



Dear Valued Donors of the Whitefish Veterans Support Team,

SPRING 2023

The Whitefish Veterans Support Team (WVST) executed another successful year, reaching a diverse group of veterans and military families whose challenges include both visible and non-visible wounds. Injuries including traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), physical disabilities/impairments, as well as the loss of a spouse while serving our country, pose unique challenges for veterans and their families. These WVST events make a difference in these hero's lives and are possible because of your generous support.

In mid-July WVST hosted eight Gold Star spouses who lost their husbands while serving in the military. These women were flown in from various US cities and stayed at Glacier Raft Company cabins in West Glacier. The spouses were treated to a Red Bus ride up Going-to-the-Sun road and hiking to Avalanche Lake where they saw a bear across the lake. They also experienced a two-day float trip on the Middle Fork of the Flathead River provided by Glacier Raft Company. They participated in daily counseling sessions provided by professional counselors addressing issues unique to losing a loved one.

The late summer veterans retreat included five couples from the 82nd Airborne who conducted the withdrawal of forces from the Kabul Airport at the conclusion of the Afghanistan war. In addition, three 82nd veteran couples from the Vietnam War attended. The 16 participants were flown to Whitefish to spend six days participating in team building events, including float fishing and hiking in Glacier National Park. Daily counseling sessions addressed issues common to both generations of veterans and provided effective tools for successfully managing their trauma.

In an effort to engage our local veterans, WVST teamed up with the Kalispell Veteran's Center and Iron Horse Golf Course. Iron Horse provided ten local Montana veterans one-on-one golf lessons at the driving range and a luncheon at the Club House. The group had an amazing day and they created new lasting friendships.

In January 2023, WVST hosted six couples and one Chaplain all members of the 82nd Airborne. For many of these young couples it was the first time they had a chance to get away from the rigors of military life and spend dedicated time with each other. The participants stayed in mountain-side lodging and spent four days getting private lessons to learn for the first time or improve their skiing/snowboarding skills and enjoy the great outdoors. There were several evening events hosted by local supporters and restaurants. Each day included group counseling sessions with their Chaplain and one of our WVST volunteers discussing issues unique to the young couples and the demands of military life.

WVST partnered with Dream Adaptive Recreation to offer ski instruction and equipment for six visually impaired veterans in February/ March 2023. Participants spent three days learning to ski and snowboard at Whitefish Mountain Resort, while meeting and bonding with other veterans. This program provided the unique support opportunity for participants to engage in a meaningful and challenging activity as they strive to overcome the obstacles of visual impairment. See the enclosed article to learn more.

Each year WVST works diligently to build on its existing programs, engage a more diverse group of veterans and look for ways to improve the lives of military families. We sincerely appreciate all of you that continue to believe in our mission and provide the generous funding to make all these events possible for the brave men and women who serve our nation. For more information please visit wvstmt.org.

Our sincere thanks to you for your continued support.

The WVST Board of Directors

Whitefish Veterans Support Team is a nonprofit organization that empowers US Military Service Members, Veterans, Family Members, Supporting Caregivers, and Gold Star Families to overcome the inherent hardships and challenges of military service. By providing physically and emotionally challenging activities, we strive to build meaningful relationships that advance interpersonal development, healing, growth, and resiliency.

200 Parkhill Drive, Whitefish, MT 59937

TO LEARN MORE GO TO: WVSTMT.ORG