



WARRIOR WORKFORCE™

August 2008

Volume 1, Issue 1

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- > **Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation partners with America Supports You**
- > **Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation offers OJT to war wounded and their spouses**
- > **The Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (MSCCN) and the Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation work closely together to expand job opportunities for war wounded couples**

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THE MILITARY SPOUSE PINNACLE FOUNDATION™ PARTNERS WITH AMERICA SUPPORTS YOU



MSCCN is honored to announce that the Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation, has entered into a DOD partnership with America Supports You.

"Our Turn to Serve"

MSCCN was built by a group of dedicated military spouse professionals. The Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation has been blessed by the work of exceptional individuals who helped us develop a

first-of-its-kind training and vocational education program for war wounded couples, under the auspices of the Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation.

Employers struggle with the reality of their ROI and profit goals when truly wanting to employ a war wounded couple. Constant doctor appointments and transitional challenges from military to civilian life for these couples contain too

many variables for many employers.

We understand the "fear of the unknown variables" that employers face when wanting to do their patriotic duty for our nation's war wounded by employing them as they transition into civilian life.

The Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation intends to hire 50 war wounded couples to work on the recruitment side of the MSCCN operation for a six month (Cont., page 3)

SPOUSE OF WAR WOUNDED JOINS MSCCN BY AMY ROSSI

Every once in a while you meet someone who fills you with wonder. I just did. Being in her presence allows me to be a better person. I am in awe of the grace and courage she has displayed during her struggle. It is astounding to me, a

fellow military spouse.

Paula's journey begins similar to other military families, a stay-at-home mom taking care of four young children, counting down the days until her husband returns. Her husband, Simon,



Paula Heine

is on his third tour in Iraq when Paula receives the dreaded phone call. Her husband is injured and returning home for (Cont., page 2)

**SPOUSE OF WAR WOUNDED JOINS MSCCN
(CONT. FROM PAGE 1)**

"As a wife and Army spouse I have a duty to be a strong person and deal with what came our way and not let it get in our way!"

treatment. For Paula the relief of finding her husband whole at the airport starts to fade, as the reality of his condition begins to set in.

Simon's injuries were on the inside and much harder to heal. Paula watched Simon struggle to get better and agonized with him as they fought an illness that none could see. As days stretched into weeks it became clear to Paula that she had "lost the guy she knew before" and that a little bit of rest and support from his family was not bringing him back. It soon became clear to everyone that Simon was no longer fit for duty and that he would be medically discharged.

Paula quickly had to shift into a new role, caregiver for a soldier with severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Her husband's PTSD was so severe that he could no longer leave the house and would require intense personal treatment. With little help, no place to live and no income, Paula realized the family did not have enough in savings. The family was ap-

proaching a crisis, so she turned to the internet to search for the help that she desperately needed. I asked Paula what kept her going during this challenging time she quietly said "prayer."

Paula was determined to help her husband get better and to take care of her family. She spent hours researching organizations and calling for help. Through her dogged pursuit she stumbled onto a few organizations that have changed the course of her family. Through the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (MSCCN), Paula found a career as a virtual administrative assistant. She volunteered her way into a paying virtual position. Operation Homefront provided a place for Paula's family to live while her husband gets the care that he needs. When I asked her about the organizations she said she felt "Blessed and thankful, just knowing there are people out there willing to help."

What gave her the staying power when so many others would simply give up? She said "As a wife and Army spouse I have a duty to be a strong person and deal with what came our way and not let it get in our way!" For me this summed up the true essence of a military spouse, a willingness to keep going no matter what.

As a fellow military spouse and wife of a soldier who is currently in Afghanistan, I had to face my biggest fear and become immersed in a world that is secretly hidden away. A nightmare called *what if?* A place that I often go late at night after the house is quiet and I am alone. Facing this terror with Paula helped me lessen the constant anxiety I feel. During our conversations I found a tranquility that I feel down to my core. There is a peace that comes from inside Paula and it draws you into her remarkable being, just knowing her I realize that like her, my family will overcome our challenges, together.



