

The Sooner Streamer: Wounded Warrior Discovers Her Passion Amid Pandemic



NORMAN, Okla. (March 5, 2021) — Jody Farmer took a journey without leaving her house. You never would've guessed the ending if you saw the beginning, and that ending keeps getting better. During a period of shutdowns, sit-stills, and stay-puts, Jody took an unlikely step through a door opened by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), and her life changed because of it.

“ Go outside your comfort zone, think outside the box, and start a new hobby. It can open up things you never thought of before. ”

Connect with WWP to learn about [resources for women veterans](#).

Jody Encounters a Roadblock

“There were more painful days than there were good days, and that’s never a good thing,” said Jody. Her career in graphic design had reached a breaking point. She was sick of the corporate grind and needed a cure.

A potential remedy was right down the road from her Norman, Oklahoma home: the University of Oklahoma (OU). Ever the creative type, Jody enrolled as a fine arts major in January 2020. But just as quickly as the curtain raised for the newest Boomer Sooner, it came crashing down for her — and the rest of the world — because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The first confirmed case in Oklahoma was on March 7, 2020. Less than two weeks later, Gov. Kevin Stitt ordered a state of emergency, and by the end of the month, stay-at-home restrictions were in place.

Not the ideal situation for anyone, let alone someone as social as Jody.

“I had to find other ways to fill that void of getting out of the house, which we couldn’t do because we were all restricted to our homes,” Jody recalled.

Overcoming adversity wasn’t new for Jody. She spent six years in the Navy, five more in the Army, and had spinal surgery to repair three ruptured discs. While in the hospital recovering, a backpack full of personal items was her introduction to WWP.

Gaming Offers a New Social Outlet

More than a decade later, another outreach by WWP helped her overcome a setback. She responded to an

invitation to join WWP's Discord server, which offers chat rooms and audio channels where warriors can talk with one another as they're playing video games.

Jody wasn't a gamer, but she knew it might be able to help her connect with people during the pandemic.

"I got to see first-hand how gaming helped my husband with his post-traumatic stress disorder," Jody said. "It kind of gave him an escape."

There was no escaping the fact that the first time Jody joined a recurring Monday night gaming event with WWP, well, there was some room for improvement.

"It was craziness. I was terrible," Jody said.

But that didn't matter.

"You're all military. There's that automatic, 'You're my brother, you're my sister, we all served, this is my background.' We all just started talking and it gave me that piece I was missing," Jody said.

She became a mainstay at the Monday night event. Every week, she'd log on and [connect with fellow veterans](#), and every week she improved. In June, she was asked to co-lead the event, mirroring the transition that so many warriors make within WWP. Initially, they're the warrior on top being carried, but in time, they become the warrior on the bottom, helping others.

"They wanted to pass on the torch," Jody said.

The initial gaming spark ignited a torch that was about to shine on another opportunity.

Player Becomes a Coach

What do you remember about your freshman year of college?

It's safe to say Jody and the millions of other first-year students will never forget their first semesters in 2020. Classes and college life were anything but typical as universities had to adjust amid the pandemic.

But if you're a student, you still want to feel connected with other students. And Jody found just the group for her: OU Esports.

"I found out that my college had a club for people who play video games, and they had a streaming group where they wanted to bring in more people to teach you how to stream," Jody said.

Jody's experience livestreaming with warriors paid off: by the start of the fall semester, she was coaching a team of her fellow students.

"They quickly found out that I was more than just the captain and offered me the position of coach," Jody said. "That was not in the cards and not what I was expecting."

Mike Aguilar, a fellow Army veteran and lead advisor for OU Esports, wasn't expecting someone with Jody's experience, either. But the students on the team have benefitted because of her.

“She’s obviously older than the predominance of our undergrad student population, and she’s also seen some real things and had some real stresses as a parent, service member, and just as an adult,” Mike said. “She has a unique skill set and she is absolutely a diamond in the rough in that regard.”

OU Esports is the largest student organization on campus with more than 1,700 students participating. It continues to grow, and so does Jody’s experience in the livestreaming and gaming space.

It begs the question, though: What if she never would’ve responded to that initial invite to WWP’s Discord server?

“I don’t know where I’d be, but it wouldn’t be a good place,” Jody confessed.

And to any warrior who isn’t in a good place but is thinking about livestreaming and gaming, Jody suggested giving it a shot.

“I wanted to use gaming to help bring a little brightness to my day instead of thinking on the depression or anxiety,” Jody said. “And it doesn’t have to be that you’re good at it because believe me, I’m still not good at it. But go outside your comfort zone, think outside the box, and start a new hobby. It can open up things you never thought of before.”

Contact: Chris Obarski — Public Relations, cobarski@woundedwarriorproject.org, 904.570.0823

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.](#)

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/The-Sooner-Streamer-Wounded-Warrior-Discovers-Her-Passion-Amid-Pandemic>