through events and activities like this, wounded veterans learn they are not alone.

Alumni and guests were encouraged to get creative as they brushed through the guided painting class. New painters unveiled their talent and transformed their blank canvases into wall-worthy masterpieces of birds on a wire at sunset. Engaging in artistic activities, partnered with fellowship, reduces stress and anxiety, and moves wounded veterans toward recovery.

"Improving my skills and learning new painting techniques is very enjoyable. Plus, events like this get me out, and I love the social atmosphere and getting the chance to laugh with others," said Stacy Barton, Navy veteran, and WWP Alumna. "It's sometimes very hard to go out and do things with my ailments. Events like this make it worthwhile."

The small group enjoyed snacks, bonding, and even a little competition while creating their bold, vibrant works. When other forms of communication fail, art can play a huge role in helping injured service members make important breakthroughs, build trust with others, and gain self-confidence and self-worth.

"I participate in as many WWP activities as I can. I'm currently in cooking and nutrition classes, and I can't wait for a yoga class to return," Stacy said. "I was lucky enough to attend one of the hiking trips in the mountains, and I made it to the top. It gave me such a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment, especially since I had been physically unable to get outdoors due to surgeries before."

Throughout the evening, WWP staff discussed programs and services one-on-one with warriors, including Benefits Services and Physical Health and Wellness (PH&W) programs. Currently, more than 100,000 wounded service members, their family members, and caregivers receive support each year through free WWP programs and services.

"I participated in a health and wellness expo in Pensacola last September. I had a great time, learned so much and made several friends," she said. "It's a wonderful feeling since I was so depressed and unsocial after returning home from my time in service. I'm much more outgoing now after being involved with WWP activities."

The WWP PH&W program focuses on four key areas: inclusive sports, fitness, nutrition, and wellness. Activities and programs are planned throughout the year for hands-on participation and long-term commitments. Building

strong health and wellness habits is a key component of recovery for injured service members. During the month of January 2016, WWP served 789 wounded veterans and family support members through the PH&W program: www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/physical-health-wellness

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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