MILITARY SPOUSE PINNACLE FOUNDATION (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

period under our sheltered on-the-job training (OJT) model, in preparation for corporate job placement.

During this six month OJT, the war wounded couples train to build their skills sets in all areas of HR, job search, job match, job posting, and virtual office management, while sharpening their computer skills when learning how to manage our sophisticated Applicant Tracking System (ATS) provided

by Kenexa, Inc.

The next step is our spring-board approach when placing an OJT war wounded couple in a suitable corporate or virtual job.

It's been proven that job seekers, who are currently employed at the time of their job search, have a great advantage in the marketplace.

This is the power behind the Pinnacle Foundation's sheltered OJT model.

We want to provide every advantage in

the placement of our war wounded couples into meaningful corporate and virtual office employment. Pinnacle Foundation provides the training and placement, while MSCCN offers new or refreshed skill sets.

The Pinnacle Foundation is a recognized IRC Section 501(c)(3) organization in good standing. The Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation's tax ID number is 20-1130252.

Read about MSCCN and the Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation on the Web!

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

RESOURCES FOR SEVERELY INJURED

There are several outstanding resources for the war wounded and caregivers of war wounded to use for employment assistance. One is the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Look through the website at www.va.gov but also contact the nearest VA office for local assistance.

Another outstanding resource is the Military Severely Injured Cen-

ter:

"The Military Severely Injured Center was officially opened on February 1, 2005. The new center ties together military and other government programs, such as the Army Disabled Soldier Support System and similar programs in the other services, and those run by the departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs." 1-888-774-1361

Overseas Toll-free: Dial 0-800-888-0013; Press "05" to make a toll-free call to the USA; Enter 1-888-774-1361 to be connected.
<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

DisabilityInfo.gov contains disability information for all.

REALifelines is a third resource for war wounded. Contact your REALifelines representative at 1-888-774-1361.
<http://www.dol.gov/vets/REALifelines/index.htm>

Vet Success, found online at <http://www.vetsuccess.gov>, is for all veterans transitioning out of the military.





**MARINE CORPS WOUNDED
WARRIOR
“STAYING WITH MY MARINE”**

“May God Bless our wounded and fallen warriors and their families and may they be comforted in their pain and grief.”

Remarks by the Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Gordon R. England
The Center For The Intrepid and Fisher House II and IV Dedication Ceremony
Brooke Army Medical Center
Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX
29 January 2007

My name is Erica Auster and I am a caregiver to a severely war wounded Iraq veteran. My husband is Sgt. Charles Auster, a United States Marine, who suffers from a brain injury, PTSD, short term memory loss, recurring headaches, tinnitus, and so much more.

He is still undergoing treatment at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda and has been through numerous procedures since his injury in August of 2005.

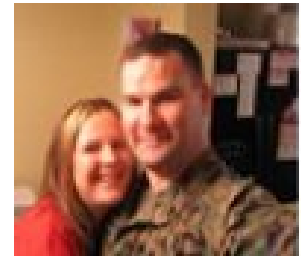
My husband is a hard working man. He’s a Marine, one of the few, the proud.

His morale after his injury plummeted to a very low point. His routine had been broken and so had his spirit. He lost brothers on the battle field and now, he was losing his career. After months of being home, he longed to be working. Marines have to work - it’s their nature.

His severe injuries inhibit his physical strength – that’s a difficult acceptance when you’re a Marine. He needed the chance to prove his capabilities to someone who was willing to work with him and allow him the opportunity to learn through repetition.

MSCCN was the only organization who hired my husband, knowing he was severely injured.

My husband applied for many positions. He hoped for a job that entailed repetitive computer duties or video games. He knew that if he could no longer be on the vehicle he loved so much, perhaps he could do something he knew he could not forget – computers. My husband spoke with a few recruiters on the phone but the interviews ended badly. My husband’s phone demeanor is no longer what it used to be. He has poor hearing in his left ear and because of this his



Sgt. Charles and Erica Auster

ability to carry on conversation has suffered. Needless to say my husband was not offered a position, nor was he given an opportunity of a personal job interview.

