Wounded Veteran FamilyCare

Annual Report
FY 2017

10 Years Helping Caregivers of Wounded Veterans
Letter From the Chairman and Executive Director

Since our inception 10 Years ago, the Wounded Veteran Family Care Program (WVFCP) of the Quality of Life Foundation (QoLF) has stepped into some of the most tumultuous situations in the lives of Caregivers caring for their severely wounded, ill, or injured veterans.

We have come in the nick of time to provide a safety net, reinforce the foundation, and create a clear launch pad from which they could see their way forward to a brighter future. From retreats and family reunification, children thriving, attending college, veterans learning to navigate a new normal, and Caregivers, recognizing their value, their significance and their importance in their families. The Wounded Veteran Family Care Program has been there to make tremendous long-term impacts in the lives of these Caregiver families.

During the past ten years we have been privileged to serve over 2,000 military family members belonging to over 425 caregiver families. Through direct financial support and leveraged contributions we have provided nearly $3.5 million in combined total estimated assistance to our caregivers. The dedicated staff of the Wounded Veteran Family Care Program has helped these families secure a more stable and sustainable way of living with an improved quality of life, as they define it.

We recognize that we could not have done this amazing work without all of you, our teaming organizations, donors, corporate partners, and supporters. So, we thank all of you for joining us on this journey of supporting our nation’s caregivers. As we look to the decade ahead, we invite you to join us as we strive for greater service to those that served our country, and those that care for them.

Michael Zeiders
Board Chairman

Elizabeth Chisolm
Executive Director

“As a caregiver we often think people really don’t understand. I was able to share my heart and desire. QoLF is a foundation that truly produces Life.”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
HOW THAT LOOKED IN THE EARLY DAYS

Collaboration is an essential component of our success.

WVFCP covered housing and coordinated services for an accessible van, family outing and other financial support.

We identified dental care and college scholarship options for family and hearing aids for veteran.

WVFCP coordinated a moving team, purchased beds and furniture for the children and partnered for car repair and rental.

After 4 years this caregiver smiles again. WVFCP partnered to secure pro-bono dental work using state-of-the-art equipment.

“There is nothing scarier than facing eviction, and not being able to feed your family”. WVFCP provided assistance during very challenging times.

Computers are a necessity. This family needed a computer for the children and the caregiver. WVFCP coordinated the purchase of a new laptop.

“The best way to communicate with case workers is a computer.” WVFCP coordinated the purchase of a computer for this family.

When you have mobility issues, ease and accessibility is critical. WVFCP coordinated a custom home organization and shelving for this caregiver.

Battling with her veteran’s husband severe spinal cord injury dampened the joy of a new baby. Fortunately, WVFCP coordinated in-home pre/post labor services for this family.

Paying respects to our parents is necessary for closure. WVFCP helped with travel for their mothers’ homegoing.

“I honestly can’t put into words how thankful I am, you came into our lives. You have given me hope that we can survive this crazy new life we live.”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
OUR MISSION

We seek to improve the quality of life of individuals and families who provide daily, substantial care for catastrophically wounded, ill or injured veterans. We want to ensure that every caregiving family is recognized, accepted, and supported in their civilian community.

Help Caregivers
balance their need to care for themselves, as well as their desire to care for their veteran and the rest of their family.

Build Working Partnerships
with government, businesses and community organizations that provide resources needed to help caregiving families achieve a healthy quality of life balance.

Create Awareness
through a broad range of media that caregiving families are in our communities and that they deserve the continued support of a grateful nation.

OUR CORE VALUES

Authenticity
We establish genuine relationships with the families we serve founded on trust and compassion, so we can provide support with a clear understanding of the whole picture and best address the wide range of issues our families encounter.

Collaboration
We are fortunate to co-exist with many organizations, resources and programs dedicated to serving the veteran population. Whenever possible, we explore and connect with resources that could benefit our families to avoid duplication of existing services.

Respect
We are honored to have the opportunity to help these most deserving families improve their quality of life, and seek to reflect that in every interaction.

“As a Caregiver one thing I had started to repeat to myself, does anyone know my needs...Thank you QoLF and all involved. I am forever grateful...”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
We assign each family a Quality of Life Foundation Family Support Coordinator (FSC).

Caregiving family is recognized, accepted and supported in their community.

Needs that can’t be met with existing resources are addressed through QoLF’s Unmet Needs Fund.

FSC reaches out to resource, confirms family’s eligibility and notifies family of solution.

