

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

Warrior Discovers Armory of Tools Through Mental Health Telephone Support Program

MARYSVILLE, Wash., Dec. 19, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Returning home from Iraq, Leslie Calderon was fighting a war within. This personal war lasted nearly a decade and found its way to the doorstep of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), where the organization's mental health telephone support program, [WWP Talk](#), helped Leslie cope with effects of her war experience.

Leslie was a high school senior when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. A few months later, she joined the U.S. Army Reserves.

"I joined out of a sense of purpose," said Leslie. "I wanted to fight for the United States as a Mexican-American woman. I wanted to represent the Latin community as a woman in the fight against terror."

In Baghdad, Leslie served as an ammunition specialist. This role, and assigned location, made her particularly sensitive to the constant sound of bombs and mortar fire.

"I woke up every morning thinking I get to live another day," said Leslie.

Complexities of war put Leslie in a constant state of high-alert, and her anxiety went into full force.

Leslie returned home hoping to silence the white noise of war, including [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) and military sexual trauma.

It was during this time Leslie hit rock bottom.

"Drinking masked the pain, and it wasn't long after that I would think I could end it all right then and there," said Leslie.

Leslie's struggle continued for nearly 10 years. She describes that period as an emotional roller coaster that wouldn't end. She was overwhelmed and reached out to WWP.

"I can't explain how this [program](#) changed my life," said Leslie. "We had some very dark and scary conversations that I don't think I could have had under any other circumstance. Talking helped me so much."

Today, Leslie continues to transition from the warrior needing help to the warrior helping.

"A year ago, I couldn't help myself," said Leslie. "Now I have a strong foundation to keep fighting, and I have the strength to carry myself, my kids, and my fellow soldiers."

Read Leslie's full story: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/warrior-discovers-armory-tools-though-mental-health-support-project>.

To help warriors like Leslie, visit <https://wwp.news/Donate>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers – helping them achieve their highest ambition. Learn

more: <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/about-us>.

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

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<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2018-12-19-Warrior-Discovers-Armory-of-Tools-Through-Mental-Health-Telephone-Support-Program>