

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

Wounded Warrior Project Challenges Group to Heal at Rehabilitative Mental Health Gathering

LONG CREEK, S.C., Sept. 23, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Injured veterans seeking treatment for combat stress recently received a new healing perspective through a Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) multi-day mental health workshop. The five-day rehabilitative and therapeutic adventure allowed participants the chance to connect with nature, fellow wounded warriors, and the WWP staff members who could guide them to various free programs and services to assist in their recovery processes.

Warriors convened in Long Creek, South Carolina. There they tackled a variety of enjoyable yet challenging outdoor activities, including white-water rafting on the Chattooga River and traversing the treetops via zip line and high ropes courses. By working through different obstacles in a setting designed to accommodate physical injuries and social anxieties, injured veterans had the chance to develop new skills to improve both mental health and physical wellness. Most importantly, they were able to hone these skills alongside fellow wounded warriors who have shared similar experiences.

"It helps with the isolation issues that most – if not all – of us face or have faced before," said Army veteran Greg Robles-Velez. "It's a way to have a good, strong support group – to meet people you can count on and who can count on you. Being around people who understand creates an unspoken bond."

Exposure to combat and operational trauma affects service members and veterans spiritually, psychologically, biologically, and socially. Although challenging, WWP's mental health rehabilitative multi-day experiences provide safe, private environments for warriors to express themselves and discuss their combat deployments – with laughter and tears. At the end of the rehabilitative program the warriors share lessons learned from the activities that impacted their personal struggles most and set achievable goals for their recoveries.

"I tell everyone I meet that WWP saved my life," Greg said. "During my time in service and while transitioning from the military, I was heading down a dark road with no end in sight. Without WWP, I would probably just be existing. Now I can honestly say that I enjoy life."

The gathering was especially significant for Greg, who attended his first Project Odyssey® mental health multi-day workshop one year ago.

"One of my goals since then was to become a Peer Support Group mentor," he said. "Once I decided to do it, I sat with WWP staff members to break down my goal. I attended group meetings and made a point to get involved with other warriors."

WWP's Peer Support program is solely dedicated to ensuring every injured veteran, family member, and caregiver encourages one another in recovery, thus embodying the WWP logo of one warrior carrying another off the battlefield.

Peer support plays an important role in the healing process as injured veterans rely upon each other's learned experiences when managing day-to-day challenges. This special type of therapy reintroduces wounded warriors to the unique bonds experienced during military service. Rarely duplicated in the civilian world, these relationships act as a secure bedrock that paves the road to recovery.

Noting Greg's dedication, his group mentor and a WWP mental health services teammate for Fayetteville, North Carolina, decided he was ready and invited him to attend the rehabilitative mental health gathering in Long Creek – as a peer support group mentor.

"It was an honor and an experience I will never forget," Greg said. "Being able to assist other warriors is what it is all about."

Greg said he encourages any of his brothers and sisters in arms who might be dealing with the invisible and visible wounds of war to reach out to WWP, and he is grateful that his wife reached out to the organization on his behalf.

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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