FSC leverages resources from existing government, non-profit and community organizations.

Family answers become our to-do list and varies widely. Each family has their own special and unique needs.

FSC asks the question, “What is causing you the most stress and how can we help?”

We assign each family a Quality of Life Foundation Family Support Coordinator (FSC)

“When no one else would help...there was help from this great organization. I am eagerly awaiting ... better restful nights and easier days.”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
“You are making such an impact in so many of our caregiver lives that I just cannot even explain. THANK YOU more than words can express!!!!”

Bottom Left Caregiver Data from 2014 Rand Study

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
“There are no words to express the safety and comfort that this gift has given us...

THANK YOU for helping our family...and God bless you!”

Emails and Phone Calls data accumulated from 2014 to present

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
Needing a Break

"Thank you so very much.. this has changed our lives in so many ways forever"

from this WVFCP Family Caregiver
When tragedy strikes, our caregivers find themselves thrust into unexpected and unknown situations. These situations, may be short-term, but could become a new way of life. One thing is for certain, the new circumstances create stressors that are incredibly difficult to handle. The stressors can be so tremendous that at times the caregiver will neglect themselves, their own doctors’ appointments, their own interests, their own needs, for the benefit of the veteran or the children.

We recently received a note from a veteran caregiver who, despite feeling the weight of the world on their shoulders, found their way to the Wounded Veteran Family Care Program. We were able to give them back a piece of something they had lost. We were able to give them a much needed break.

“It has been a year since you helped our family. As we packed up this morning to go camping, a deep sense of gratitude was felt all around. You asked me what we really wanted to do as a family to enjoy life more, I answered- camping! And that’s exactly what we have been doing since you helped us last year to get all of our camping gear! We went to Big Basin and Lake Tahoe and Yosemite last year and today, we return to Big Basin as our first of many trips this summer!

You have made a huge difference in our lives! And I reap the rewards of your kindness every time we go out camping and I see my calm peaceful husband sitting by the campfire and the smiles on my children’s faces because they love it! Thank you so very much.. this has changed our lives in so many ways forever:)

“I hope that you are enjoying your summer as much as we are. I really just want you to know: you have made a huge difference in our lives.”

from this WVFCP Family Caregiver
a Caregiver’s Smile

“I’m so excited words can’t explain... You all are the best - hope you know... you have no idea what this means for me and my family!”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver

“How much more can we bear? Even more! I would do it again... and again!”

The family of an Air National Guardsman came to the Wounded Veteran Family Care Program facing challenges as a result of the veteran’s debilitating illness from his burn pit exposure in Iraq in 2005. The family was forced to fight an uphill battle for the veteran’s VA disability compensation after his return home. The lengthy process for securing the veteran’s benefits, while facing multiple medical crises, lasted for years and financially devastated the family.

“I’m so excited words can’t explain... You all are the best - hope you know... you have no idea what this means for me and my family!”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
The veteran shared his story with us:

“I remember when the back of the plane opened up, they said put your head down and run to the terminal on the flight line. But as I was running, I could smell and taste this terrible funk. Well, after getting checked in, I realized that this black smoke and flume was hanging right over the base. So, we asked and they said, ‘oh that is just the burn pits.’

I wish I had my life back before I went to fight for our country. My life consists of doctor appointments and a sack full of medications, 40 pills every morning and night. I wish I would just feel normal and not hurt all the time, but if you ask me, I would do it again and my answer would be yes because that’s what we do.”

(Signed) The American Soldier

The caregiver of this brave Airman gave her all to ensure that her loved one was receiving the proper treatment. Bills piled up as they dealt with his illness and waited for compensation. The caregiver neglected her own health and dental needs. After four years of neglect, the caregiver’s dental treatment needs were so significant that dental insurance would not make a dent in the cost of her needed dental work. The family could not afford the out of pocket expense as they were still struggling to fix the financial devastation that followed waiting for the veteran’s benefits.

Many caregivers have come to us with unmet dental healthcare needs. Most caregivers have simply endured the pain and embarrassment of dental decay and “soldiered on” with life because they see the very real need of maintaining good dental health as a want and not a need. In the face of a veteran’s need for treatment and paying household bills, caregivers place their needs last and neglect their own health, as this caregiver had done.

Caregivers often negate their own personal needs as they struggle to balance the demands of caregiving, managing a household, and taking care of other family members.

