

Wounded Warrior

FAMILY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



2017 Fall Edition



Happy Birthday Navy! On **October 13, 2017** the US Navy celebrated 242 years from its establishment in 1775. **November** is Warrior Care Month, dedicated to honoring the courage, resilience and accomplishments of wounded, ill and injured service members and their families and caregivers. Look for events in your area and discounts throughout the month. **Naval District Washington** will host a Family Symposium on November 15th at USO Bethesda to give our Wounded Warriors and their families an opportunity to share firsthand their stories of recovery and resiliency. For more information please contact Mr. Clarence Thomas at clarence.thomas1.naf@mail.mil. **December** is filled with holiday activities and busy schedules. Look below for tips from **Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO)** to manage your health during this holiday season. It is also time to apply for scholarships for spouses and children who are interested in continuing their education. Check out the websites provided for more information.



CREDO's HELPFUL HOLIDAY MANAGEMENT TIPS

For many, the approaching holidays are a time of family, celebration and reliving great memories. However, for a number of others it can become a time of stress, depression, or loneliness. For this group, the holiday season can seem overwhelming. Here are a few tips to try and stay healthy over the holidays...

1. Seek Community. If you feel lonely or isolated find community, whether it is through your church, other social events or maybe just a group of friends. Volunteering your time to help others can often lift your spirits as well.

2. Recognize your own feelings. If you have recently lost someone close to you or you can't be with loved ones this year, it's normal to feel sadness. Give yourself permission to cry and/or talk to others about your feelings.

3. Budget, Budget, Budget! Before breaking the bank, decide how much you can afford to spend on gifts and food. Then make sure that you stick to your budget.

4. Plan. Even if you normally fly by the seat of your pants, take some time to plan what days you will be doing what and when and where you will be traveling. Decide what the greatest priorities are and stick with them. Let extended family know your plans. This will help prevent the last minute stressors.

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MILITARY SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



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Military.com

[HTTP://OFFERS.MILITARY.COM/V/SCHOLARSHIPS/](http://OFFERS.MILITARY.COM/V/SCHOLARSHIPS/)

CREDO'S HOLIDAY TIPS (CONTINUED)

5. Retain a healthy lifestyle. Keep up a healthy physical and eating regiment throughout the holiday season. Be careful not to commit to overindulgence allowing the holidays to become a free for all.

6. Take 5. It may do you good to step back from all the hustle and bustle at times to just simply breathe and refresh yourself. Take a walk, get a massage, or whatever tends to get you relaxed.

7. Don't be afraid to seek professional help. If your thoughts and emotions are filled hopelessness and/or a persistent feeling of sadness or anxiousness, understand that it's okay to call others for help.

8. Evaluate. As a family, decide what events – both family and social –you enjoy attending and which ones you dread attending. This year may be the time you cut back on some of the dreadful activities simply because you feel the need to meet other's expectations. Yes, this will upset some, but by you taking back your holidays your joy and sanity just may return.

9. Give them a break. As stated in #8, don't put pressure on others to meet your expectations of them. By doing so, you may be placing unnecessary stress on them.

10. Serve. As mentioned earlier, take time to serve others. For parents this is a great opportunity to train your kids on the heart of giving over receiving. It is not an overnight fix for your children, but it serves as a great catalyst to have them look at life through a different lens. Years after the fact, serving others will be the things that your children remember... or at least that's the case for mine.

11. Faith. If you adhere to a faith group, surround yourself with their love and support. Your personal faith can have to ability to revolutionize your heart and mind.

Remember, it's amazing how far a loving embrace or a kind word from a friend or family member can carry someone. During this holiday season be a light to others, you may find that it helps you more than it helps others.

FROM ONE CAREGIVER TO ANOTHER

FINDING BALANCE

BY KEELY RICKS

On July 7, 2017, The Free Lance-Star interviewed LCDR Sean Ricks while competing at the 2017 Department of Defense Warrior Games in Chicago. During his interview, Ricks spoke about the power of adaptive sports and how the support of his family has helped while on his road to recovery. The following excerpts are from an interview:

Ricks, who has five children aged 16 through 24 and owns Stafford's Ricks Roasters Coffee Company with his wife Keely, also wants people to understand that behind every athlete at Warrior Games is a family who also worked hard to accept their loved one's new reality.

"There's been a lot of emphasis [at Warrior Games] on the caregivers and how hard a job it is for them," he said. "I can't say enough about that. I don't know what it would have been without Keely at my side. We want to make sure that people understand it's not just the athletes working hard, it's also the family that takes care of us."



The Ricks, Sean (left) and Keely (right) at Navy Pier in Chicago, Il.

