

Wounded Warrior

FAMILY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Summer Edition



Navy Wounded Warrior Safe-Harbor (NWW-SH) sends summer greetings! **July** began with thirty-nine Navy and Coast Guard wounded warrior athletes competing in Chicago at the DoD Warrior Games. Over 80 family members traveled to Chicago to watch, cheer and support Team Navy. **August** is a busy month preparing for back to school. Remember to schedule physicals and immunizations for the entire family. **September** is Suicide Prevention Month. Log on to www.suicide.navy.mil to keep current on Navy Suicide Prevention Support and Services. Life is worth living!

CAREGIVERS RECEIVES PILLARS OF STRENGTH SCHOLARSHIP FROM UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

BY: HILDA BUEH-MENSH (WOUNDED WARRIOR CAREGIVER)

I used to work with the Social Security Administration prior to my husband's diagnosis. I used to be a full time career woman.

My life changed on May 25, 2016 when I received a phone call informing me my husband suffered a stroke at the tender age of 31. Per his report, he made multiple visits to the Naval Clinic in Astugi due to severe headaches that lasted for 5 long days. He was then medically evacuated to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for treatment on June 1, 2016.

Since being at Walter Reed my husband has suffered multiple strokes and a spontaneous left circumflex coronary artery dissection on July 7, 2016 and July 18, 2016. As a caregiver, I struggle with not having the ability to protect him from having more strokes as they cannot tell what caused his illness. I currently live in a state of constant fear and anxiety, daily monitoring every ache and headache thinking it is another stroke. Since his stroke, my husband displays cognitive communication deficits, neurological visual neglect syndrome, cognitive impairments, and difficulty with instrumental activities of daily living. With all of his deficits it becomes overwhelming to be a strong support system but my faith

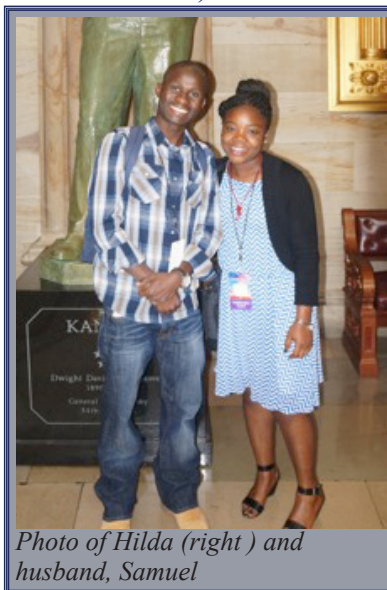


Photo of Hilda (right) and husband, Samuel

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

Meet the new teacher.

For kids, one of the biggest back-to-school fears is "Will I like my new teacher?" Breaking the ice early on is one of the best ways to calm everyone's fears. Take advantage of your school's open house or back-to-school night. Some teachers welcome phone calls or e-mails — another great opportunity to get to know each other before the year begins.

If personal contact with the teacher isn't possible, try locating the teacher's picture on a school website or in a yearbook, so your child can put a name with a face. If your child's teacher sends a welcome letter, be sure to read the letter together.

Tour the school.

If your school hosts an open house, be sure to go. Familiarizing your child with her environment will help her avoid a nervous stomach on the first day. Together you can meet her teacher, find her desk, or explore the playground.

With an older child, you might ask him to give you a tour of the school. This will help refresh his memory and yours.

Connect with friends.

A familiar friend can make all the difference when heading back to school. You might try calling parents from last year's class and finding out which children are in your child's class this year. Refresh these relationships before school starts by scheduling a play date or a school carpool.

Tool up.

Obtain the class supply list and take a special shopping trip with your child. Having the right tools will help him feel prepared. While keeping basic needs in mind, allow for a couple of splurges like a cool notebook or a favorite-colored pen. These simple pleasures make going back to school a lot more fun.

has brought us to a place of being thankful. Managing my husband's daily appointment and medication schedule is stressful but has taught me to be more of a flexible person. I am dedicated to being his caregiver and given up my personal desires to support my husband on this road to recovery.

Ms. Matilda Hall the Army Ombudsman introduced me to the care giver meetings organized by Ms. Linda Rasnake. During one of the care givers monthly meetings, Ms. Aaliyah El-Amin, the site coordinator for UMUC presented a list of scholarships available to the care-givers, the Pillar of Strength was one of them and after discussion with my husband and his encouragement and motivation, I took the bold step to apply and thanks be to the Almighty God, I was selected to be one of the five winners.