Fortunately, for this caregiver, the Wounded Veteran Family Care Program found a local dentist who offered to provide over $16,000 in pro bono services to the caregiver because of her family’s sacrifice and service to the country. The caregiver was overjoyed that she felt comfortable smiling in public without being embarrassed by the state of her teeth.

Although we could not take away the veteran’s daily physical pain or the emotional hurt of the family’s circumstances, the Quality of Life Foundation was able to significantly improve the caregiver’s quality of life and remind her that she matters too.

“Yayyyyy! Absolutely a dream come true! ...I have tears of joy...! Thank you so much to you and everyone at Quality of Life Foundation.”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
You help us make a difference in the lives of Caregivers and the family members that they support daily.

Caregivers thank us for the support we provide during their most challenging times. We know that we could not do it without you, Our Donors. So we say thank you for being on this decade-long journey with us.

“Thank you and your donors so much for everything!!! ...I think everything that could have been done was done!! Keep up the good work and thank God for people like you!”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
COLLABORATION WORKS
FY17 TEAMING ORGANIZATIONS

Department of Veteran Affairs
Disabled Patriot Fund
Department of Economic
Opportunity in Florida
E&E Siding, LLC
New Focus Staging
The Bed Store
Purple Heart Homes
Premiere Movers
Semper Fi Fund
Texas Ramp Project
Texas Wounded Warrior
Foundation
Help Our Wounded
Closets by Design
Furnishing Hope
Social Security Administration
Michigan Fallen and Wounded
Soldiers Fund
Our Military Kids
Veterans & Athletes United
Operation First Response
Leashes of Valor
Catch a Lift Fund
Mattress Firm
SemperMax Support Fund
Feed Our Vets
Organizing in a Snap
Bed’R Mattress
PenFed Foundation
Pennsylvania Wounded
Warriors
Heroes Angels
Cell Phones for Soldiers
Rucker Orthodontics
LIHEAP
Pruple Heart Homes
Ricci Construction
Bent Revolution, LLC
Sensibly Organized Spaces
Organized Design Solutions
TLC Cleaning
Tech for Troops

“We felt that the Nation as a whole had many connections.... It aided us to find support that we did not have previous to working with the QOLF.”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
from a WVFCP Family Caregiver

“I can’t express just how much our quality of life changed because of your foundation. The most stressful time of our life, became the easiest thanks to you guys!”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver

FINANCIALS

FY 2017

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EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURES $50,552

FUND BALANCE BEGINNING OF YEAR $180,630

FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR $231,182

FY 2017 Program Data

- Program Services
- General & Administrative
- Fundraising
Have you ever dreamed of being stuck in quicksand? You struggle vigorously to move through the suck of the mud. You feel your body in motion, your legs dragging one in front of the other, only to realize you have barely moved at all? Every day, every step—you struggle with moving from one room to another. Some veterans experience this struggle daily. Veterans arrive home after service with physical injuries that make their mobility a challenge, whether using a cane, a walker, or a wheelchair. Veterans and their families have to adapt to their new modes of mobility and their environments so they are not stuck, physically, as well as, metaphorically.

This feeling of being stuck was one that a caregiver shared with us to illustrate what her family members experienced. This caregiver, a mother of five, came to us in desperate need of redoing the flooring throughout her home. The family had received a mortgage-free home from an organization that provided foreclosed homes to veterans, but the home was not adapted to the veteran or his family’s needs. The veteran used a cane to walk. His youngest child used a walker. The carpet caused the veteran’s cane and the child’s walker to get stuck. To move around the home without issue, the family needed to replace the existing carpeting with hard-surface flooring. A few other minor repairs were needed. This home improvement project was expensive and required the coordination and support of others.

Quality of Life Foundation Family Support Coordinators (FSC) are experts at finding and coordinating resources for caregivers. After receiving multiple flooring and home repair estimates, and having the caregiver pick her preferred flooring, the FSC sought additional funding assistance. The FSC used Quality of Life Foundation’s grant funds from the Bob Woodruff Foundation to partially fund this project. The FSC obtained the final amount of assistance from Help Our Wounded, another nonprofit that supports caregivers and their warriors. A local flooring company was contracted to put down the new hard surface flooring. Suddenly, the family was no longer stuck. Quality of Life Foundation was privileged to work with this family to adapt their home to their current needs.

“The weight has totally been lifted off of us. You REALLY REALLY changed our lives.”

from a WVFCP Family Caregiver
“I cannot use enough words to tell you how thankful [we] are for your help...Thank you for what you do. We appreciate more than words can say.”

from a Wounded Veteran Family Caregiver