The full story, "Stafford Navy officer competing in DoD Warrior Games" by Adele Uphaus-Conner, can be viewed at: http://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/stafford/stafford-navy-officer-competing-in-dod-warrior-games/article_3770991e-b6fe-5eb6-a517-65bbc643caf8.html

NWW-SH appreciates the recognition and credit LCDR Ricks gives his wife and caregiver, Keely. We reached out to her

FINDING BALANCE (CONTINUED)

to learn how her life has changed since her husband's diagnosis, how adaptive sports has contributed to his recovery and rehabilitation, and what attending the Chicago Warrior Games meant to her:

The biggest challenge about being a caregiver and a mother is a common one for most women: balance! I am a mother, wife, caregiver and case manager for my husband, full time School Liaison Officer for United States Marine Corps and business co-owner. I have many demands on my time and attention; and usually fall into the trap of answering the one that is in front of me or that screams the loudest. One crucial skill that has kept this manageable is communication. Sean encourages me to take care of myself and set time aside just for me. We have to talk about appointments, medications, therapies in addition to business, parenting and home topics. I try to be clear on what I'm wearing during each discussion. For example, I may have to be directive as a caregiver, but want Sean to know I'm serving in that role, not just telling him what to do.

Adaptive Sports has made a tremendous difference in Sean's rehabilitation. It has motivated him to exercise more and participate fully with physical therapy. In my opinion the greatest benefit has been for his mental health. It has helped him view himself as an athlete again. He believes he can accomplish his goals and feels better about himself.

I was honored to be able to attend the Warrior Games in Chicago! It was so inspiring to see all the athletes compete. I was impressed with everything from the Opening Ceremonies to the Closing Ceremonies and everything in between. It gave me hope to see Sean at the games. He made new friends, worked very hard in his events and was truly himself that week. It was a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget!

DAUGHTER DASHES OFF WITH DADDY'S MEDALS AT 2017 INVICTUS GAMES

BY SHANNON COLLINS, DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY NEWS



The Dewalts (from left to right) Erica, Vail, Vada and Nathan take a family photo during 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto.

The crowd cheered at York-Lions Stadium here as 3-year-old Vada ran out to hug her dad, medically retired Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Nate DeWalt, and ran back to her mom, Erica, with her new "necklace," an Invictus Games' gold medal.

DeWalt, who is also the proud father of Vail, 1, said having his family here to watch him compete at his first Invictus Games means everything to him.

"It's been absolutely incredible to share this experience with my family," he said with a broad smile, his voice full of emotion. "I think in the back of my head at the start line, I'm doing this for my children. I told my wife, Erica, I would've just been happy leaving here with the experience. The medals were a bonus. To be able to put a medal around my daughter's neck was just the most incredible feeling I think I've ever had."

DeWalt said families are critical to the recovery process.

"I'm very thankful for the Fisher House Foundation, Team Navy and for Team U.S. bringing our families here," he said. "Families are a very critical part in our recovery and that support system. To be able to share that experience with them is hands down the best experience I could ever have."

Erica DeWalt, while wrangling her feisty blonde daughters, said she's very proud of her husband. "He's been getting better and better as the years go on, and we've been making a lot of friends," she said.

Erica said she enjoys bringing her daughters to events like the Invictus Games, because they aren't afraid to be around people with disabilities.

"[Vada]'s not afraid to ask questions. She'll say, 'Where's his legs?' and I'll tell her. She'll see burn victims, and she's not afraid. She asks questions, so I think it's great for her to see all kinds of disabilities."

DeWalt earned gold medals in the men's 100-meter, 200-meter and 1,500-meter races in his disability category. He earned a bronze medal in the 400-meter race.

More than 550 wounded, ill and injured service members from 17 nations are competing in 12 sporting events, including archery, track and field, cycling, golf, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair basketball from Sept. 23-30 as they are cheered on by thousands of family members, friends and spectators in the Distillery District here.

Injury

DeWalt was injured in a motorcycle accident in 2008, when a vehicle ran a stop sign and hit him. As he gained consciousness at the site of the accident, he said he didn't need doctors to tell him what was wrong. He knew he was paralyzed from the chest down. As soon as he came out of a medically induced coma, he began his rehabilitation.

"I knew I was going to do whatever it took in order to get out of that bed, whether it was walking again or in a wheelchair,"

DADDY'S MEDALS (CONTINUED)

said DeWalt, who competed on the 2012 U.S. Para Triathlon Team at the Auckland, New Zealand, world championships. He has also competed at Department of Defense Warrior Games and earned medals in track and field and wheelchair basketball.

DeWalt said he didn't have a lot of expectations going from the DoD Warrior Games and competing internationally in the Invictus Games.

"I didn't know what to expect here," he said. "I didn't know what the caliber of athletes would be. I didn't really have a clue as to the dynamic of this entire event so to be here amongst some of the greatest athletes in the world, it's just absolutely amazing.

He added, "I feel honored and privileged to be around so many of my brothers and sisters in arms and to share this experience with them. The medals are just a bonus. It's already been an experience, and we still have a week to go. I'm excited for what's in store, what's coming and it's a blessing. It really is."

DeWalt said the camaraderie among the competitors from the different nations as well as amongst Team U.S. from the different service branches has been top notch.

"The camaraderie has been, hands down, probably the strongest I've ever seen; 17 countries coming together, [sometimes] equipment breaks and somebody's there for you," he said. "I was just on the start line a few minutes ago and one of our U.S. athletes was having an issue with his equipment. I went over and fixed his bike for him quickly so he could compete in the race and still have that competitive advantage. It's a team effort here. When we line up on that starting line, we're competitors but as soon as you cross that finish line, we're back to that brotherhood and making sure that everyone is together and no one's left behind."

