



2018 Annual Report

Who We Are

Merging Vets And Players (MVP) was created in 2015 by NFL insider Jay Glazer and former Green Beret and NFL Player Nate Boyer to address the unique challenges faced by both combat veterans and retired athletes.

These men and women can benefit from each other's strengths, experience and abilities to unlock their full potential and lead their families, communities and country toward a better future.



Mission/Vision

Merging Vets And Players' mission is to match up combat veterans and former professional athletes together -- after the uniform comes off -- to give them a new team to tackle the transition together.

What We Do

Our program combines a physical workout with peer-to-peer mentoring. Once a week our members come together for a workout facilitated by expert trainers in an elite gym. The gym provides a setting where veterans/players feel comfortable and confident. Participation in the workout is good for the body & brain.

Following the workout, they participate in the "huddle", an opportunity for them to come together, recognizing their earned scars. The huddle, facilitated by specially trained facilitators, offers support and shared experience in the hope of helping others choose strategies that will also help them be successful. This

peer-to-peer mentorship is supported by professional staff who also provide connection as appropriate to necessary services.

MVP recognizes that whether injured on the field or in the field of battle, athletes and vets often share physical challenges. They also share mental challenges. It has many names, but PTSD is not confined to wartime combat. It is a diagnosable mental condition that accompanies multiple kinds of trauma. As a result, both vets and players face transition that is often accompanied by a loss of purpose and identity.

MVP members can also participate in 4 service projects and 10 network building events. Events are inclusive of their peers, family, and friends and strengthen the foundation

Our People

Program staff are combat veterans trained in intervention models for the treatment of trauma. They leverage their network, understanding of veteran services and culture, and their own challenges of transition to build relationships with veteran members. The interactive MVP training provides staff with the tools to amplify the impact of their peer support and physical activity program. Our training and program model were developed by recognized experts in the field of mentoring and trauma-informed techniques.



OUR IMPACT

PARTICIPANTS

1,000+
program participants
in four key cities

RETENTION

92%
members retained
from 2017 to 2018

PROGRAM

95%
reported high levels of
satisfaction in program

HOURS

9,965
program hours
provided to participants

IMPACT

500%
more participants
attending 4+ sessions

RESOURCES

90%
reported high levels of
satisfaction in resources

EXPANSION

3
new locations in Atlanta,
Chicago, and Las Vegas

2018 STORIES



Michael Strahan

In October, Good Morning America host and NFL Veteran Michael Strahan and MVP Ambassador participated in a session with our Los Angeles Chapter. Michael interviewed some of the MVP participants about their experiences and revealed his own connection to the military in his family along with his own personal struggles of transition out of the NFL. At the end of the session Michael surprised all of our members with workout gear from his line MSX.





Heracio “Junior” Aguilar

LOS ANGELES

I been with MVP since the earliest stages so going on about 3 years now. I can still recall my first experience being a bit uncomfortable upon walking into the gym and participating in the session, however, in due time that changed. I not only grew as a person mentally but physically, in the time spent with MVP. I went on mission with a small group from MVP to Hurricane Harvey where we assisted in relief efforts, MVP has given me the chance to feel and act like a soldier again with my fellow brothers in arms. In fact, I even have lost over 80 pounds throughout my time with MVP and am back down to Army weight!

Lyft rides support me in several ways, I live a bit further than most from where MVP is held, the area isn't exactly the safest neighborhood, and public transportation is very challenging at night due to bus routes being limited. With that being said, my attendance at program had been affected at times since I started a new job that required early shifts. After MVP sessions, I would take a bus that was over an hour long leaving me with only a few hours of sleep per night at best. With the Lyft rides that MVP was provided, I have been able to cut that trip home by more than half the time, thus allowing me to obtain adequate sleep and rest. I am now able to attend the program that has been important to my progress in regards to my transition mentally, physically, and professionally.



Home for the Holidays

In 2018, Merging Vets And Players partnered with Hilton Hotels, American Airlines, and Michael Strahan for the Home For The Holidays Campaign. The holidays are a challenging time for our members who often feel isolated during their transition. To counter this, we provide the opportunity for four of our members across the US to be reunited with loved ones during the holiday season. We know relationships matter and even more so during the holidays.

Lyft Rides

In 2018, MVP partnered with Lyft to offer free rides to our MVP Members in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Chicago. Transportation can be an obstacle for some of our members to get to program. Operating in cities like Las Vegas and Los Angeles where public transportation is unreliable creates an initial barrier to participate in our program. This can set our members back in their transition process and many rely on our weekly programming to feel mentally and physically healthy throughout their week. Though Lyft's donation, together we provided over 100 rides to our members.



Andi Ward

LOS ANGELES

The person who visited me during MVP's Home for the Holidays was my younger brother Josh, who I was very close to growing up. The last time I saw him was two years ago, January 2017. The best part of being reconnected for the holidays with my brother, Josh, was not only getting to spend time with him exploring Southern California but also introduce him to my new world in a much more positive manner.

