

New Beginnings: Operation Second Chance Newsletter - Empowering Veterans & Families! | June 2024



Operation Second Chance turned 20 this year! We are absolutely elated to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Operation Second Chance this year! As a veteran recovery-focused non-profit organization, we have had the profound honor and privilege to be a part of the lives of so many veterans and their families. Over the past two decades, we have witnessed incredible resilience, transformation, and healing. Our programs have facilitated support, hope, and a sense of community for those who have served our country so bravely. We are deeply grateful for the trust placed in us and for the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of our nation's heroes. Here's to another 20 years of making a positive impact in the lives of veterans and their loved ones!

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What's New?



Appalachian Trail update!

After the guys left Heroes



Ridge, they have been hiking every day for the last 10 days. They have been in Pennsylvania for a while and dealing with the summer heat and unforgiving rocky terrain, which can be very slow going. The trail passed through Duncannon, PA where they stopped in the local VFW and the American Legion for some food and met some great local Veterans. They have since crossed over the 1,200 mile mark and currently in Port Clinton, PA at mile 1,221. They will be back on trail in the morning and expecting to be at the Delaware Water Gap, PA/ New Jersey border by the end of the week. Things are getting tougher out there for them as the weather is getting hotter and water has become more scarce. More to come.....God bless!!! 🇺🇸

#AppalachianTrail
#OperationSecondChance
#OSC #Veterans
#HeroesRidge

Bringing Awareness in his big green tractor - Ivan is doing it again...during the spring of 2025, Ivan is planning to take another cross-country trip in his antique Johnnabill tractor to help bring awareness for our



Veterans and their families. Ivan shared, "I just met a Veteran last week that was in tears trying to adjust back to civic life. I gave her a puzzle box and she was in tears and thanking us for caring and remembering are Veterans and First Responders. I found out the last three trips made a difference to start advertising early. People started calling and hoping we would stop in or they would like to hold an advert when we came through."

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/man-drives-tractor-cross-country-supports-wounded-veterans>



Media Highlight. Cindy was the guest on a Pod Cast for Brook Lane: Hope | Healing | Recovery last week. Jeff O'Neal, the CEO of Brook Lane hosted Cindy as they talked about OSC and Brook Lane's goal of destigmatizing mental health through honest conversations. You can hear the whole conversation [here](#).

How are we doing?

Leave us a comment or request for different content by dropping us a response to this newsletter or connecting through our social media platforms.



solace, camaraderie, and healing.

Walter Reed Caregiver Retreat | The Walter Reed Caregiver Retreat was a sanctuary for those who often stand in the shadows of service—the caregivers. This retreat offered a much-needed respite for individuals who dedicate their lives to supporting veterans. Through workshops, group discussions, and relaxation activities, caregivers were given the tools to manage stress, build resilience, and connect with others who understand the unique challenges they face.

Veterans Wife and Female Relative Retreat | Recognizing the pivotal role women play in the lives of veterans, OSC hosted a retreat specifically designed for wives and female relatives. This gathering provided a safe space for sharing experiences, learning coping strategies, and exploring self-care practices. The retreat was a testament to the strength and support that women bring to the veteran community.

Operation Second Chance: A Beacon of Hope and Healing for Veterans and Their Families

In the months of May and June, Operation Second Chance (OSC) embarked on a remarkable journey of healing and support for veterans and their families. Through a series of retreats, expeditions, and skill-building activities, OSC demonstrated its unwavering commitment to providing holistic care and creating environments where veterans and their loved ones could find



Male Veteran Retreat | The Male Veteran Retreat was an opportunity for veterans to come together, share their stories, and engage in activities that fostered teamwork and personal growth. From group therapy sessions to outdoor adventures, this retreat was a crucible for healing, where veterans could rediscover their resilience and forge new bonds with their peers.

Family Retreat | Understanding the importance of family unity in the healing process, OSC organized a Family Retreat that welcomed veterans and their loved ones. This retreat was a celebration of togetherness, offering activities that promoted communication, trust, and fun. It was a reminder that the journey to recovery is not a solitary one, but a path that families can navigate together.

Couples Retreat at Heroes Ridge | The Couples Retreat at Heroes Ridge was a unique opportunity for veteran couples to reconnect and strengthen their relationship. Through relationship workshops, outdoor activities, and quiet moments of reflection, couples were able to reignite the spark of their partnership and learn how to support each other in their journey of healing.


