



**FOR OUR  
TRANSITIONING HEROES**

The C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation (Catch A Special Thrill) was established in 1991 with a mission to host quality outdoor recreational fishing events for disabled and disadvantaged children. Since then, C.A.S.T. has grown their fishing programs to approximately 60 annual events in 30 states. C.A.S.T. diversified their programs by adding the Fishing Kids Program in 1996 to encourage urban children to get outdoors and fish. In 2011, the organization's Board of Directors and management decided to extend their fishing experience and program services to support transitioning disabled service members and their families.

C.A.S.T., partnered with the Warrior Transition Battalion at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State, founded the "**Take a Warrior Fishing**" program, and hosted their inaugural fishing event at American Lake on July 23, 2011.

The **Take a Warrior Fishing** event and program are supporting the recreational and sporting activities of the over 700 injured or impaired service members and their families of the Warrior Transition Battalion at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The objective of the program is to provide a once a year outdoor, recreational, community-based event supporting disabled/impaired armed service members and their families by increasing family interaction, encouraging outdoor recreation, and supporting positive community activities for individuals most affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other military related injuries. **Take a Warrior Fishing** encourages utilizing fishing as one therapeutic element that positively contributes to a soldier's transition back to military work or the civilian sector.

It is a simple fact that a recreational program such as fishing, designed around the patient's needs and interests reduces the need for medication and shortens the hospital stay. Recreation addresses medical and human needs. It means much more than having a set of activity skills for spare time use. It encompasses values and attitudes.

As the availability and importance of leisure increases in today's lifestyle, so does its potential for waste and boredom. Wounded warriors often have an abundance of leisure time to deal with. In and itself, leisure is neither good nor bad. A person's use of it makes that determination.

By providing structured and unstructured therapy driven services such as fishing, Therapeutic Recreation is used for:

- Improving physical abilities
- Building confidence
- Promoting greater self reliance
- Development and/or enhancement of leisure skills
- Strengthened interpersonal skills
- Development and/or enhancement of leisure awareness
- Empowering Veterans to advocate for positive self growth and change
- Enrichment and creation of a meaningful quality of life

The capacity to enjoy life and to maintain self esteem is vital to the well being of an individual particularly when recovery or transition is involved. Based on core knowledge of human behavior and physiology, the goal of recreation is the creative development of an individual's potential for self-sufficiency and enrichment.

The **Take a Warrior Fishing** event seeks to increase awareness and participation in fishing, provide both physical and psychological therapeutic benefits through the event, and also create a positive community activity for future participation. To support continued engagement for the individual or family, several angler groups and clubs are present at the annual event to encourage continued participation in fishing throughout the year by engaging the participants in additional club involvement.

The Wounded Warriors Program is a budding program for the foundation. We feel confident in our ability to make it successful given our 20 years of experience hosting fishing programs for underserved populations and wide range of contacts in the fishing industry throughout the country. We also feel that the timing is right to expand this program given the increasing population of returning wounded warriors. This program is a response to a need that has been expressed to us frequently in the past and currently plays a role in reintegration of returning and existing wounded services members. We feel honored to be able to offer a program such as this that has the potential to give back to those that have sacrificed so much for us.