

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

Wounded Veterans and Families Bond While Breaking Glass

Handmade Art Allows Time to Talk, Share Stories

STAFFORD, Va., March 7, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Piece by piece, Lisa LaPorte snapped thin pieces of glass, pleased with the perfectly symmetrical triangles, rectangles, and squares. Lisa effortlessly broke the navy and light blue glass pieces just minutes after learning the skill, her mind focused on her vision for a finished product.

Lisa, whose husband is a wounded veteran, was joined by nearly two dozen other caregivers and injured service members to learn the art of glass fusing. After a quick tutorial, Lisa and the other women and men were breaking shards of tinted glass to shapes they preferred, to form designs on a clear glass plate. But the night was about more than the art.

"It is nice to get together with caregivers," said Lisa. "They understand the challenges we deal with on a daily basis. Nights like this are a great opportunity for self-care."

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) knows the important role family plays in an injured veteran's recovery. It is why the WWP Alumni program hosts events to bring caregivers together. The Alumni program is one of 20 direct programs and services provided for wounded veterans, their families, and their caregivers. By bringing families together to form new connections, bonds at home are strengthened.

"To be able to interact with people that have been through what you have, it helps, a lot," said Ryan Baker, a wounded service member who turned pieces of red, white, and blue into a small American flag. "These events help us get out of the house, when maybe they normally wouldn't."

The Alumni program reached more than 4,500 people through outings, dinners, sporting events, and other gatherings, in January alone.

Allan LaPorte joined his sister-in-law at the event Friday night at Art From the Heart in Stafford, Virginia. He placed pieces of purple, blue, maroon, and orange glass into the four corners of his glass plate, then used gold tinted glass dust to fill out his project. All of the plates will be put in a kiln reaching temperatures of more than 1,000 degrees to fuse the glass together.

"It is fun making it, putting the different shapes and colors of glass together to create what you want," Allan said. "It is also great to share the experience with all these nice people who become your friends."

"I like making things with my hands," Ryan said. "I also enjoy meeting the caregivers."

WWP is committed to a lifetime of service for injured veterans, their families, and their caregivers. Through the Independence Program, WWP helps wounded service members with a moderate-to-severe brain injury, spinal cord injury, or other neurological condition. Because of their cognitive or physical challenges, the injured veteran is not able to access resources and activities in their own community. The Independence Program works with the wounded veteran and their full support team to ensure the service member can live their life on their terms. WWP has invested more than \$90 million to the Long-Term Support Trust. This provides a safety net for seriously wounded veterans, who risk the possibility of being institutionalized if they lose their caregiver.

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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