

## Wounded Warriors Forge New Connections During Blacksmithing Class

AVON, Minn., Jan. 15, 2020 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Marine Corps veteran John Chance didn't consider himself much of an artist, but the opportunity to learn blacksmithing alongside other veterans from Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) changed his perspective.

"When you take steel and heat it up to shape it, you're getting outside of your own mind; you're focusing on the piece of metal and using all your senses to focus on just that," John said. "I can't draw to save my life, but working with steel brings out the artistic side."

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Local blacksmith shop Ken's Custom Iron donated the class and prepared lunch for the group of veterans. Owners Ken and Mary Lou's daughter and son-in-law are Air Force veterans who registered as WWP warriors on the day of the class. Ken showed the veterans how to apply heat and shape metal in various ways – looping, twisting and folding it to create objects.

Army veteran Jason Galvin had tried blacksmithing before and picked up new skills. "In the second part of the class, they set us free and guided us as we created something; I made a fire poker," Jason said.

Jason, who was deployed twice to Afghanistan, drives two hours each way to attend [WWP peer support](#) groups that meet in Eagan and Maple Grove every other week. The groups give him the chance to build camaraderie with other veterans.

"There are not a lot of veterans in this area, and it's great to hang out with them," Jason said.

WWP connection events give injured veterans a chance to socialize with other veterans to build the support network they need to overcome the challenges they face. In a [WWP survey](#) of the wounded warriors it serves, more than two in five (41%) expressed they talk with fellow veterans to address their mental health concerns.

"Many of us used to destroy things with our hands while in the military; blacksmithing gives us the opportunity to build and create," said John, who saw combat in Iraq and is now a WWP peer support group leader.

[Learn more](#) about how WWP connects warriors to build strength through community.

## 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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