

Wounded Warrior

FAMILY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



2017 Second Quarter Edition



Happy Spring to everyone from Navy Wounded Warrior-Safe Harbor! As the weather warms up, second quarter helps identify the impact our families and caregivers have in our community. **April** is *Month of the Military Child* and now is the time to register for summer camps. Check out some resources in this issue along with an article recapping a panel discussion of children of wounded warriors. **May** is full of special days including *Military Spouse Appreciation Day* (May 12), *Mother's Day* (May 14) and *Memorial Day* (May 29). During Military Spouse Appreciation Day, take the time to acknowledge the significant contributions, support and sacrifices of our armed forces spouses. Thank you to all these silent heroes who serve our country just like their loved ones. Remember to look for special events and programs in your area honoring and recognizing military spouses. After celebrating mom in May, don't forget to honor dad in **June** during *Father's Day* (June 18)!

RECOVERY'S IMPACT ON MILITARY CHILDREN



In March, children of Wounded Warriors were asked to share how their lives were impacted after their parent suffered a life changing wound, injury or illness at the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCM) Warrior Care Coalition. Five children

of three different wounded warriors sat together on a panel describing their experiences and their journeys to recovery.

Some of these kids believed that their dad was "bullet proof," so when they learned that he was in the hospital, they expected him to be fine. When they witnessed the severity of his condition, they were still thankful that their hospital visit was to someone who was still alive. Those who were only in grade school at the time of the injury or illness remembered how they were shielded from their father's true condition but managed to pick up bits of information from overhearing adult conversations.

Once their fathers came home, the kids discussed the range of emotions experienced during the "limbo" period as they tried to determine the best way to move on. All described periods of tension and frustration which lead to arguments, a household environment of "constant caution," "changes in daily routines and even changes in diet. Some kids said their dad was not the same person after the injury.

Others said dad was the same guy, he just didn't have the same physical abilities and stamina he once had. Often these kids felt guilty because they thought they should be doing something more to help the family and improve the situation. Most of the "children" on the panel were young when their fathers became wounded, ill or injured, but are now young adults. When asked what they could have done differently during those years of recovery, they reflected on the

RESOURCES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Looking for 4-H Clubs or camping opportunities available to military children, youth and families?

Visit: 4-hmilitarypartnerships.org for more information.

Information on free camps for military children and additional camp resources can be found at www.militaryfamily.org as well as family retreats and healing adventures.

Log on the www.militaryonesource.mil for valuable tips and ideas on how to keep your child healthy and engaged over the summer.

The Coast Guard Support website dedicated to Coast Guard services provides a link to the American Camp Association's site to help you find the right camp for your child: <http://find.acacamps.org/>

Several parenting resources are available at www.zerotothree.org including downloadable versions of "Supporting Young Children Affected by a Veteran Parent's Injury" and "Transitions: Returning to Civilian Life". Download your free copy today!

MONTH
OF THE
MILITARY
CHILD

IMPACT OF MILITARY CHILDREN (*CONTINUED*)

following: give dad more space; argue less; don't take things for granted; be more sensitive; and find ways/activities to do things together to still feel normal.

Great advice and life lessons from the experts that we can all live by!

FROM ONE CAREGIVER TO ANOTHER

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY RESOURCE

BY: COLLEEN PERRY

Our Navy Wounded Warrior journey began in early January 2016 when my husband was experiencing severe headaches. After several urgent care trips, a computerized tomography (CT) scan revealed a large mass on his brain. He was quickly admitted to a hospital with a neurosurgeon who could operate on the mass immediately. Within 2-3 days we were contacted by representatives from Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW). At the time I was so overwhelmed with all of the new medical information that I couldn't really comprehend all that the NWW staff explained, but I understood that it would be beneficial to let them help me fill out an application to see if my husband could qualify for the program. I wish I could go back to that day and thank the NWW staff for their patience, kindness, and respect as I was trying to take the appropriate steps to get my husband help for the future while my mind was completely focused on how he was recovering in the moment. Since he had never experienced any significant medical issues prior to the brain tumor, we really had no idea what the Navy could do to help. We honestly didn't even know what kind of help we might need. A huge weight was lifted simply by having the NWW staff to help us gather information and documents to make the experience go more smoothly. We were not even aware how to obtain a medical power of attorney or a will, but thankfully the non-medical care team through NWW offered guidance and resources even while my husband was still in the neuro-ICU. My biggest piece of advice for someone going through a similar situation is to take advantage of the resources that are available and always ask if you're unsure about something. There have been many questions that have come up as we have made our way through this journey and I've been so thankful to have an advocate to help me figure out how to best support my husband in his recovery.



