

Play Ball! For Wounded Veterans

Injured Service Members Take Field with MLB Stars

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla., April 4, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- America's pastime is back --- Major League Baseball started its season yesterday. One of the first games had the Tampa Bay Rays hosting the Toronto Blue Jays. The Rays created memories recently by hosting a group of wounded veterans at Spring Training in Port Charlotte.

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) took the injured service members to experience two days on the field with Rays players. The wounded veterans shagged fly balls during batting practice, worked out with Rays teammates, and even had their chance in the Rays' batting cages.

"It was very cool to take swings in the cages like the players do," Army veteran and WWP Alumnus Chris Gordon said. "I enjoyed talking to Chris Archer and having Evan Longoria sign my glove."

"It was a wonderful, fun experience and everyone made the warriors feel appreciated," Army veteran and WWP Alumnus Brian Commons said.

More than 100,000 wounded veterans, caregivers, and family members receive access to WWP programs and services, all of which are free of charge. The Alumni program brings injured service members together to help create shared support structures. Through sporting events, dinners, and community service opportunities wounded veterans form bonds with each other and see they are not alone in the challenges they face.

"The camaraderie with the other warriors was great, very uplifting," Brian said. "Combine that with the shared experience of training with and meeting the Rays made this both fun and therapeutic."

"WWP is an organization that has become like an extended family to me," Chris said. "If ever I have any questions about my benefits or any other matter, they have an answer for me or they can refer me to the right source."

WWP's Benefits Service is one of 20 direct programs and services offered free of charge to Alumni. This program helps ensure wounded veterans receive the benefits they earned while serving in the armed services. A WWP teammate works with the injured service member or caregiver to navigate the Department Veterans Affairs' (VA) process. The benefits team also works with the injured veteran or caregiver on any necessary appeals he or she needs. Just in February, the Benefits team helped nearly 2,500 wounded veterans, families, and caregivers.

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/benefits-service.aspx>.

"Wounded Warrior Project is a lifesaver for me," Brian said. "The WWP programs provide me a positive outlet and direction for my healing and rehabilitative process. I am forever grateful for the dedication and compassion of those WWP personnel who work diligently to provide programs and services."

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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