

## **OUR MISSION**

Provide military injured and their families with innovative and transformational programs that build confidence and improve lives.



## **OUR VISION**

To cultivate a nationwide community of injured veterans and their families that provides innovative world-class programs, rooted in the mountains, to strengthen lifelong relationships and reinforce purposeful lives.



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## PRESIDENT/FOUNDER LETTER



Dear Friends,

After an in-depth strategic planning process, I am excited to share that on March 31, 2021, Vail Veterans Program (VVP) merged with Semper Fi & America's Fund to expand much needed services for wounded service members and their families. The core programs of VVP will remain in Vail allowing our important work to continue in the heart of the Rocky Mountains.

During the last 18 years, Vail Veterans Program has been providing innovative and transformational programs to enhance the lives of wounded service members and their families. When I look back I still can't imagine that what started as a volunteer organization for the first 10 years out of my home in Vail, would turn into the strong organization that it is today.

We are joining forces from a strong and impactful financial position, Vail Veterans Program is proud to be able to make a sizable contribution to Semper Fi & America's Fund to ensure the sustainability of programs in Vail and give veterans and their families the support they need and deserve for years to come.



It has been the greatest honor of my life to work with service members and their families. I am excited to continue my involvement in this important work by serving on the Advisory Council of Semper Fi & America's Fund.

On behalf of the Vail Veterans Program Board of Directors and staff, thank you for your generous contributions and belief in our mission. As we move forward together, our future looks broader and brighter.

To all of our Vail Vets alumni I want to thank you for sharing your time with us, and for your service and sacrifice to our country. You will forever be a part of the VVP family and now a part of the Semper Fi & America's Fund family.

You are all my heroes!

Cheryl Jensen
 Founder, Vail Veterans Program

#### **BOARD CHAIR LETTER**





Dear Supporters,

The newly forged partnership of Vail Veterans Program with Semper Fi & America's Fund is our most exciting strategic arc since our founder, Cheryl Jensen, set upon a course to provide transformative experiences to help heal the wounds of battle in the early years of the program. With each iteration, Cheryl has insightfully anticipated evolving areas of greatest need which would present challenges for the Program and especially the alumni participants across a spectrum of wounded, injured, caregiver and family experiences all focused on transforming lives.

With this new partnership, VVP leverages this critical relationship to the benefit of alumni participants from both communities, providing bidirectional access on a scale which we have yet to offer to date.

At the core of this new partnership though, are the values and commitment to our VVP alumni to stand beside each of you as we expand the offerings beyond the mountain environment once again.

Sincerely,

CAPT Jeffrey M. Tomlin
 Vail Veterans Program Board Chair

#### WARRIOR SPOTLIGHT



Vail Veterans Program (VVP) invited my family to attend the Summer 2020 program to help our family reconnect. The program was canceled due to the pandemic, but that didn't stop VVP from supporting us. A new program they created called, OUR MISSION CONTINUES, provided support to our family in reconnecting with each other over the summer, as well as over the holidays. At Christmas, VVP launched the Adopt a Hero Family program which provided us with warm pajamas, snow gear, and toys for my children. This program helped to put a smile on my children's faces during a very difficult year, not only due to COVID, but also having to see their dad recover from yet another surgery. This program also helped to provide resources for our kids during the pandemic, especially during a time when our children were at home and unable to participate in extracurricular activities at school and on base.

OUR MISSION CONTINUES helped to offset food and extra utilities costs with all six of our children being at home. Usually, we rely on subsidized childcare, sports, and other programs at our local military installation, however, we were shut out of these programs due to them only prioritizing dual active-duty families during the pandemic.

The pandemic hit right when I was recovering from my 17th surgery on my knee. This put an extreme burden on my wife who is my caregiver, who then had to care for five of our children in addition to assisting me with my recovery. My physical therapy and other crucial treatments were no longer available during the shutdown, and my wife had to juggle many hats at once. VVP helped out in such a huge way by having meals delivered to our home, which was instrumental in allowing my wife to care for all of us during this unprecedented time. As a wounded veteran, it is often hard for me to accept that I have to rely on my wife so much, and this bit of help allowed me to feel like I could make her life a bit easier. Thank you to all those who support VVP, you are truly making a difference in veterans' lives.