NAVY WOUNDED WARRIOR HONORED AT PENTAGON HEALING ARTS EXHIBIT

BY SUE HIEB



Photo by HM3 Jared Lenahan

Congratulations to HM3 Jared Lenahan on being selected to represent the Navy at the Healing Arts "Patriotic" Rotating Art Exhibit at the Pentagon which kicks off on April 12, 2017.

"Find your passion, find a hobby, stay busy, and keep your mind occupied," is good advice from HM3 (IW) Jared Lenahan, recovering service member and Navy Wounded Warrior-Safe Harbor enrollee. In addition to his Corpsman duties with the Marines, HM3 volunteered to go to Afghanistan as part of a Joint Task Force which opened up other opportunities for him. While in the theater he filled many rolls: Corpsman, combat photographer, Public Affairs Officer, news writer, and manager of social media accounts.

Jared took an interest in photography as a young teenager and developed his skill without any formal training. It is strictly a hobby and he doesn't anticipate making it a future career, but one that has kept him busy over the years, amassing a file with tens of thousands of photos. His library includes photos of landscape, portraits, live music DJs, military themes, service dogs and even photos from the NWW-SH Family Symposium held last November at USO Bethesda. He has further used his time to share his knowledge of photography and teach others.

NAVY WOUNDED WARRIOR HONORED AT PENTAGON HEALING ARTS EXHIBIT (CONTINUED)

Another hobby and passion of Jared's is rock climbing. While stationed in Sicily, he was rock climbing with friends and a piece of climbing equipment broke causing him to suffer a 40 foot drop. Throughout his long recovery and rehabilitation process, HM3 has focused on his hobbies to keep busy. During the day when he is not at medical appointments, he works out at the gym exercising the muscles and movements required for rock climbing; during restless nights, he gets into his photo library and edits and catalogs his photos.

Adding to his many interests, he recently completed an internship/work therapy position training service dogs with Warrior Canine Connection. This was a rewarding experience that he would like to continue doing in the future.

HM3 was recently contacted by Office of Warrior Care Policy to submit three photos for the Healing Arts "Patriotic" Rotating Art Exhibit at the Pentagon, unveiling event on April 12, 2017. Two of the photos he submitted he took in Afghanistan, and the third photo (pictured on previous page) he took at Mt. Aetna utilizing a technique called "light painting." To create this photo, Jared set his camera on a tripod in a dark cave and photographed himself over a 10 second period shining a light. The camera captures the light during those 10 seconds with the pictured result.

Congratulations to HM3 for this recognition and exposure of his creative photography!

NAVY WOUNDED WARRIOR HOSTS FAMILY SYMPOSIUM IN THE NORTHWEST

BY: KYLE MALLOY

Navy Wounded Warrior - Safe Harbor hosted the Navy Region Northwest Family Symposium on Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor Jan. 26. The event marked the first Navy Wounded Warrior symposium held in 2017 and was attended by wounded warriors, family members, caretakers and naval senior leadership stationed in the Pacific Northwest. Commander, Navy Region Northwest Rear Adm. Gary Mayes was the keynote speaker for the event and spoke about how important these symposiums are to the mission of Navy Wounded Warrior - Safe Harbor. "Family members and caregivers make significant sacrifices to support their wounded warriors," said Mayes. "This symposium is a pledge to continue to provide resources and assistance specifically tailored for caregivers and those who need it most."

He spoke about the value Navy Wounded

Warrior offers to its service members in the Navy and Coast Guard and encouraged committed participation from those who attended the symposium.

"To all, keep pushing, keep helping make (Navy Wounded Warrior) better," he said. "To the warriors, stay strong."

A panel of seven wounded warriors and caregivers addressed the crowd to share their stories while highlighting valuable services Navy Wounded Warrior offers.

