

Wounded Warrior Honored for Volunteer Efforts

RENO, Nev. (April 20, 2022) – Air Force veteran Diana Bourgeois didn't let 12 brain surgeries stop her from stepping up to help fellow wounded warriors. Just a month after her last surgery, she was volunteering with Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP).

Diana also asked to host events for warriors in her area to help increase connection in the veteran population.

Her willingness to answer the call to help led to a different kind of call recently. Diana is a huge fan of the New Orleans Saints, and the NFL has been a [longtime supporter of WWP](#) and the warriors it serves. So, when Saints star wide receiver Marquez Callaway surprised her on a Zoom teleconference, she was speechless.

"Based on your leadership, your dedication, and your impact within your community and within the fellow

Wounded Warrior Project Alumni, you have been selected as the Rusty Baggett Peer Leader of the Year Award recipient," Marquez told Diana on the call.

WWP launched the [Rusty Baggett Peer Leader award](#) last year to help honor the men and women who volunteer their time with WWP to reach more veterans in their communities. Diana was selected from more than a dozen nominees around the nation.



Veteran Diana Bourgeois was the winner of the Rusty Baggett Peer Leader award for her volunteer efforts.

She had a simple, but telling, response when Marquez asked her what volunteering with WWP meant to her.

“Going to all of these events, getting out of that dark place, and realizing there are other like-minded people like me,” Diana said. “I just want to share that with veterans everywhere to try to get at least one person out of their black hole or dark place and get them into the light and be able to just be happy.”

WWP named its national volunteer award after Army veteran and former WWP staff member, Rusty Baggett. Rusty was one of the first WWP Peer Support Group leaders before getting hired within the organization. He passed away in 2020.

WWP staff nominated Peer Leader volunteers from across the country, and five regional winners were selected with one chosen as the national award winner. The winners were:

- East: Paula Edwards
- Mid-Atlantic: Greg Robles
- North-Central: Raymond Pizarro
- South-Central: Kennery Foster
- Pacific: Diana Bourgeois*

* National Award recipient

There are more than 100 [peer support groups](#) around the nation. Group leaders plan monthly gatherings, either in-person or virtually, which bring veterans together and help provide support.

Warrior Leaders host local events for warriors to promote engagement. For warriors attending, this could be their first interaction with WWP.

Contact: Rob Louis — Public Relations, rlouis@woundedwarriorproject.org, 904.627.0432

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.](#)

Additional assets available online: [Video \(1\)](#)

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/Wounded-Warrior-Honored-for-Volunteer-Efforts>