The application process was very simple and straight forward, five essays generally about your Service member, the challenges you face as a caregiver and how the scholarship will benefit you.

My goal is to obtain a Master's Degree in Management Information Systems. After the degree and by the grace of God if my husband's condition remains, stable I will find a job to support the family in the near future.

To my fellow caregivers who are stuck in the care giving role, I would like to tell you, you can sail through the storms and still accomplish your personal goals. Just give it a try and with determination and Christ in your boat you will smile at the storm. I want to use this opportunity to thank God Almighty, to my husband for his sacrifices for our freedom, UMUC, Yellow Ribbon Fund, and Blewitt Foundation for this marvelous opportunity. It is a dream come true.

WOUNDED WARRIORS DISCUSS RECOVERY AT MID-ATLANTIC FAMILY SYMPOSIUM

BY KYLE MALLOY

NWW-SF hosted the 2017 Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Family Symposium June 2, at the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach- Oceanside.

Cmdr. Kerry Ann Hudson, obstetrics and gynecology doctor at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, served as the keynote speaker and discussed her experiences working with NWW not only as a naval doctor, but as a family member as well. Hudson spoke about how using NWW resources helped her provide non-medical care for her active-duty sister who suffered extensive injuries while on deployment.

"It wasn't until that time that I truly realized the breadth and depth Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor offers service members and family members," said Hudson.

Hudson went on to talk about how her experience with NWW during her sister's injury allows her to serve her patients better and educate them about NWW.

"It is with great honor and privilege to stand here today to advocate for Navy Wounded Warrior and tell you how grateful I am for every single person who works in their offices," said Hudson.

A panel of five wounded warriors and caregivers addressed the crowd to discuss their recovery journey, the challenges they face and how NWW has assisted them through their journey.

"The biggest success I've had while in Navy Wounded Warrior is that I am still here with you," said Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Ron Condrey. "Now I have the ability to give back and help others. We are a family at Navy Wounded Warrior."

"Navy Wounded Warrior helped us get extended child care hours through an organization so that I could be with my husband while he was in the hospital," said Kristen Maple, caregiver to her husband. "That was such a blessing for us."

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

"Whatever issues I need help with, Navy Wounded Warrior has provided opportunities and resources so I can resolve them," said Condrey. "I am just so grateful."

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.

Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor is the Navy's sole organization for coordinating the non-medical care of seriously wounded, ill and injured Sailors and Coast Guardsmen, and providing resources and support to their families. Through proactive leadership, the program provides individually-tailored assistance designed to optimize the success of the wounded warriors' recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration activities



A CAREGIVER'S QUIET RESILIENCE

BY PAIGE LAPLANT, OFFICE OF WARRIOR CARE POLICY

"I didn't know how resilient I was until I had to be," said Jennifer (Jen) Troha, wife and military caregiver to U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Robert (Rob) Troha. "It's amazing what you can do when you're put in a situation where you just have to do what you have to do."

As a wife, mother, and caregiver, Jen has her hands full. Never did she imagine she would be caring for a family of eight, including four children and two dogs, while traveling regularly to Paralympic-level adaptive sports training camps and clinics with an ill Service member. And yet, she said, "Here I am. I didn't realize I had it in me, that's for sure."

PO1 Troha was diagnosed with a neurological condition in December 2015 after 13 years of Service. The Department of Defense (DoD) Military Adaptive Sports Program helped him regain a sense of identity.

"Adaptive sports has given him purpose," said Jen. "His career has been taken and he was raised with the old-fashioned belief that he's the husband and the father and that he's supposed to be the provider," she said. "With all of that taken away, it's nice for him to have something new to engage with and to focus on; something to keep him thriving."

PO1 Troha competed in the February 2017 U.S. Navy Trials in Port Hueneme, California, to earn a spot at the annual DoD Warrior Games, and given PO1 Troha's condition, he will always require a caregiver by his side. Jen has found companionship and support among fellow caregivers on the road.

"We are a very tight-knit group. We face a lot of the same challenges," she said. "It's not as simple as caring for our spouses; there are a whole lot of things that go into being a caregiver. The effect it has on your marriage and your family life play a big part. It's nice to have other people that understand that struggle." Many caregivers also face challenges balancing their caregiver responsibilities while also prioritizing self-care – a necessary and conscious effort.

"It's very easy to get lost in everything that's going on. And if you're not careful, the balance is lost with it," said Jen. "It's something we actively have to strive for but as long as we don't forget to carve that time out, then that balance is there."