"One of the best things for me was being able to participate in the adaptive sports camp," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) 1st Class (AW) Cameron Fisher. "Learning each of the sports and building camaraderie with my teammates was a great experience."

Many of the panelists said they received strong support through the assistance and guidance of their non-medical care managers, especially during the really challenging times on their journey.

"Sometimes we would have no idea who to ask the questions we had," said Colleen Perry, caretaker for her husband, Missile Technician 2nd Class (SS) Clay Perry. "It's been a huge help to have that person who will know."

"Navy Wounded Warrior has been a good organization because of the non-medical care managers," said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (FMF) Joseph Paterniti. "The good ones collaborate with both the Sailor and their family to find which course of action is going to be the best for everyone."

The family symposium served as an inviting platform for wounded warriors, their families and caretakers to engage in an honest conversation about their personal stories and how Navy Wounded Warrior has assisted them on their road to recovery.



NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST HOSTS WOUNDED WARRIOR FAMILY SYMPOSIUM

BY: KYLE MALLOY

Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW) – Safe Harbor hosted the 2017 Navy Region Southeast Family Symposium on Naval Air Station Jacksonville March 23.

Commander, Navy Region Southeast Rear Adm. Bette Bolivar gave opening remarks for the symposium, speaking about the region's commitment to NWW and recognizing the importance of the symposium.

"For many, providing care to a wounded, ill or injured service member is a full-time job and one that takes a heavy toll both physically and emotionally," said Bolivar. "Wounded warrior caregivers need a forum like this to help share their successes and frustrations while connecting with people who have provided similar assistance in the past."

She expressed gratitude for the panel members who volunteered to share their personal journeys and discuss their experiences with the symposium attendees.

"Each service member here today has a unique and valuable perspective," said Bolivar. "By sharing their personal stories, experiences and insights, our panelists can help ensure Navy Wounded Warrior provides the highest quality support to the caregivers of our current and future wounded warriors."

A panel of five wounded warriors and caregivers addressed the crowd and discussed the valuable services NWW has provided them during their recovery process.

"There were a lot of burdens taken off of us," said Alison Stephens, caregiver to her husband, Senior Chief Aviation Administrationman Jon Stephens. "It was just so unexpected, and it was really nice to not have to worry about certain things so we could focus on recovery."

"To have that teammate who helps create a plan and calls to check up on you takes a lot of pressure away," said Chief Machinist's Mate Scott Smith. "It's one of the best Navy programs and I'd love to shake the hands of those who founded it."

Barbara Baker, caregiver to her son, Seaman Adrian Kelly, drew a parallel from the emphasis of the Navy ethos on dedication and accountability when discussing her experience with the NWW program.

"The unwavering dedication, accountability, compassion and love by means of medical care, emotional support and financial assistance showed to Adrian and myself during this time validates the Navy Wounded Warrior family and community are not just about the self," said Baker. "I'm very grateful for all the support and all the assistance Navy Wounded Warrior has provided us."

The panel discussed a variety of topics – from how to approach medical advice – to dealing with financial stresses. Each member spoke about how their journey has affected them and the lessons they have learned from it.

"I continue to learn more every day," said Smith. "Trust your caregivers, trust Navy Wounded Warrior and don't be afraid to ask questions. Keep asking questions and don't sit back and wait."

"When you have a foundation of people that are there for you, let them help you," said Baker. "Whatever form of support that you're offered, accept it."

The family symposium served as an inviting platform for all participants to engage in honest dialogue regarding their experiences, share best practices and discuss how Navy Wounded Warrior has assisted them on their road to recovery. It was attended by wounded warriors, family members, caretakers, and senior leadership from both the Navy and Coast Guard.

"Thank you to the panel for your courage and bravery today. Your stories are so powerful and meaningful," said Navy Wounded Warrior Director Merissa Larson. "They help us know what is working while highlighting necessary changes in the service deliveries of the organization, helping us to continue to evolve and be a staple in the recovery process."



NWW-SH is grateful to the caregivers who have shared their stories and advice with our community. We thank all of the caregivers who give so much of themselves every day to care for the wounded, ill and injured service members. REMEMBER TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

Log on to <http://samueliinstituteblog.org/military-caregivers/> to download a guidebook written specifically to support military caregivers called The Caregivers Companion to help you with this journey.