Military Spouse Corporate Career Network has been my husband’s second chance. They have allowed him to learn new skill sets through repetition and have given him an entire new outlook on life.

This once dragging man is now eager to learn new things and very willing to step forward once again into the working environment. Our positions with MSCCN are an escape from the doctor’s appointments, (Cont. next page)



Sgt. Charles Auster in the hospital



MARINE CORPS WOUNDED WARRIOR
"STAYING WITH MY MARINE" (CONT.)

surgeries, and constant rejection of employers and civilian recruiters.

Ever since my husband was war wounded in Iraq, our lives have revolved around doctor appointments, surgeries, and constant challenges with his health. Our dual and paid

positions at MSCCN allow us to take a step back from all of that and concentrate on something professional – enhancing our skill sets.

I am very grateful for my position with MSCCN. We're thankful that the MSCCN follows through with their

promises to war wounded and their caregivers. The MSCCN has truly changed both of our lives.

Our jobs gave us a normal routine again and a way to bring income into our family unit. I truly can not thank them enough!

"We're thankful that the MSCCN follows through with their promises to war wounded and their caregivers. The MSCCN has truly changed both of our lives."

ARMY WOUNDED WARRIOR

BY VALETA ACKERSON

**"FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE,
 THROUGH SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH"**

During the early years of our lives as a dual military couple, my husband and I often had conversations of how he would become Command Sergeant Major of the Army, that he would never leave the Army, and how he would be in for 30 years and then would still have to get kicked out.

The Army was everything to my husband, Army Sergeant Ronald D. Ackerson, Jr. He survived the challenges of being raised in Los Angeles, losing his father to a fatal car accident at age four, and as a teenager

being taken from his mother to be raised by an uncle and aunt who could offer him a better life.

Immediately after high school, Ronald joined the United States Army. He was determined to succeed in his career despite these adversities. When I met Ronald he was confident and strong, highly intelligent and driven - a leader who led by example and expected nothing less than the best.

When his unit in Germany was alerted for deployment, Ronald prepared me, a civilian at the time, for our



Army SGT Ronald Ackerson and Valeta

separation. We had two little girls who are only 23 months apart in age. We were very aware of the dangers that lurked in Iraq; however, our belief in God and that He would keep Ronald safe was comforting.

When the time came, Ronald packed his bags and went to war. Once in Iraq, Ronald was delayed
 (Cont., page 6)

"I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

Christopher Reeve



“FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, THROUGH SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH” (CONT.)



SGT Ackerson recovering after a bilateral craniotomy.

in Kuwait. The bag that contained his weapon was left in Germany; therefore, he could not proceed any further until his weapon was secure. On the tenth day of his deployment, Ronald was reunited with his weapon and was enroute to his unit's new home. I had not heard from Ronald in three days and was very aware that he was traveling. I knew that I would hear from him as soon as he was safe with his unit.

On Thursday, August 26, 2004, at 6:30 PM, I received a call that his convoy had been ambushed and that Ronald was injured in an IED blast. He had sustained head as well as chest injuries. His location and status of being alive or dead was unknown.

Ronald was sent to Baghdad for a bilateral craniotomy. Although skull fragments, debris and shrapnel were removed from his brain, there is still shrapnel lodged in his frontal lobe, along with plates,

screws and mesh that pieced him back together. Additionally, his sinus cavity was obliterated. Along with a Traumatic Brain Injury, Ronald has Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, memory loss, chronic fatigue and headaches.

We are currently stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. Ronald is still undergoing treatment and will be sent to the Polytrauma Center on Palo Alto, California and the National PTSD Center. The road to Ronald's recovery has been long, tiring, and difficult. My entire family tries to adjust to our new lifestyle and continues to try to reach a place of normality.