She advises other caregivers to take help when it's offered.

"It's really important to address your own needs because if you're not taken

care of then you can't take care of [your Service member]... if you're not supported, then you can't support [your Service member]. So, if people offer to help, take them up on it," said Jen.

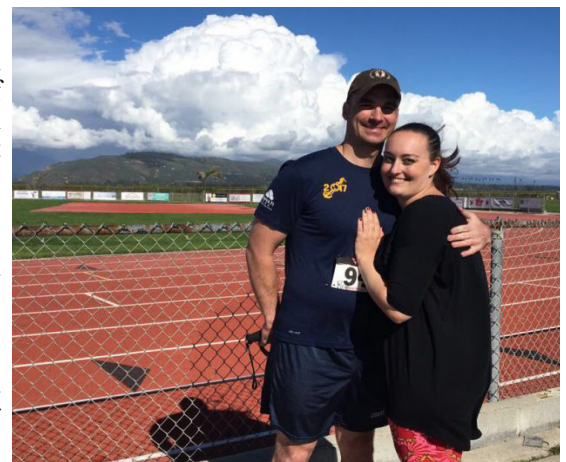
As her children, aged six, four, two, and six months, grow up witness to their parents' experience, Jen hopes they heed one major takeaway: if you fall down, you get back up.

"It's not like when my husband joined the military, he anticipated that he was going to have any of the struggles he's had," she said, "and when you're faced with a devastating diagnosis or severe psychological problems, you have two choices: you can let it hold you back, you can let it define you, or you can define yourself, get back up, and keep pushing through."

And that's what resilience is all about, isn't it?



The Trohas, Rob (left) and Jen (right) holding their daughter Maggie walk during a Navy Wounded Warrior adaptive sports camp



NAVY & MARINE CORPS FISHER HOUSE TEAM SUPPORTS THE 2017 DOD WARRIOR GAMES

CONTRIBUTED BY CNIC FISHER HOUSE STAFF

Commander, Navy Installations Command's (CNIC), Navy & Marine Corps Fisher House staff proudly joined the Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games Family Program volunteers to assist family members of all athletes June 29 – July 9.

The CNIC Navy and Marine Corps Fisher Houses provide a "Home Away from Home" in times of a medical crisis for our Nation's Heroes' and their families. The focus of our staff is taking care of you while you take care of your loved one. This is accomplished by providing a caring and creating comfortable and peaceful accommodations for those we serve.

"This was the first time a Fisher House Program had the opportunity to assist with the DoD Warrior Games and it was an amazing experience for everyone," said Pam Smith, CNIC Navy & Marine Corps Fisher House Program Manager." Staff included the CNIC Program Manager, Fisher House General Managers, Assistant Managers, Front Desk Supervisor and the Housekeeping Supervisor.

The Fisher House Program and Wounded Warriors currently partner by sharing program information and services that will benefit service members and their families.



Navy & Marine Corps Fisher House Program Assistant Manager Jessica Reddish poses with a wounded warrior family members at the 2017 Warrior Games



Navy Wounded Warrior Family Services Coordinator Dario Santana gives the 'thumbs up' with a wounded warrior family member at the 2017 Warrior Games

Through the existing partnership with Navy Wounded Warrior and Fisher House Foundation, the CNIC Navy and Marine Corps Fisher House team worked side by side in support of the athlete's families. All were partnered with a service point of contact. Their mission was to assist the athlete's family members beginning with their arrival in Chicago, starting with hotel and game registration to transportation to the venues to see their athlete compete. The entire Family Program teams were the helping hands for individual or family member needs at any time during the Games. A true partnership bond developed among everyone as part of the family program team.

Some of the Fisher House managers had the opportunity to see family members and athletes who had previously stayed at their house and it was a wonderful reunion! Managers and their staff understand what it means to host families and wounded warriors in their homes. This experience added a new level of understanding seeing "our families" come full circle - what recovery, family and a caring home truly means.

TO LEARN MORE,

VISIT CNIC FISHER HOUSE PROGRAM HOUSE WEBSITES:

Bethesda - www.wrnmcc.capmed.mil/PatientVisitors/SitePages/Fisher_House.aspx

Camp Lejeune - www.lejeunefisherhouse.org

Camp Pendleton - <http://cpen.med.navy.mil>

Portsmouth - www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcp/pages/fisherhouse.aspx

San Diego - www.sandiegofisherhouse.org