

Wounded Warrior Project Helps Veterans Ride the Waves

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas, Sept. 7, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) recently helped injured veterans and their families take advantage of the waning days of summer by teaching them an ancient pastime, still very much enjoyed at America's beaches today – surfing.

More than 60 participants congregated at Corpus Christi's Bob Hall Pier for a day of fun in the sun. Those who wanted to learn to ride the waves enjoyed surfing lessons. Those content to sit back and observe enjoyed mingling with fellow warrior families and WWP staff members. WWP supports warriors in all stages of recovery, and program events like this give them an opportunity to experience firsthand what is possible when exposed to social gatherings that get them out of the house and engaged with fellow service members.

The lessons were exhilarating for Air Force veteran Chris Wolff, who now walks with the use of forearm crutches after a flu vaccination left him paralyzed – a rare condition known as acute disseminated encephalomyelitis. Adaptive sports through WWP have become a major component of his recovery process, and he was happy to share the experience with his wife and daughters. He and his family drove from their home in Whitney, Texas, which is just south of Fort Worth, and other warrior families came from all over the state to be a part of the coastal surfing program gathering.

"It meant the world to me to be able to get on a surfboard, given that doctors once told me I would never walk, breathe, or eat on my own again," Chris said. "It was an incredible opportunity to show my older daughter another thing Daddy can do – just in his own way. She has seen me adapt and overcome so many things, and it shows her that she can do anything with enough perseverance and determination."

Chris said it was fun familiarizing himself with a new way of surfing, especially with the help he received.

"WWP provided someone to teach and guide me in the water, along with a few warriors to help laugh at me when I drank salt water," he said.

Engaging program activities like the surfing excursion support the recovery needs of veterans by reintroducing them to the bonds forged during military service. Encouraging warriors to recapture that military spirit with their peers decreases the potential for isolation, which can help them to stay focused during their healing process.

Chris said WWP's program outings are an imperative component to the overall recovery process for injured veterans.

"Interacting with warrior families is beneficial in so many ways," he said. "It allows our children to interact with other kids who can relate to them. It allows supportive family members like my wife to share the resources we've found and be a shoulder to lean on for someone else – even if it's just for the day. And for the warrior, it can be a great motivation, whether it's someone else's spirit pushing me to continue or vice versa. It is at these gatherings that we make connections and lifelong friends."

WWP staff closely interacted with warriors over the course of the afternoon, advising them of additional services and personalized therapeutic outlets to assist in recovery. Like WWP outreach gatherings, these program resources are available free of charge, thanks to the generosity of donors.

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. The WWP 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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