I have not worked since I left the Army four years ago to raise our girls. However now that Ronald's Army career is coming to an end and he is facing uncertain employability, it is important for me to find a job. I am a mother and caregiver in need of employment.

Ronald's health is not the same. He faces challenges physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. The combination of these factors can feel overwhelming.

I was so thankful that I found MSCCN! The opportunity that they afford "families" of the war wounded is immeasurable. They really consider the entire family and the issues that encompassed the family of war wounded veterans. I have been given a chance that I would not have had otherwise. They understand that my husband has appointments and demands that another employer would not consider.

We are not being given a chance to have jobs. We are being given an opportunity to have careers with a professional staff who cares for our men and women that have sacrificed so much. We are in a position to help other families like ourselves!

"I was so thankful that I found MSCCN! The opportunity that they afford "families" of the war wounded is immeasurable."



LETTER TO EMPLOYERS

Operation Homefront states that "According to recent statistics, **more than 30,000 service members have been wounded in action.** Service members disabled from injuries return home, are discharged from the service and have 30 days to vacate base housing. Then they have to wait, some as long as 18 months, for their VA compensation to begin while they continue recuperating at major medical facilities (and pay the mortgage back home)."

A recent study by

the Rand Corporation shows an even more alarming statistic when looking at depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI):

"... approximately 300,000 individuals currently suffer from PTSD or major depression and that 320,000 individuals experienced a probable TBI during deployment."

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG720.sum.pdf

These patriotic servicemembers have faced incredible

hardship and injury. They need and deserve what every person wants – to earn a living. They want to show that they can contribute to their country and their family once again. The sooner they can start on the path back to employment, the better.

Please contact Deb Kloeppe, President and CEO of the Pinnacle Foundation at 636.357-7524 if you have a job for an injured warrior or his/her caregiver. Monetary or virtual office equipment donations are also greatly appreciated!

They need and deserve what every person wants – to earn a living.

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO, DEB KLOEPEL

We want to provide every advantage in the placement of our war wounded couples into meaningful corporate and virtual office employment.

Pinnacle Foundation provides the training and placement, while MSCCN offers new or refreshed skill sets. The Pinnacle Foundation is

a recognized IRC Section 501(c)(3) organization in good standing. Military Spouse Pinnacle Tax ID# 20-1130252.

We invite you to join us in our mission to help military spouses, war wounded and their caregivers, and veterans find suitable employment!



Deb Kloeppe, President and CEO of MSCCN and Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation

"The military GIVES so much to our country freely; MSCCN will always be of no-cost to our military family for the services we render to them."



The Military Spouse Pinnacle Foundation

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THE MILITARY SPOUSE CORPORATE CAREER NETWORK (MSCCN) WORKS WITH THE PINNACLE FOUNDATION TO HELP WAR WOUNDED AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

About MSCCN's Veterans and Spouses Pinnacle Foundation

The Pinnacle Foundation is the premier liaison among the military, military families and employers working to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships between employers and veterans or spouses.

The Pinnacle Foundation is a recognized IRC Section 501(c)(3) organization that builds occupational skills that are in demand by local and virtual economies. We partner closely with the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network, our sister organization, to provide personalized professional career development for our candidates. Together, we provide the best possible training opportunities and career development services for this population.

Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (MSCCN)

The Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (MSCCN) was developed by a Navy spouse, Deb Kloeppe, and founded by Concentra in 2004. It became a separate non-profit organization in 2005. MSCCN works directly with large corporations and small businesses to place the best applicants in the best organizations. MSCCN is proud to work with military family centers and many military-affiliated nonprofits to find job placements for military spouses, military widows/widowers, war wounded veterans, and caregivers of war wounded. The MSCCN Team is comprised of military spouses and veterans.

Recognized by the **ESG** as a 5-Star rating Supplier
Military Spouse Corporate Career Network
A Non-Profit Corporate Direct Hire Program



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