

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

Overnight Shark Adventure at Camden Aquarium for Wounded Veterans

### **Wounded Veterans and their Families Get up Close and Personal with Sharks, Starfish, and Stingrays**

CAMDEN, N.J., March 7, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- The thought of encountering a shark could cause one to stay out of the water, especially at night; but wounded veterans and their families showed no fear during their visit to Adventure Aquarium, for an overnight 'Shark in the Dark' encounter. Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) invited the group of 40 to share this Alumni program adventure.

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

Navy veteran and WWP Alumna Denise Robb, brought her kids for the first time to a WWP Alumni event. "Once, the kids started talking, the adults soon followed. We had time to visit with WWP families before the tour, which was good because it helped everyone acclimate to the environment and each other."

With everyone convened in the aquarium's cafeteria and anticipation mounting for the night among sea life, WWP staff gave all the kids hats and bracelets. The matching apparel created a team vibe and more importantly, made the group easy to identify.

"To my surprise, the kids wore the hats the entire night, and in the morning... even the teenagers," said Denise. "It really helped us keep track of our group because the hats were bright red, and there were many groups."

WWP Alumni and family viewed the aquarium's impressive shark collection, as well as sea turtles, stingrays, and a multitude of different fish before spending the night sleeping close to the aquatic animals.

"We all met in the shark room around 10:30 pm to set up sleeping arrangements, and the experience was *amazing*, we actually got to sleep right next to the shark tank," said Denise. "They host parties and that's where I want to have my daughter's sweet 16."

In the morning, everyone packed up their bedding, ate breakfast, and ventured out to see more of the aquarium exhibits.

"We even had a warrior with a service dog that did great the entire night! It's honestly in the 'top 15 things in my life', and that is saying a lot," Denise said. "I felt good being around other warriors, and all the wives and families were very nice. I thought it might be a little funny being a female warrior, but everyone was great."

Denise has only been able to attend one other WWP Alumni event so far, and that horse riding activity still has her riding today with plans to become an instructor. Being part of this Alumni family event at the aquarium encourages her to attend more often and she commented how WWP staff made them feel relaxed and comfortable the entire time.

Through a high-touch and interactive approach, the WWP vision is to foster the most successful, well-adjusted

generation of wounded service members in our nation's history. Just in the month of January 2016, WWP engaged 16,315 warriors through various Alumni program events, activities, and outreach efforts.

Since being founded in 2003, WWP has evolved its programs and services to meet the growing needs of the constituency it serves. Most recently, WWP launched Warrior Care Network™, a \$100 million investment to battle the invisible wounds of war and reach those who might otherwise go untreated. This is a first-of-its-kind partnership between WWP and four national academic medical centers of excellence including Emory Healthcare, Massachusetts General Hospital, Rush University Medical Center, and UCLA Health to connect thousands of injured warriors with world-class care. For more information, please visit [www.warriorcarenetwork.org](http://www.warriorcarenetwork.org).

### **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](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

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