DeWalt said Invictus is the epitome of brotherhood.

"There's a language barrier with people from some of these countries, but it doesn't matter because we get through, day after day, and we're carrying each other through this week together from start to finish," he said. "From opening ceremonies to closing ceremonies, the camaraderie, the brotherhood, these guys are role models. Their ability to come out here and push through their injuries and inspire and conquer the challenges that maybe they wouldn't have done otherwise is absolutely incredible."

DeWalt said he's awed by his experiences at the Invictus Games.

"It's something I'll never forget," he said passionately. "The Invictus Games has changed me as a person. I feel humbled to be here."

CNIC SUPPORTS NAVY WOUNDED WARRIORS, TEAM US AT 2017 INVICTUS GAMES

BY KYLE MALLOY

Commander, Naval Installations Command (CNIC) Vice Adm. Mary Jackson attended the 2017 Invictus Games to show Team U.S. support and cheer on the 17 Sailors competing at the international sporting event, Sept. 25-26.

Team U.S. is a joint military crew and consists of athletes from each branch of service. During her visit, Jackson spent her time meeting with both athletes and their families while attending a variety of different competitions.

"I think it is so powerful to see these athletes and what sport has given them," said Jackson. "It's not really about the competition, it's about the camaraderie that you see among these teammates. It's about how they work together and power through injuries and illnesses that most of us can't even imagine."

CNIC Force Master Chief Andrew Thompson accompanied Jackson on the trip, also demonstrating his support for Navy wounded warriors and Team U.S. at the Invictus Games.

"The Invictus Games reminds our service members that they are still part of the team and they are still in the fight," said Thompson. "I think this helps encourage the athletes and demonstrates how life continues beyond their injury or illness."

Both Jackson and Thompson spoke about the impact families and loved ones have on the athletes, recognizing just how important their roles are to the recovery and rehabilitation of the service members.

"Our family members are a critical link to the team," said Jackson. "These family members are out here every day, helping get these athletes into the competitive environment and I can see how the impact of loved ones contributes to the resiliency of our wounded warriors."

"One of the biggest contributions to making these games happen is that of the family members and loved ones of these



VADM Mary Jackson takes a photo with Navy Wounded Warrior family members Shavon (middle) and Gabriela (right) Thomas.



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CNIC SUPPORTS WOUNDED WARRIORS (CONTINUED)

athletes,” said Thompson. “They’re the number one support of these athletes and ensuring they are taken care of is a top priority for us.”

Jackson and Thompson expressed gratitude for being a part of the Invictus Games experience and how much they believe in its mission.

“These athletes give me motivation and inspire me,” said Thompson. “If you want to see a warrior, attend these games and you’ll see the definition of one.”

“To both the athletes and family members, we are so proud, so humbled by what you are doing every day,” said Jackson. “I thank them because they represent a resiliency that we all aspire to have.”

Being enrolled with Navy Wounded Warrior (NWW) provided the 17 Sailors the opportunity to compete with the United States at the Invictus Games. Jackson spoke about the importance of NWW and how its mission contributes to the Navy’s success.

“We have lots of resources for our Sailors in the Navy and it’s important the fleet has awareness of Navy Wounded Warrior’s mission,” said Jackson. “There are local elements to Navy Wounded Warrior, which includes not only adaptive sports, but many other non-medical resources. If there is a Sailor who is eligible, we absolutely want to get them enrolled.”

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.



NAVY WOUNDED WARRIOR PRIDE IN PARTNERSHIP

Navy Wounded Warrior could not effectively execute its mission without the strong relationships and partnerships with non-government organizations (NGO). NWW would like to highlight milestones reached this quarter that could not have been reached without the participation of our NGO’s.



Frontline Families Jacksonville was awarded a \$10,000 grant to bring awareness to Wounded Warriors and their Caregivers. They hosted a 9/11 Appreciation Ceremony and conducted repairs to the home of one of our Navy Wounded Warrior enrollees. The Caregiver /spouse of the Wounded Warrior was also honored and had an opportunity to advocate for awareness and support for service members with Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI). The family had new energy efficient windows installed and new flooring laid to enable the veteran to move throughout the home more safely.

Frontline Families, a national service program run by Points of Light, inspires service members and their families to serve their communities as part of the reintegration process. The program trains military families as volunteer leaders to help address the most pressing challenges in their communities, such as homelessness and education. Frontline Families Jacksonville locally engages the Military Community to lead community service projects that will address pressing issues which impact the community and the City of Jacksonville.

Hero Miles generously paid for all sponsored family member’s airfare from all US branches of service to attend and support their service members at Warrior Games in Chicago and Invictus Games in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Hero Miles booked over 50 flights for Navy families to attend Warrior Games and over 30

flights for Navy athletes and family members attending Invictus Games. The Hero Miles Program, administered by the Fisher House Foundation in partnership with the Department of Defense, provides round-trip airline tickets to wounded, injured, and ill service members and/or their families who are undergoing treatment at a military or VA medical center; or who are attending an authorized event.



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