

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

Several members have sent me articles about the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) and have asked me to write about the WWP in an attempt to determine the validity of the articles they have seen on the internet. In response to those requests, I have read and re-read the WWP's Form 990 for 2012 (tax year beginning October 1, 2012 and ending September 30, 2013) as this was the most recent filing I could find on Guidestar.org or Charity Navigator.

GuideStar USA, Inc. is an information service specializing in reporting on U.S. nonprofit companies. In 2010, their database contained over 5 million IRS Forms 990 on 1.9 million organizations. GuideStar's operations include data digitization, database management and development, nonprofit services, web site operations and research. GuideStar also serves to verify that a recipient organization is established and that donated funds go where the donor intended for individuals looking to give in the wake of disasters or during the holiday season. Those interested in reviewing a nonprofit's recent Forms 990 can register at GuideStar.org and download them for free.

I also used Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) to research WWP. Charity Navigator does not rank charities but assigns qualitative designations. They do so by evaluating two broad areas of performance; Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency. The ratings (from 0-stars to 4-stars) show how efficiently Charity Navigator believes a charity will use its support today, how well it has sustained its programs and services over time and its level of commitment to being accountable and transparent.

For the past five fiscal years, the WWP has received an overall rating of three stars (out of four) from Charity Navigator. A four star (exceptional) rating means that the charity exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its Cause. A three star (good) rating means that the charity exceeds or meets industry standards and performs as well as or better than most charities in its Cause.

All financial data to be discussed in this report is taken from the WWP's 2012 Form 990 for the tax year ending September 30, 2013. I looked for a more recent filing but was unable to find one.

The following information about expenses was obtained from Schedule O of the Form 990. According to the IRS, "an organization should use Schedule O (Form 990 or 990-EZ), rather than separate attachments, to provide the IRS with narrative information required for responses to specific questions on Form 990 or 990-EZ, and to explain the organization's operations or responses to various questions. It allows organizations to supplement information reported on Form 990 or 990-EZ".

Employees	Salaries	Avg. Salary	Top 11 Employees		
340	\$28,905,282	\$85,016	low	high	avg
			\$151,452	\$397,490	\$217,569

Salaries are inclusive of: base compensation, bonus & incentive compensation, deferred compensation, and non-taxable benefits.

	Total	Revenue -
Total Revenue	Expenses	Expenses
\$234,682,943	\$158,073,943	\$76,609,000
Total Program Service Expenses		\$117,198,737

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Listed below are some of the organizations WWP gave funding to in Fiscal Year 2013.

Track (\$4,540,030) is the first education center in the nation designed specifically for wounded warriors. Track is focused on providing college and employment access to wounded warriors and is an extensive and holistic training experience for the mind, body, and spirit. It is a 12-month program with dual emphasis on college prep and job preparedness.....

Family Support Services (\$5,716,280) – The Family Support Program provides support and respite programs for a wounded warrior’s family members and/or caregiver.....

Warriors to Work (\$7,214,394) is one of the cornerstones of WWP’s efforts to achieve its strategic goal of economically empowering wounded warriors. WTOW assists wounded warriors with their transition to the workforce. WTOW offers a complete package of employment assistance services including resume assistance, interviewing skills, networking, job training, and job placement.....

Transition Training Academy (TTA) (\$4,424,903) provides innovative information technology training to wounded warriors who are still on active duty.....TTA was developed in partnership with Cisco Systems, Inc. and the U.S. Department of Labor. TTA sites are located at 17 bases.

Peer Support (\$2,386,866) is the programmatic embodiment of WWP’s logo, fostering relationships that enable one warrior to help another through the recovery process. WWP peer mentors are trained to be resources, listeners, and “hospital buddies”, who can share their understanding and perspective.

Independence Program (\$11,491,465) is a program for warriors who depend on their families and caregivers due to a moderate to severe traumatic brain injury, spinal-cord injury, or other neurological conditions. The Independence Program works with the warrior and their full support team while creating an individualized plan for each warrior focusing on goals that provide a future with purpose at no cost to the warrior and his or her support team.....The goal is to empower each warrior to live as independently as possible, with the highest quality of life and finest, most compassionate care possible.

American Council on Education (\$125,000) – provides free training to college and university mental health counseling centers.

American National Red Cross (\$250,000) – Hurricane Sandy relief.

Augusta Warrior Project (\$150,000) – provides outreach advocacy and case coordination to warriors.

Catch A Lift Fund (\$100,000) – promotes physical and mental healing by providing free gym membership.