Last time Josh visited me I was homeless, so for him to see the change in my life was amazing. I now have an apartment, an extensive support network of friends, veterans' organizations that I'm involved with and continuously contribute to, steady work, and I'm finishing up my undergraduate degree at California State University, Northridge studying Kinesiology. As a person, I am more at peace, more comfortable in my sobriety, and more rooted in my community because of MVP and this experience they afforded me.



Roy Flores

U.S. ARMY VETERAN

Roy was born and raised in and around the projects in the Bronx, New York. His parents were immigrants who became naturalized citizens. He joined the Army in 1994 and believed in the Army's values of a brotherhood of men and women and the belief of defending the nation with the values of good vs. evil. When he signed up for my first 4-year tour, he thought "when I'm done, I'm done" but he stayed in for 23 years. During his first year, both of his parents died. "I was an only child, and at 18 the Army became my family."

“ I have lost too many brothers and sisters in combat and after combat while dealing with their own internal wars. I have helped many of them while I was on active duty and now that I'm retired by listening and continuing to being a mentor. ”

MEMBER STORIES



Roy was introduced to MVP by a fellow member. He attended the Las Vegas chapter's first anniversary session and immediately felt like he was part of a family again." MVP to me is that feeling of comradery and esprit de corps that we find in service, unable to be replicated anywhere else for veterans. It has been monumental and instrumental to my transition. It's a tribal and family community. I have lost too many brothers and sisters in combat and after combat while dealing with their own internal wars. I have helped many of them while I was on active duty and now that I'm retired by listening and continuing to being a mentor."

Roy sees that MVP is an outlet for his fellow service members and it keeps them moving forward through transition—it is a house of hope, sanctuary, and a family reunion every week with a good workout in between. It resonates with what's worked for him in his transition of balancing it family, laughter, and sweat.

He believes his next step in helping out his Vegas MVP community is by simply showing that if he can transition well—they can as well.

During his career, he was deployed to Iraq and did two tours back-to-back from 2003-2005. During an extensive, year-long process he applied and was selected to serve in the White House Communications Agency from 2009-2013 until another deployment in 2014. In late 2014 he returned to Fort Drum, New York until he retired in 2017 and moved to Las Vegas with his wife and two children. After leaving the Army, he took a couple of months off to regroup and started a new job in 2019 in Project Management in the entertainment industry.

In addition to Roy's new job, his family and MVP, he is working on a book/screenplay tentatively titled: From Bronx to Bagdad and Everywhere in Between based on the journals and logs he kept during his time in the Army. "I want to leave a legacy for my kids that shows a human element and also a behind-the-scenes look at military life."



Oren O'Neil

FORMER NFL PLAYER

Orenthall 'Oren' James O'Neal He started playing Pee Wee football at age 9. Despite great technique, hustle, effort, and love for the game, no college was interested. Pursuing his dream, he decided to 'walk-on' for a chance to play. He sat out the entire season and was eventually awarded a full scholarship.

On Sunday, April 29, 2007, Oren was sitting in church and ignoring the buzz of his cell phone, missing calls from the

Oakland Raiders, his agent, and numerous friends. He joined the Raiders as the first pick of Round 6 of the NFL Draft and led the Raiders 2007 run offense into sixth place in the NFL. Then disaster struck. In 2008, he went down with severe physical injuries. He was out for the whole 2008-2009 season. He came back as a starter in the 2009-2010 season, but injured his back and ankle and was cut from the team in April 2010. His football career was over.

MEMBER STORIES

"For a year I went into isolation and was full of rage. I was married to Kelsey and had James, my first child. I didn't talk to my wife, family, or friends." He found a job in Texas at General Electric as a steam turbine engineer but after three years the pain was too much. The first spine fusion surgery in 2013 for holes in his vertebrae didn't work. He gained 300 lbs., couldn't face a second rehab, and was out of work for another year.

Then he heard from Tony Stewart, a former teammate, that Jay Glazer was launching a program working with veterans and athletes in transition and in 2015 agreed to be the first retired football player to participate in the retreat that became MVP. "Jay was in the process of creating a safe place to connect retired professional athletes and veterans. The guys in the group felt a good sense of relief sharing their experiences and just listening to the others: "We went through different things, some had injuries, and feeling a sense of loss of our identity. As a former professional athlete, people tend to see you in a certain way and don't really respect your daily struggles, but MVP is different."

Oren went back to Dallas but kept in touch with the people he met at the retreat and MVP. Now he is expressing his anxiety in poetry: "I write poems for my kids so they know my story and to pass down some hard-earned wisdom to them." His next venture is a nonprofit dedicated to helping underserved youth by exposing them to new opportunities that'll show them possibility for their future.



