

Veterans Hike the Day Away with Wounded Warrior Project

BOISE, Idaho, Sept. 13, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- During a recent day hike near Boise, injured veterans got a taste of the great outdoors. The hike helped them keep up with their commitments to an eight-week Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) physical health and wellness program.

A group of veterans and their families in the Pacific Northwest are actively taking part in the virtual hiking program, which requires participants to walk or hike three to four times per week on their own and track their progress. Through warrior-created Facebook pages, many participants – like the hikers in Boise – have opted to meet for group hikes. As veterans are getting out of the house and enjoying time with family and new friends, they are staying active and improving their overall health.

"I was interested in this program because I love hiking and being outdoors," said Army National Guard veteran Andrew Guibor. "It's a great way to stay in shape, and these gatherings give me the opportunity to meet other warriors who enjoy hiking."

Andrew said he took up hiking after his last deployment, using the outdoor adventures as a way to manage stress. In a WWP survey of the injured warriors it serves, 32 percent of veterans said physical activity helps them cope with stress and depression. Programs like this highlight the importance of managing mental health through physical activity.

"As of last month, I decided to take my hiking goals to the next level," he said. "I'll be going to a mountain guide school, and every weekend I'll go through my trail book and find a new hiking area to take on."

Then there is Army veteran Jesse Andrade, who is fairly new to hiking.

"My wife and I enjoy spending time outside doing different things," he said. "It was a lot of fun to try a new outdoor activity."

These engaging wellness activities support the long-term recovery needs of injured veterans by reintroducing them and their families to the unique bonds experienced during military service. Socialization decreases isolation, leading to a better chance for warriors to focus on their recovery.

One such opportunity to reduce isolation is the WWP Peer Support program. Peer support plays a significant role in the recovery process as injured veterans rely upon each other's learned experiences when managing day-to-day challenges. All WWP programs and services have an aspect of this support structure, while the Peer Support program is solely dedicated to ensuring every injured veteran, family member, and caregiver encourage one another in recovery, thus embodying the WWP logo of one warrior carrying another off the battlefield.

"We simply enjoy the company of our fellow warriors," Jesse said. "It's important to get involved because it reminds us all that we're not unique or alone when dealing with everyday struggles."

"It gives people a chance to talk to fellow veterans," Andrew said. "And being outdoors, you're not on guard or worrying as much about what's going on around you. So you get to relax and open up more to

people - it's good therapy."

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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