– Ross Blain, E9 Mastery Gunnery Sgt. (Ret)







#### **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

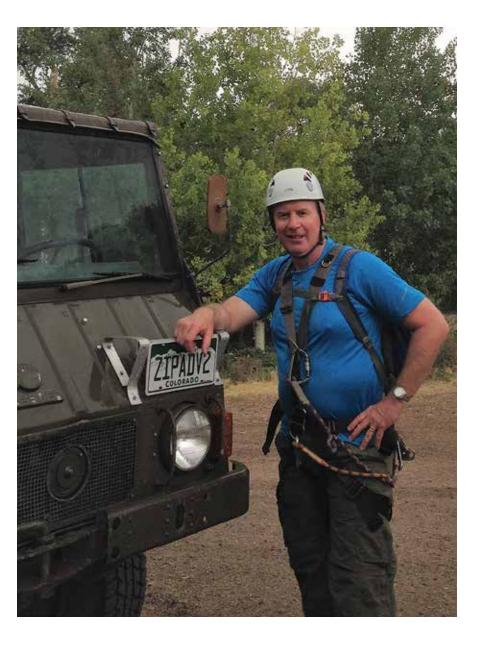
For the past 10 years, I've had the distinct privilege of serving as a volunteer photographer for Vail Veterans Program.

I've been able to witness, first-hand, how the VVP leadership and supporting team significantly impacts the lives of veterans and their families, caregivers and friends.

When they first arrive, I sense their excitement coupled with apprehension; however, by the end of the week, they are filled with a renewed sense of confidence and courage having tackled the unique opportunities the mountains offer.

As a retired veteran myself, I appreciate the opportunity to listen to their stories and encourage them along the way. In my photography role, I'm truly honored to capture and record the incredible memories they create as honored guests of the VVP program, which is my heart's passion as a volunteer. Whether you personally touch VVP through your time, talents, or treasures, it's an honor to serve alongside you in supporting our nation's veterans and families who have sacrificed dearly for the cherished freedoms we enjoy.

- Colonel Wesley Cockman, USAFR (Ret)



### **VOLUNTEERS THROUGH THE YEARS**

Aaron Acton	Daniel DeRossi	Bill Hanlon	Emily Lukanich
Liz Adams	Dave Devoll	Joe Hanlon	Ian Lukanich
Izzy Adochio	Caroline Dewell	Meg Hanlon	Jeff Luker
Albert Almodova	Reece Dill	Sally Hanlon	Jack Manes
Marilyn Augur	John Dobbins	Wendy Hanlon	John Manning
Brenda Barr	Suzy Donohue	Dylan Hardenbergh	Lola Marston
Bob Bassett	Dave Eickholt	lan Hardenbergh	Jarod Martin
Hailey Bill	Kayla Etters	Conor Hay	Jen Mason
Kate Blakslee	Ann Faison	Rik Heid	Cyndy McAdam
Annie Blakslee	Christine Farragher	Dwight Henniger	Joe Menendez
Molly Blakslee	Lucy Footlik	Suzy Hill	Laine Michael
Tony Borg	Joanne Foster	Dan Houck	Terry Michel
Billy Bortz	Gary Frey	Jake Howard	Elana Milmo
Pri Braun	Natalie Frey	Kristin Howard	Matt Newill
Julie Browman	Gabby Gadson	Dan Humphreys	Rabbi Joel Newman
Melinda Brown	Mike Galvin	Lindsay Humphreys	Sophia Nisonoff
Teddy Bruno	Kate Zook Gibbs	Laura Johnson	Eric Noreen
Alec Bruno	Donna Gioradano	Alexia Jurschak	Jack Olsen
Jenn Bruno	Allie Gish	Kay Kahler	Barry Parker
Luca Bruno	Amy Gish	Paul Kahler	Joan Patchett
Tom Burch	Emily Gish	Mitch Karlin	Andi Payen
Michael Byram	Gaby Gish	Quinn Kelley	Diane Pitt
Danica Carey	Sammy Gish	Scott Key	Brian Rambol
Wendy Carey	Sandra Goncharoff	Bruce Kiely	Nancy Richards
Mike Carey	Ava Goncharoff	John Kreuger	Jan Rinker
Drisana Carey	Olivia Goncharoff	Beret Kroeger	Brian Roach
Forrest Christiansen	Shawn Graves	George Lamb	Andrew Rostek
Cheryl Clayton	Zac Green	Lizette Lamb	Rosalie Rougeout
Wes Cockman	Jameson Gregg	Taylor Landrum	Andy Rougeout
Trevor Crandall	Jessica Gregg	Jim Liken	Gerald Salani

