

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH RECOVERY

Wounded Warrior Project® Peer Support Program Helps Wounded Veterans Support Fellow Warriors

New York, NY (February 25, 2015) – When Nicky Norwood retired from the Army in 2009, he felt closed off from the outside world. In addition to suffering a back injury while deployed in Iraq, Nicky struggled from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), causing him to shut out those around him and feel sorry for himself. Through engaging with his fellow injured service members at Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Alumni events, Nicky was able to not only get back on his feet but also have an impact on his fellow veterans.

“For the warriors in rural areas, like Brandon, Miss., where we live, it is important to have someone there to lean on who understands what you have been through and what you are going through,” says Nicky. “That’s what the Peer Support program is all about.”

As the spouse of a disabled veteran with PTSD, Nicky’s wife, Sherry, also saw the value in being able to support other caregivers who are in a similar position. She too became a peer mentor, offering support to other warrior spouses who have had similar experiences. “As a mentor, it is important for me to support my mentees and encourage them about the things they can do as opposed to what they can’t do,” says Sherry. “We all have been through the same things. We can share and are able to lean on each other for support. It’s like we are all family.”

Through WWP’s Peer Support program, warriors and caregivers like the Norwoods serve as mentors, providing support and encouragement to their peers along their road to recovery. Peer mentors are further along in the recovery process and have received training specifically designed to help them support their WWP peers. The roles of a peer mentor include being a role model, motivator, supporter, and friend.

The goal of the Peer Support program is for every warrior being mentored to eventually mentor another warrior, thus embodying the WWP logo of one warrior carrying another. By becoming a peer mentor, warriors who once were the warrior being carried have the opportunity to become the warrior who carries others.

WWP has seen the success that peer mentors can have through the Peer Support program and has worked closely with members of Congress to authorize the VA to establish a peer support and community outreach pilot program. This program also authorizes the VA to conduct a student loan repayment pilot program aimed at recruiting and retaining psychiatrists to assist transitioning service members with accessing VA mental health care services.

If you or someone you know is interested in receiving peer mentoring or peer mentor training, please contact the WWP Resource Center at resourcecenter@woundedwarriorproject.org or 888.WWP.ALUM (997.2586).

About Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has a vision of fostering the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation’s history. To achieve this objective, WWP is committed to a lifetime of service and commitment through its mission: to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP currently serves more than 63,000 warriors and over 9,000 family members through its 20 unique programs and services. The purpose of WWP 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 organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit www.woundedwarriorproject.org.

