

Kemah Aquarium Hosts Wounded Veterans and Their Families

Wounded Warrior Project Alumni Feed Stingrays and Explore Exhibits

KEMAH, Texas, March 10, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Wounded veterans and their families got up close and personal with stingrays at a recent Alumni program event hosted by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP). The Kemah Aquarium recently hosted 110 injured service members and their families for a day of exploration and fun.

"I attended the event with my wife and kid, and it seemed like my daughter had a really good time," said Air Force veteran and WWP Alumnus Keith Schulz. "We all learned new stuff about the different fish on display. My daughter was able to get up on the glass and touch the stingrays and feed them. I think she got a real kick out of that."

The interactive stingray tank stood out as the highlight for many attendees with children, who were thrilled at the chance to interact with the sea creatures and hand feed them.

"It was a great event for the kids, and they loved the aquarium," said Marine Corps veteran and WWP Alumnus Derek Lee, who came with his wife and children. "The stingrays were sucking the food off their hands, and the kids were laughing."

The gathering gave injured service members and their families a chance to create memories and bond. Events like this are part of the WWP Alumni program, one of 20 free programs and services WWP offers wounded veterans, caregivers, and families. The WWP Alumni program creates support through shared experiences and builds camaraderie by bringing injured veterans together to connect with other wounded veterans and family support members. Many wounded service members face similar challenges adjusting to their injuries and civilian life. By bonding through events, these veterans learn they are not alone and have the chance to grow closer to their own support circles, and other injured service members.

"I talked to the people around us, many of whom were people we had never met before," said Derek. "I exchanged numbers with quite a few people. It's a good chance for me to reach out and help. We all know what it's like --- you meet people who think how you think and react how you react. We all know what each other has been through."

Currently, more than 100,000 wounded service members, their family members, and caregivers receive support each year through WWP's 20 free programs and services. WWP's Peer Support, for example, gives successfully readjusted injured service members and caregivers a chance to serve as mentors to provide support and encouragement to peers who are on their respective roads to recovery. Peer Mentors receive training specifically designed to help them assist fellow combat veterans as role models, motivators, and friends. The goal of the Peer Support program is for every mentored veteran to eventually mentor another. By becoming a Peer Mentor, injured service members who once were the warrior being carried off the battlefield have the opportunity to become the warrior who carries others, thus embodying the WWP logo.

"The Wounded Warrior Project staff were very open to hearing from us about what we like, and what more we can do with them and each other," said Derek. "They've always been willing to listen to us and hear where we're coming from."

Since being founded in 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has evolved its programs and services to meet the growing needs of the constituency it serves. 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.

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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