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED OUR NATION'S HEROES SINCE 2004

Lisa Schanzer

John Liles

Kenneth Schanzer Kira Scheidegger

Laurie Schoen

Katie Schofield

Michelle Seares

Marion Singleton

Christie Spessard

Caroline Stone

Tyler Stricklin

Jim Thomason

Pete Thompson

**Bob Troutman** 

Kristi Tsanova

Hailey Van Meal

Brian Uelze

Bill Welch

Matt Whalen Jennifer Whitmore

Gary Whitson

Steve Wrysch

Dex Zaring

Courtney Winninger

Vail Fire Department

Yolanda Troutman

Julia Torok

David Strandjorn

Pete Seibert

**Buddy Sims** 

Ann Smead

Liz Stern

Nicholas Delain

Pat Hammon

#### 2020 PROGRAMS

228
TOTAL EXPERIENCES
PROVIDED



RESILIENCE FOR LIFE & MILITARY CAREGIVER PROGRAMS

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

OUR MISSION CONTINUES

WINTER
THERAPEUTIC
OUTDOOR
PROGRAMS



816

TOTAL VETERANS,
FAMILY MEMBERS
& CAREGIVERS SERVED



SUMMER FAMILY PROGRAM FITNESS CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

HEALING THE FEW - TO STRENGTHEN THE MANY





## 100%

OF WOUNDED VETERANS
AND FAMILY MEMBERS
ACHIEVED THEIR PERSONAL
GOALS WHICH INCLUDED
RECONNECTING WITH FAMILY,
PHYSICAL REHABILITATION,
EMOTIONAL HEALING,
A STRESS-FREE & FUN
EXPERIENCE, CONNECTING
WITH OTHER VETERANS AND
MILITARY FAMILIES, AND
MENTORSHIP OF PEERS







### WINTER THERAPEUTIC OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

WINTER FAMILY PROGRAM January 26 – 31, 2020

WINTER MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE March 1 – 6, 2020

Wounded veterans and their families are invited to experience the unique healing powers of the therapeutic Rocky Mountains.

The landscape from the top of Vail Mountain is representative of the peaks and valleys that veterans and military families face as they navigate a grievous service related injury.

Veterans are offered a breath of fresh air as they gain confidence and independence through adaptive skiing and snowboarding with private professional instruction. Families reconnect and build lifelong memories through group lessons, meals, and evening activities. On the slopes, veterans restore hope by conquering physical and emotional challenges, empowering them to achieve anything, despite their injury.

"Vail Veterans Program helped lift our spirits and allow us to breathe again."

- Ross Blain, E9 Mastery Gunnery Sgt. (Ret)



143 Total Participants









FAMILIES
RECONNECT
AND BUILD
LIFELONG
MEMORIES

#### **FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

BLACK MOUNTAIN RANCH June 14 – 21, 2020 August 16 – 23, 2020

Physical, mental, and emotional wounds of war impact the entire family of a wounded veteran.

In partnership with Black Mountain Colorado Dude Ranch, our Family Support Programs provide an authentic western experience that allows military families to continue their healing journey together in a safe and comfortable environment.

Alumni families are invited to Colorado to enjoy a week at the ranch, unplugged from the daily challenges they face at home, allowing time for reconnection and the building of lifelong memories through horseback riding, whitewater rafting, a wilderness pack trip, and peaceful evenings around the campfire.

- " Vail Veterans Program supports our whole family individually and together."
- Myra Blanchard, Caregiver to Wounded Veteran



64 Total Participants









FAMILIES
CONTINUE
THE HEALING
JOURNEY
TOGETHER

## COVID-19 RESPONSE — SIX NEW PROGRAMS CREATED OUR MISSION CONTINUES

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting cancellation of in-person programming, we recognized it was imperative to find innovative ways to support our military families as they navigated the challenges associated with these unprecedented times.

In response, we launched the OUR MISSION CONTINUES grant award program, offering critical fiscal support to military families from across the nation.

Categories include: Emergency Financial Assistance, Family Experiences, Military Caregiver Support, Health & Wellness Resources, Mental Health Support, Educational Resources, and Pay It Forward Opportunities. Most grant awards have provided support for housing, utilities, food security, wellness, and mental health.

