

## MSCCN First Step Caregiver Employment Program

*MSCCN re-vitalized its caregiver training program to create the MSCCN First Step Caregiver Employment Program and offer paid training to caregivers of war wounded*

Imagine the isolation of a parent or military spouse placed in charge as the primary caregiver to a severely war wounded military member. These primary caregivers leave their home, family, support system, and especially their jobs, to spend months going from a hospital room to a hotel room assisting their injured loved one to recover from serious injuries incurred while defending our country. Life as they knew it is over and they are faced with medical decisions, financial strain, and a future that is no longer under their control.

Widows/widowers and caregivers of war wounded have always been the highest priority for MSCCN services. As the first nonprofit serving ALL caregivers, including parents, of war wounded service members, MSCCN established a successful sheltered on-the-job-training (OJT) program for caregivers and their war wounded in 2005.

MSCCN has a proven track record when training primary caregivers to work as interns inside the MSCCN sheltered OJT program. The MSCCN intends to keep in our employ the interns supported through sponsorships, grants, and donations.



We offer flexible scheduling, understanding teammates, and the opportunity to build new skills in the areas of community outreach, job referral and placement services, applicant assistance, and customer service.

The MSCCN interns will be responsible for outreach to wounded warriors and caregivers in their area and will assist in helping them find job opportunities, resources, and training. They will also work to educate corporations on the huge needs that our war wounded and their families face in the areas of retraining and employment.

MSCCN invites all caregivers of war wounded who are interested in learning more about the MSCCN First Step Caregiver Employment Program to email MSCCN at [askus@msccn.org](mailto:askus@msccn.org).

MSCCN encourages employers interested in financially sponsoring a caregiver to contact the MSCCN President and CEO, Deb Kloeppe, directly via email to [ceo@msccn.org](mailto:ceo@msccn.org). Individuals wishing to donate to the MSCCN First Step Caregiver Employment Program are also requested to contact Deb.

### Resources for Caregivers of War Wounded:

MSCCN was the first non-profit in the nation to assist all caregivers, including parents, of war wounded with their employment needs. Below are some other resources to assist caregivers of war wounded.

#### Wounded Warrior Project

[http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1027&Itemid=1120](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1027&Itemid=1120)

#### Operation Homefront Village

[http://www.operationhomefront.net/ww\\_housing/housingprogram.asp](http://www.operationhomefront.net/ww_housing/housingprogram.asp)

#### Well Spouse

<http://www.wellspouse.org/>

*According to officials from three national organizations—the [Wounded Warrior Project](#), [The Military Family Network](#), and the [Coalition to Salute America's Heroes](#)—an estimated 10,000 recent veterans of these conflicts now depend on their parents for their care. Working unheralded, these parents have quit jobs, shelved retirement plans, and relocated so they can be with their injured sons and daughters. (from [http://www.aarpmagazine.org/family/when\\_wounded\\_vets\\_come\\_home.html](http://www.aarpmagazine.org/family/when_wounded_vets_come_home.html))*

## First Intern Selected for MSCCN's First Step Caregiver Employment Program— Maria Cottrell



Maria Cottrell is a proud military spouse. Her husband Warren, a Sergeant in the Marine Corps, served his country for eleven years, including two tours in Iraq and one tour in Afghanistan. Maria managed the home front during his deployments.

Maria noticed a huge difference in Warren when he returned from his third deployment.

Warren was diagnosed with PTSD and hospitalized. Maria worked full-time to help support the family. Once Warren was released, she missed many days of work taking Warren to appointments. She never knew when she would have to leave work at a moment's notice because Warren often called her in panic, needing her at home.

Their daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and Maria shouldered the additional responsibility of more doctor's visits and the need to monitor her daughter's sugar levels, administering several insulin injections a day. Maria's health suffered – her blood pressure skyrocketed and she experienced debilitating attacks of spastic colon, problems her physician attributed to stress. She was also diagnosed with a heart defect and was finally forced to

give up her job.

Warren's income was drastically reduced when he transitioned from active duty. When Maria lost her job, this proud Marine family's finances bottomed out.

In March of 2009, Warren was diagnosed with TBI and now receives numerous medications to relieve his debilitating headaches. Maria will not leave her husband – she is committed to loving him and caring for him for the long haul. If she didn't shoulder these responsibilities, our government would be responsible for the costs of his caregiver.

Maria was desperate to find work but was unable to work outside the home because of her responsibilities for her husband's care. Unfortunately, she doesn't have and can't afford the basic requirements necessary to obtain a work-at-home position with MSCCN partner companies – her computer is 9 years old and the family can't afford any type of Internet service, much less the high-speed Internet service the position requires. She also needed a more flexible schedule than our partner organizations can offer.

This family doesn't want charity – they want to get their lives on track and make steps to build the financial stability they lost when Warren was injured.

In November, 2009, Maria is entering a special MSCCN caregiver training internship, through a grant from the AS-MBA Star Foundation, with a flexible schedule ranging from 20-25 hours per week. Maria will be working on the Gateway – first step will be posting jobs. She will then be trained to match applicants to positions, start working with candidates, doing internet research etc.

Maria is receiving a newer, albeit used computer, and funded internet services through MSCCN.

Maria is very excited about the opportunity to work with the MSCCN. She is thrilled to continue her connection with the military by assisting other military family members with their search for employment. She hopes to be a resource and a sounding board for other caregivers who like Maria, have had their lives turned upside down. She is so grateful to have the opportunity to alleviate some of the stress of their financial burden from Warren, who constantly worries about keeping his family afloat.

The MSCCN is honored to have this courageous caregiver join our team! We also thank Warren for his service to our country.

## Overview of Training Internship

1. MSCCN receives an "application" for possible candidate with two letters of recommendation about caregiver's status, plus the applicant provides a personal story essay.
2. Status as war wounded caregiver is verified through military channels.
3. Interview selection
4. Once hired, pre-employment interview to assess current skills and those needed
5. 3 month check to assess competency in new skills
6. 6 months - final interview, skill review, and letter of recommendation

The actual training will vary, based on skills demonstrated and new skills to be added. MSCCN will provide training in these areas:

Job posting on the Gateway

Applicant communication— both written and oral

Customer service

Setting up a work-from-home office

Guidelines for independent contractors

Increased computer literacy

Employment liaison with other war wounded families

Learn joint service (DoD) terminology

Internet research

...and much more!