Spring Turkey Season Hunting Expedition in New York | For veterans seeking solace in the great outdoors, OSC organized a Spring Turkey season hunting expedition in New York. This expedition was more than a hunting trip; it was a chance for veterans to immerse themselves in nature, practice mindfulness, and experience the therapeutic benefits of being in the wild.

Marksmanship Skills in Red Lodge, Montana | In Red Lodge, Montana, veterans had the opportunity to test their marksmanship skills shooting at distances past 1,000 yards. This activity was not only a testament to the precision and discipline instilled in veterans during their service but also a way to channel their skills into a challenging and rewarding hobby.

A Beacon of Hope | Operation Second Chance's initiatives in May and June were a beacon of hope for veterans and their families. By providing diverse and inclusive programs, OSC has shown that healing is a multifaceted process that requires attention to the physical, emotional, and social well-being of veterans and their loved ones. As we look forward, the legacy of these events will undoubtedly continue to inspire and support those who have served our country with honor and courage.

HOW COMMON IS PTSD?

PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) can occur after you experience a traumatic event, like an accident, natural disaster, physical or sexual assault, or combat.

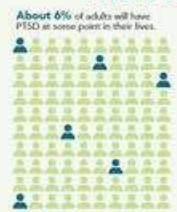


Most people who experience a traumatic event will **not** develop PTSD.

About **70%** of people (7 out of 10 worldwide) will experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime.

PTSD IN THE UNITED STATES

About **8%** of adults will have PTSD at some point in their lives.



PTSD is more common in women than men, in part because of the types of traumatic events women are more likely to experience, like sexual assault.

About **8%** of women will have PTSD at some point in their life.

About **4%** of men will have PTSD at some point in their life.

*We are learning more about trauma and PTSD among transgender and non-binary individuals.

PTSD IN VETERANS

- Veterans are more likely to have PTSD than civilians.
- Hispanic and Black Veterans are more likely to have PTSD at some point in their lives relative to white Veterans.
- Veterans who deployed to a war zone are slightly more likely to have PTSD than those who did not.
- Veterans who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely to have PTSD and risk increases with time in the military.

PTSD treatment works. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with PTSD, you are not alone. Learn about treatment options: www.ptsd.va.gov

If you've experienced a traumatic event, a 5 question self-screen can help you decide if your feelings and behaviors may be related to PTSD. Get started at ptsd.va.gov/screen

Raising Awareness Corner | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among veterans is a critical and often overlooked factor contributing to the alarmingly high suicide rates within this community. The invisible wounds of war, including PTSD, can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety, making it difficult for veterans to seek help or reconnect with their loved ones. This internal struggle, combined with the stigma associated with mental health issues, can tragically culminate in a veteran taking their own life. Addressing PTSD and providing comprehensive mental health support are therefore essential steps in combating the epidemic of veteran suicide.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

Resources for Suicide Prevention

- **AFSP**
- suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/veterans
- mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention
- veteranscrisisline.net/about/contact-us
- nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention

Women Vets New Outreach Opportunities | The past 18 months have marked an incredible journey for Women Veterans of Southern Maryland, growing from three to over 100 members. This substantial growth speaks to women veterans' unique needs and our community's resiliency.

Operation Second Chance is thrilled to present the Women Veterans Healing Arts Program - Summer series, a unique opportunity made possible by the generous support of St. Mary's Art Council and Maryland State Art Council. This series, building on the success of 2023, offers three transformative sessions over the summer, with more to come this fall. These workshops are designed to cater to both novice and experienced artists, ensuring that every participant discovers their unique artistic voice and experiences the healing power of art.

The Women Veterans Healing Art Program—Summer series consists of three transformative, free art classes designed specifically for women veterans. Beginning in June, these guided art sessions will facilitate empowering self-expression, healing, and community building.

Operation Second Chance initiated an all-women veteran's morale group, which began as a small gathering of three women veterans over coffee and has now blossomed into a vibrant community of 94 members, with a diverse range of events offered each month. Recognizing the need for a Women Veterans morale group, Operation Second Chance, a Maryland-based veteran organization serving veterans and their families, has taken the initiative to offer and sponsor this program. With the support of St. Mary's Art Council, Operation Second Chance launched its first Healing Arts program last year, engaging a total of 16 women veterans, many of whom attended multiple sessions. Building on this success, we are excited to offer another Healing Arts program - the summer series - throughout the summer, with a fall series planned to begin in late August.