- " Vail Veterans Program helped us persevere in these trying times."
- Christie Herrera, Caregiver to Wounded Veteran



OF PARTICIPANTS
REPORT HAVING
STRONG COPING
MECHANISMS TO FACE
CHALLENGES INTO
THE FUTURE

117 Total Participants





















**\$225,23**2

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED



#### VIRTUAL PROGRAMS & FITNESS CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

Based on requests from military families as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a desire to continue learning after returning home from a VVP event, we launched virtual programming for over 900 alumni veterans and their families.

We have partnered with professionals in nutrition, mental health, and financial services, as well as fitness instructors, chefs, and meditation gurus.

Through virtual programming, we provide weekly newsletters with relevant content and resources to our entire alumni database, as well as offer monthly Zoom seminars on topics including health, nutrition, and financial wellness, with a live  $O\Delta A$ .

- "Because of VVP, during this pandemic, we felt we weren't alone".
- Gilbert Builtron, U.S. Navy Petty Officer Third Class (Ret)



233

Virtual Programs
Participants

**6**5

Resilience for Life & Caregiver Support Participants









#### RESILIENCE FOR LIFE

In partnership with the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute. veterans and military caregivers were given a unique opportunity to participate virtually in one of two Resilience for Life training programs. Each program consisted of three 90-minute interactive group sessions. Performance coaches helped participants focus on unique methods for stress management, including reframing the discomfort of stress to leverage personal growth, performance, and wellness. By confronting stress head-on, wounded veterans and caregivers gained tools to positively address the daily challenges associated with transitioning out of the military and adjusting to their "new normal."



#### MILITARY CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Military caregivers required support in 2020, more than ever before. With lock-downs in place, and many families transitioning to online schooling, the daily responsibilities of military caregivers became even more strenuous. In response, we created virtual Zoom sessions for caregivers focused on nutrition, wellness, as well as financial literacy and budgeting. Participants had the opportunity to connect virtually with others confronting similar challenges and received individualized support from our professional partners. Caregivers who had planned to attend an in-person Military Caregiver Retreat in 2020 were mailed wellness packages to encourage them to invest time in their mental health and wellbeing, while at home.



## VIRTUAL FITNESS CHALLENGES

Many of our alumni reported having difficulty motivating themselves to remain active as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We responded to this feedback by developing our Virtual Fitness Challenge for Veterans and Military Caregivers. Utilizing a specialized movement tracking online application, we assigned participants to randomized teams and provided them with daily movement goals. Teams communicated through the application and worked together to achieve their team goals. Participants were provided with incentives for their hard work and dedication. Powerful. positive program outcomes demonstrated a need to continue offering Fitness Challenges for both veterans and military caregivers into the future.

#### HONORING GRADUATES - CELEBRATING LIFE'S BIG MOMENTS

The pandemic caused many disruptions for military families, including the cancellation of many significant life events.

To recognize the hard work and dedication of our alumni 2020 high school and college graduates, our military teens were given a choice between an Apple iPad and Microsoft Surface Pro. These gifts not only helped the graduates to celebrate their incredible accomplishments, but also will assist them in attaining their future educational goals.

Our team also continued to acknowledge alumni birthdays with personalized birthday messages, allowing us to remain connected with our military families after program culmination.









# LONG AND SHORT-TERM PROGRAM IMPACTS

## Short-term goal achievement during program:

- Reconnect with Family
- Enjoy a Stress-Free and Fun Experience
- Connect with Other Veterans
- Connect with Other Military Families
- Emotional Healing
- Improving Recreational Skills

# Long-term goal achievement evaluated after program culmination:

- Increased Self-Confidence
- Improved Outlook on Life
- Development and Implementation of Stronger Coping Mechanisms
- Community of Mutual Support
- Continue to Set New Goals for the Future

## **FINANCIALS**

## INCOME

## TOTAL INCOME \$1,507,000

DONATIONS \$1,191,000 79%

IN KIND DONATIONS \$316,000 21%



## **EXPENSES**

## TOTAL EXPENSES **\$1,502,000**

PROGRAMS **\$1,144,000 76%** 

FUNDRAISING \$111,000 7%

ADMINISTRATION \$247,000 17%

Full financial reports are available online at vailveteransprogram.org/fiscal-transparency



















#### **2020 DONORS**

#### \$100,000 +

Frechette Family Foundation Elizabeth & Michael Galvin Vail Resorts EpicPromise Wounded Warrior Project

