

Warriors Find Relaxation and Support During Manatee Swim Session

CRYSTAL RIVER, Fla., April 23, 2018 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Injured veterans and their families recently swam with manatees at a Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) connection event. Gatherings like this are designed to help warriors build support structures to heal from the physical and mental wounds of war.

"There are times when being in crowded settings makes me physically sick and anxious," said Army veteran Patrick Spiro. "Being on an open boat and seeing a few people I knew helped my situation. When I got in the water, I felt a connection with the manatees. I put my hand down to pet him, and it was almost as if he knew I had been through trauma too; for him it was a boat propeller, for me it was the death of my friends."

Warriors challenged themselves physically and mentally while paddling and floating in the water. They overcame apprehensions and left the comfort of the boat to swim with guides in the murky and then crystal-clear waters where manatees come to keep warm during the Florida winter.

"Wounded Warrior Project, to me, means family," Patrick said. "I went on an event about five years ago, and it changed my life in ways that still impact me today. It was five days of the hardest activities I'd been through since returning from the Middle East. I was pushed mentally and physically, but Wounded Warrior Project staff gave me encouragement and hope. If it wasn't for that trip, I honestly feel like I would still be in my apartment with the blinds down, afraid to leave except for appointments or food."

Isolation is one of the most significant struggles wounded warriors deal with after serving their country. It can be difficult knowing how to overcome that challenge and rekindle bonds similar to those formed in the military.

WWP programs focus on connection, mental and physical health and wellness, financial wellness, independence, government relations, and community relations and partnerships. Generous donors make it possible for wounded warriors to benefit from program resources at no cost to them.

To learn more about impacting the lives of warriors and joining our team, visit <https://www.linkedin.com/company/125657>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) connects, serves, and empowers wounded warriors. Read more at <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/about-us>.

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

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