

Helping Wounded Warriors is our duty

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Banner editorial: Helping Wounded Warriors is our duty

Dec. 22, 2008 -- November was designated Wounded Warrior month by the Army, but there should be no end to the commitment by those who take care of those injured while defending America's freedoms.

"We owe those who wear the uniform all the support they can possibly have. We'll give them the best medical care, and for the docs and nurses here, there's no doubt in my mind our troops get the best medical care possible," said President George W. Bush during a recent ceremony at the White House honoring wounded warriors.

While Carlisle Barracks may not deploy large numbers of Soldiers to theater, the military and civilians here can -- and do -- dedicate efforts on behalf of Wounded Warriors.

More than 40 Soldiers who were injured in the line of duty have enjoyed the Pennsylvania tradition of hunting turkey and deer, thanks to Randy Rakers, security manager and special security officer at the Army Heritage and Education Center. Since Spring 2007, he and his friends in the Michaux Yellow Breeches chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation have hosted Soldiers from the Army Wounded Warrior Program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Special veterans' licenses and the required tags were donated, as well as all the equipment the Soldiers would need. Each Soldier was decked out from head to toe in warm, blaze orange hunting clothes.

Rakers isn't alone in finding a way to help.

Members of the Army War College 2008 class donated \$2,690 to the Fisher House at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Responding to a unanimous choice to support the Fisher House, graduates Col. Gordon Roberts and Lt. Col. Anthony Johnson presented a check November 25 to Maurice Borde, in support of the unique program that meets humanitarian needs beyond those normally provided by the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

There is at least one Fisher House at every major military medical center to assist families in need and offer the comforts of home in a supportive environment. More than 10,000 families find a home at

one of the Fisher Houses annually – and no family pays to stay at any Fisher House. Donations are used to reimburse the individual Fisher Houses operated by the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The Army's Wounded Warrior Program is the official program to assist and advocate for severely wounded, injured, and ill Soldiers and their Families, wherever they are located, for as long as it takes. AW2 gives individualized support to this unique population of Soldiers, who were injured or became ill during their service in the Global War on Terrorism.

"There is no higher priority for the Department of Defense, after the war itself, than caring for our wounded warrior," said Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense.

Everyone who enjoys the freedoms that our brave Soldiers provide us every day owes it to them to do what they can to help.

Check out the support groups and nonprofits organizations. Help focus your local church, civic group or veterans organization on ways to help.

Volunteer at the Wounded Warrior Project to become a community liaison, or donate to the Wounded Warrior fund, CFC 11425 of the Combined Federal Campaign or to Army Emergency Relief.

"We owe more than just our gratitude to our wounded and fallen, their families and those who stood beside them in combat. We must do everything within our power to ensure they receive the care and benefits they so richly deserve. These veterans have given one-hundred percent and they deserve one-hundred percent back," said Amd. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, in a letter to all servicemembers.

It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do something. What are a few minutes, a few dollars or a few days to give to someone who has devoted their life to protect yours?