#### \$50,000 - \$99,999

Safeway Foundation

#### \$25.000 - \$49.999

Paul Galvin Memorial Foundation Military Warriors Support Foundation Jeanne & Frank Trainer U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs



#### \$10,000 - \$24,999

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#### \$1,000 - \$4,999

Anonymous (2)

10th Mountain

Whiskey & Spirit Company

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Jeanne & Chad Allen

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Suzanne Brown

Bobbi Bryson & Butch Mazzuca

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Diane Pitt & Mitchell Karlin

Slifer Smith & Frampton Foundation

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Pam & Ernest Elsner

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23

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#### \$100 - \$499

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Steven Leonard Tamara & Glenn Lester Leslie & Jonathan Levy Courtney & Tom Lippencott Linda & Robert Llewellyn Shanyn Maddox Roslyn & Craig Mangone Shashank Maragiri Dan Martin Jennifer Mason Trudy & Robert Matarese Barbara Ann & William Mavfield John McDonald & Rob Wright Janifer & David McDougall Heather & JP McInerny Kathleen McKeeta Christopher McLaren **Burt Merical** Andrea Miller Minturn Seniors Citizens Mountaineers Carol & Vincent Mitchell Moffet Consulting Tom Moorhead Eric Mork Sheila Mossman Jane & Jim Mott Ginger M. Myers Jean Naumann Peggy Nicholls George Nimmo Don P Odom Jan & John Oltman Christine Oppy

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#### **UP TO \$99**

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Debbie Ecksten

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James Quesenberry
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Heather Zaimes Steve Zemke

Pamela C. Zickafoose

#### \*Denotes Deceased

The donor list represents contributions made between January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020. We have carefully reviewed the names listed. However, if you find an error or omission, please email info@vailveteransprogram.org or call 970.476.4906.



#### LEADERSHIP TEAM

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Nanci Northway Chief Financial Officer

Becca Aliber

Director of Programs & Development

Sarah Heredia

Development and Operations Manager

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Melissa Doyle

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SSGT Justin Lynn (Ret)

LSSN Casey Sparks

SSGT Aaron Craig Taylor (Ret)

"Thank you to our leadership team for their valued input through the years, because of their efforts VVP will live in the hearts of our nation's heroes for years to come."

– Cheryl Jensen



#### SEMPER FI & AMERICA'S FUND - FOUNDER/CEO/PRESIDENT LETTER



Dear Friends and Family of Vail Veterans Program,

It is a joy to be writing to you all and express our excitement and anticipation of including the Vail Veteran military heroes and their families into our Semper Fi & America's Fund circle of support.

We have known this program since it's inception and have deeply valued Cheryl and her team's love and passion for this very special community. Many have already been assisted by the Semper Fi & America's Fund so this feels like just a natural effort of evolution for our entire team.

Please, if you have any questions about our hearts and efforts, visit: thefund.org. Here is a scan of our <u>Semper Fi & America's Fund Winter Newsletter 2020</u> and compilation of our outreach over the last three months – <u>2020 Double Down 4</u> Vets Media Highlights.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Team we want you all to know how much we are looking forward to meeting you all in Vail and continuing this critical mission that Cheryl began back in 2004.

With warmest regards,

- Karen Guenther

Founder/CEO/President Semper Fi & America's Fund

#### 2021 PROGRAM CALENDAR

Vail Veterans Promgram and Semper Fi & America's Fund are joining forces to expand our programming and deepen our impact to better serve the evolving needs of wounded service members and their families.

#### **VVP PROGRAMS**

#### January

- 10 15 Winter Family Program
- 31 2/5 Winter Family Program

#### February

- 28 3/4 Winter Family Program
- 7 12 Winter Family Program

#### March

7 – 12 Winter Family Program
(All Winter Family Programs are
Individual Families)

#### June

- 13 20 Black Mountain Ranch
- 15 22 Red Box Legacy Program

#### August

15 – 22 Black Mountain Ranch

#### SEMPER FI & AMERICA'S FUND – VAIL PROGRAMS

#### Ju

18 – 23 Summer Family Program

#### August

23 – 27 Golf In The Rockies

#### September

- 15 19 Military Caregiver Retreat
- 22 25 Military Caregiver Reunion











**HONORING OUR NATION'S HEROES SINCE 2004**