

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

Four-Legged Love and Support Helps Warrior Conquer PTSD

AUBURN, N.Y., Feb. 14, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Army veteran Eric Haynes' life was spiraling downward when he went online to register with Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP). In the 10 years since his service in Iraq ended, he struggled with [depression, post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\), and traumatic brain injury \(TBI\)](#).

"I felt I was running out of places to turn," said Eric. "I was masking the pain of everything. I was at the end of my rope."

After attending a few [WWP connection events](#), he received a call from WWP Talk program staff offering weekly telephonic, emotional support.

"This program changed my life forever," said Eric. WWP Talk staff suggested getting a service dog and Eric loved it. He called a few agencies and learned there was a two- to three-year wait. Fate had other plans.

Arriving at a songwriting workshop in Georgia, Eric struck up a conversation with the retreat organizer. She asked if he knew any veterans looking for a service dog; she had been training a Belgian Malinois who was a retired Army bomb-sniffing service dog and felt she was ready to be paired with a veteran coping with PTSD.

She then introduces her to Eric. "I fell in love with her immediately," said Eric.

Eric learned that the dog, named Ciara, also coped with PTSD and was triggered by alarms and other loud sounds.

"When I wake up from night terrors, she is right there to let me know everything is OK," said Eric. "When she shakes in her sleep from nightmares, I am there to tell her that everything is OK and that she is not overseas anymore."

With Ciara in his life, Eric has noticed a dramatic reduction of PTSD episodes and his bouts of depression are far and few between.

"Ciara and I are living proof that unconditional love can be a blessing," said Eric.

"Wounded Warrior Project is about not leaving any warriors behind on the battlefield of life," said Eric. "They are picking them up and carrying them forward toward safety, healing, and health."

Read Eric's full story at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/four-legged-love-support-helps-warrior-conquer-ptsd-project>.

To help more warriors like Eric, 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/2019-02-14-Four-Legged-Love-and-Support-Helps-Warrior-Conquer-PTSD>