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Operation Second Chance Invests in the Future: 39 High School Seniors Awarded Scholarships

In a heartwarming display of support and encouragement for the next generation, Operation Second Chance (OSC), recently announced the selection of 39 outstanding high school seniors to receive scholarships. This initiative marks a significant investment in the future, with a total of \$100,000 being awarded to these young individuals who show promise and dedication to their education and communities. Operation Second Chance, known for its unwavering support for wounded veterans and their families, has expanded its

The Healing Art Program is open to all women veterans, offering the flexibility to attend individual or multiple classes. In a nurturing and supportive environment, the program provides women veterans with the opportunity to engage in a variety of healing arts activities. These activities are not just about creating art but also about finding solace and healing. Our aim is to enhance the well-being of women veterans through artistic expression and foster a strong sense of community with others who share similar experiences. We deeply value each veteran's unique experiences and are here to inspire, support, and empower them!

The Healing Arts Program is graciously supported by St. Mary's County Arts Council, Maryland State Art Council, and Operation Second Chance. We are deeply grateful for their continued support and commitment to our cause. Their contributions have been instrumental in making this program a reality, and we recognize and appreciate their invaluable support.



Close to Home | Quotes From Patrons

Client Served 05/29/2024

Operation Second Chance hosted me and four other

veterans who served in similar capacities on a Florida fishing trip and sport clay shoot. The experience exceeded expectations. The OSD hosts and volunteers are genuinely great Americans who routinely donate time and resources to the program. Since retiring from the military, this is the first opportunity of its kind that I participated in. Reconnecting with like-minded individuals with similar experiences was refreshing and proved to be time well spent.

Client Served 05/16/2024

I had the honor of being invited to the military caregiver retreat at operation second chance. I really have no words to express the gratitude and appreciation for the chance to bond with friends and new friends. Heroes Ridge is breathtaking and inspiring. The views and facilities are amazing. Special thanks to our host Cindy and all her helpers that made it extraordinary and so much fun. Kisses to Jake.

Thank you
Sally

[Link to more](#)

mission to nurture the potential of young people, recognizing the importance of education in shaping the leaders of tomorrow. The scholarships, ranging in various levels of financial support, aim to alleviate the financial burden on these students and their families, allowing them to pursue their academic dreams without hindrance. The selection process was rigorous, with each applicant required to demonstrate academic excellence, community involvement, and a clear vision for their future. The 39 recipients were chosen from a pool of impressive candidates, highlighting their exceptional achievements and their commitment to making a positive impact in the world. This initiative not only provides financial assistance but also serves as a beacon of hope and encouragement for these young scholars. It underscores OSC's belief in the power of education to transform lives and communities. The organization sees this investment as a way to foster a sense of responsibility, leadership, and service among the youth, values that are deeply ingrained in OSC's mission and work with veterans. The scholarship program is a testament to Operation Second Chance's dedication to building a stronger, more supportive community.



Attend an Event

Interested in one of our events? Go to our events calendar and apply for one of our upcoming retreats. We have events scheduled at Heroes Ridge, Sarasota Florida, Red Lodge Montana, Durango Colorado, and local Veteran Outreach Community events put on by our incredible interns in southern Maryland, Tallahassee Florida, Bakersfield California, and New Jersey (coming soon).

[More Info](#)



Volunteer

Heroes Ridge, sprawling over 275+ acres, offers a myriad of volunteer opportunities for those looking to support veterans and their families. Whether you're clearing trails for outdoor activities, cutting wood to ensure warmth and comfort, painting and mending fences to maintain the beautiful grounds, or preparing and serving food to nourish the souls of those who've served, every effort makes a significant impact. Volunteering at Heroes Ridge is not just about lending a hand; it's about being part of a community that stands together to honor and support our veterans.

[More Info](#)

DONATE TODAY
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you can make a difference!

Donate

Donating to Operation Second Chance is a meaningful way to support the well-being of wounded veterans, providing them with the resources and care they need to heal and reintegrate into civilian life. Your contribution also extends to their families, offering them the support and services necessary to cope with the challenges they face together, ensuring that no veteran or family member is left behind. You can donate by going to our [Donate Now page](#).

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Operation Second Chance

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