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Donors & Supporters

\$250,000 and above KEY SUPPORTER

Mountain Primal Meat Company

\$100,000 - \$199,999

McCarthy Family Foundation

Blakely Paige

\$50,000 - \$99,999

American Airlines

Bob Woodruff Foundation

Dan Quinn

National Football League (NFL)

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Bellator MMA

Robert McCormick Foundation

The Oplinger Family

Workforce Software

\$1,000 - \$24,999

872 Laborers

Armstrong Foundation

Chicago Bears

Chicago Cubs

Denver Broncos

DTAGs LLC

Fox Sports

Golden Knights Foundation

Gugliotta Family Foundation

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Marines Care Foundation

The Gostfrand Family

The Kelley Family

The Morini Family

The Pack Family

The Modell Family

The James Family

The Slater Family

The Starker Family

Seattle Seahawks

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Supervisor Shelia Kuehl

SMAC Entertainment

Southern California Gas Company



WAYS TO GIVE

Annual Giving

Annual gifts to Merging Vets And Players provide much-needed, unrestricted support to sustain daily operations and fund our program that gives a weekly supportive team of peers to combat veterans and former professional athletes. Plan your annual donation to Merging Vets And Players and know that your contribution will ensure MVP can continue to offer life changing programming to the nations combat veterans and former professional athletes.

Endowment

Endowing Merging Vets And Players with sizable gifts and bequests is ensuring peer support for present and future combat veterans and former athletes in transition. Your donation will have a lasting impact over time, providing

resources to help our members transition with life skills and support they need to transition successfully.

Planned Giving

A planned gift will ensure MVP members will have a positive and supportive environment each week to thrive, leading to more successful and productive futures. Create your legacy and ensure our valuable, life-changing program continues to serve future members.

Corporate Social Responsibility

By investing in Merging Vets And Players you are making a tangible impact on the lives of combat veterans and former professional athletes who will successfully transition and become leaders and your future employees. In addition,

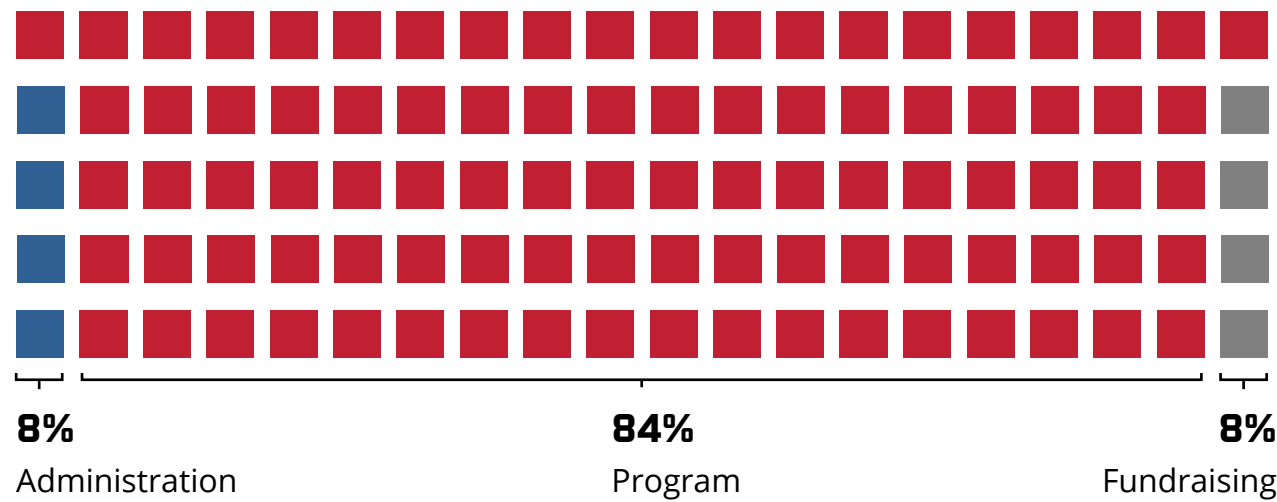
you gain valuable marketing exposure, which contributes to your profitability and creates healthier communities where your business will thrive. We offer a multitude of corporate partnership opportunities., from sponsorship of high-profile events, to experiences that enhance our members' success. Through partnerships your company will invest in providing a better future to combat veterans and former professional athletes while gaining valuable recognition and exposure.

Other Ways To Give

We also have unique opportunities for you to respond to the needs of our combat veterans and former professional athletes. Please visit vetsandplayers.org for more information.



Financials



“ The people that I’ve met here are the building blocks for the rest of my life. Without the conversations at MVP I wouldn’t be as far in my recovery. ”

- Kirstie Ennis (left)
MARINE VETERAN

CONTACT US

Los Angeles

Unbreakable Performance Center
8225 W. Sunset Blvd.
West Hollywood 90069
[323] 536-9322

Chicago

POW! Gym Chicago
310 South Racine Ave, 1st Floor
Chicago, IL 60607
[312] 829-7699

Atlanta

Team Manu MMA Club
2652 South Cobb Dr.
Smyrna, GA 30080
[404] 316-1110

Las Vegas

Xtreme Couture MMA
4055 West Sunsent Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89118
[702] 616-1022