Community Partners (\$125,000) – The mission of the farmer veteran coalition is to mobilize veterans to feed America.

Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa (\$200,000) – assists veterans in creating participant-oriented goals to guide them to self-sufficiency.

Connecticut Public Broadcasting, Inc. (\$250,000) – provides training in media arts and video production.

Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine (\$545,180) – a global organization dedicated to advancing military medical research.

LRMC Fisher Houses (\$170,000) – provide financial assistance to current members of the U. S. Armed Services, veterans, and their families.

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Not Alone, LLC (\$422,000) – provide guidance and coordination to veterans and their families.

Printmaking Center of New Jersey (\$125,000) – assist service members in their psychological, emotional, and physical recovery through printmaking and handmade papermaking.

Regents University of California, Los Angeles (\$100,000) – provide services to help families become more resilient in the face of challenges.

Shepherd Center Foundation, Inc. (\$250,000) – specializes in medical treatment, research and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury and brain injury.

Student Veterans of America (\$100,000) – peer advisors for veteran education is a peer support program that connects incoming veterans with student veterans on campus.

Syracuse University (\$150,000) – the program leverages the flexibility inherent in small business ownership to provide a vocational and economic “path-forward” for military family members.

The Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area (\$2,000,000) – community endowment, a collection of gifts, given to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Richmond.

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation (\$600,000) – to assist the organizations and agencies that serve caregivers – spouses, parents, and others – responsible for an injured military member.

The Mission Continues (\$391,500) – empowers veterans facing the challenge of adjusting to life at home to find new missions.

United War Veterans Council (\$345,000) – supporting and promoting a wide range of initiatives that provide vital services to our veterans’ community (they also put on the annual Veterans Day parade in NYC – ed.)

USA Cares, Inc. (\$100,000) – provides financial support and training leading to certification in a number of skilled trades.

Veterans One-Stop Center of WNY, Inc. (\$50,000) – connects people, organizations, and resources together to effectively improve the well-being of the U.S. Armed Forces and their immediate families. (Buffalo, NY)

Warrior Gateway, Inc. (\$100,000) – to connect the military, veterans and their family members to government and non-profit programs in their local community.

Wounded Warrior Project Long Term Support Trust (\$9,100,000) – provide long term care for the most severely wounded warriors.

It appears that the WWP performs in the same manner as most 501(c)3 foundations; that is, they receive applications for funding, review them, and make grants. In this way WWP is fulfilling its stated mission. You, the donor, need to decide if this is how you want your donation used.

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If you prefer to keep your donations local, then I am presenting you with some organizations that either work with or for veterans and their families locally. But no matter how you decide to make a donation, I strongly encourage you to visit the organization's web site to learn about them, talk to people who work there, talk to people who use the services the organization provides, or go visit the organization.

<p>Veterans Outreach Center 447 South Avenue Rochester 14620 www.veteransoutreachcenter.org</p>	<p>NYS Veterans Home 220 Richmond Avenue Batavia, NY 14020 www.NYSVETS.org</p>	<p>Canandaigua VAMC Voluntary Services 400 Fort Hill Avenue Canandaigua, NY 14424 www.canandaiguava.gov</p>
<p>Oasis Adaptive Sports, Inc. 4 Honeoye Commons P.O. Box 706 Honeoye, NY 14471 www.oasisadaptivesports.com</p>	<p>Bath VAMC Voluntary Services 76 Veterans Avenue Bath, NY 14810 www.bath.va.gov</p>	<p>Batavia VAMC Voluntary Services 222 Richmond Avenue Batavia, NY 14020 www.buffalo.va.gov/locations/batavia.asp</p>
<p>Honor Flight Rochester, Inc. P.O. Box 23581 Rochester, NY 14692 www.honorflightrochester.org</p>	<p>Patriot Guard Riders of NY P.O. Box 107 Williamson, NY 14589 www.pgrny.org Bob Harder 585-334-6356 Bharder3@rochester.rr.com</p>	<p>Veterans Court - Contacts Ken Moore 585-576-9000 kmoore@monroecounty.gov Ray Melens 585-766-0572 RMelens@aol.com</p>
<p>Gold Star Mothers Contact Rita Hasenauer rochestergoldstar@gmail.com</p>		<p>Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial Chuck Macaluso – President 154 Mendota Drive Rochester, NY 14626 www.rochestervietnammemorial.org</p>

By no means are these the only charitable organizations in our area that work with Veterans, but there isn't room to list them all, nor am I aware of them all so I picked these eleven because I am familiar with them.

Fred Elliott

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