



2019



vetsandplayers.org

Annual Report

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OUR MISSION

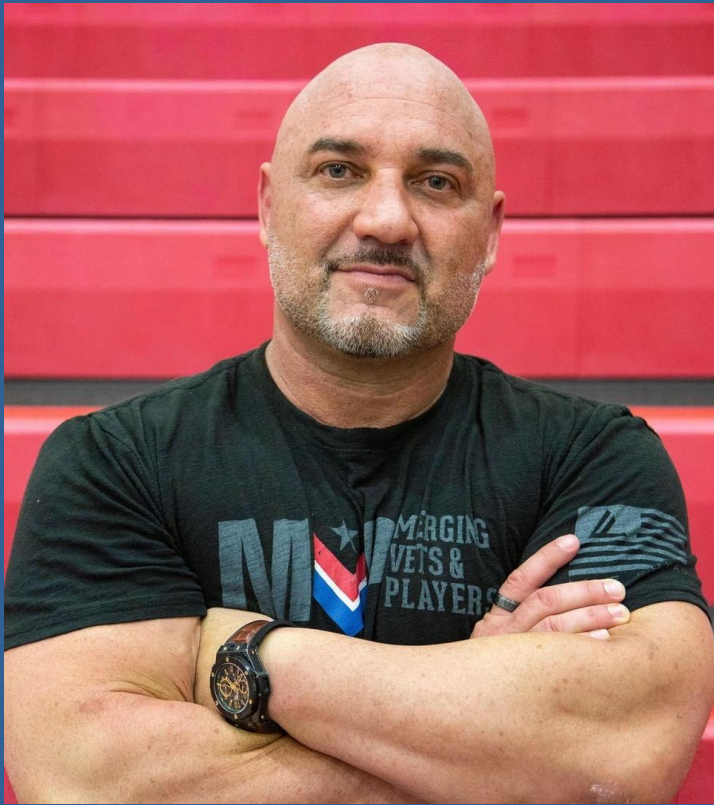
A photograph of two men embracing on a field. The man on the left is wearing a black baseball cap with the MVP logo and a white t-shirt. He is holding a black baseball cap in his right hand. The man on the right is wearing a red t-shirt and has tattoos on his arms. The background is a blurred crowd of people in a stadium.

MVP empowers combat veterans and former professional athletes by connecting them after the uniform comes off; providing them with a new team to assist with transition, promote personal development, and remind them they are never alone.

STRONG

PURPOSEFUL

EMPOWERING



“For me, MVP is a family, it’s a community. It is way more than a charity or a foundation. For somebody like myself, who suffers from depression and anxiety, one thing I learned in battling these issues, is that I need a team around me. I need a team to help me walk this walk and also, be of service to others. What I didn’t know going into this was, how they would intertwine and really help me, as much as, I have helped my MVPers. It’s incredible when we have an MVP Huddle, how smart and brilliant our crew is and how vulnerable we can all be with one another. I have learned from them, that vulnerability is real strength. We’ll have many nights where 80 people are in the Huddle, opening up about things that we could never talk about in a Boardroom or a fortune 500 company. A lot of these vets and players would never talk about these things with their families! For us, we get each other. MVP for me is a movement. It’s a mission and I think our crew will help change the narrative on mental health and suicides in this country. And most importantly, MVP, for me, is the family that will always love me. It’s the friends that will go to the ends of the earth for one another. It’s my crew and community, that no matter what, supports me, scars and all.”

Jay Glazer, Founder

MVP is my world, literally. Coming from both the military and athlete locker rooms while still being able to a part of those tribe is everything to me. We have grown a lot in five years as an organization. But there is no growth without pain, which we've experienced as well, especially this year. However, it has all been worth it, I must say. Personally, MVP has been a huge part of helping me open emotionally up this year. I have always been able to coach it but now it's time for me to be coached as well. Our team has been so innovative; willing to flex and outreach to people more than we ever have before. I couldn't be prouder as co-founder. Is what we do easy? Hell no! But it's necessary and absolutely worth it, just like every single one of us is. Who's got your back? We've got your back! MVP on three... One. Two. Three. MVP!



Nate Boyer, Co-Founder



MERGING
VETS &
PLAYERS

I AM UNBREAKABLE



WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

Letter from the Executive Director

Our mission is simple: MVP empowers combat veterans and former professional athletes by connecting them after the uniform comes off; providing them with a new team to assist with the transition, promote personal development, and show them they are never alone.

Because of our community, we have made strides in 2019, and our accomplishments reflect what happens when we come together with a common mission of supporting these two communities of veterans and athletes. Through our services, we provided 8,500+ hours of peer support programming to 1,000 veterans and athletes nationwide. Two new communities welcomed and grew with us in our mission – Atlanta and Chicago. Four of our veterans went Home for The Holidays reuniting with long lost friends and family. We set the stage nationwide for a new movement of support where several of our veterans and athletes shared their own personal stories of struggle and triumph on Good Morning America, The Rachael Ray Show, and Bellator.

With all of our growth and excitement, we remain committed to creating a future where all veterans and athletes have someone who has their back. This future is a place where all people, veterans, and athletes have a team of peers, supporting them and taking them from surviving to thriving, where anything is possible. This is a future where, no matter our race, gender, or identity, our unique differences, from the playing field and the battlefield, strengthens us as individuals and as a team. It is also a future that honors struggle, mental and physical, knowing it leads to greater human strength and purpose.

Our community made 2019 one of our most impactful years so far. We built and celebrated connections with one another, that inspired us to become the organization we deserve to be.

And we could not have accomplished all this without your support. We've got your back too!

In Service,



Jacob Toups
Executive Director

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, experiences and abilities to unlock their full potential and lead their families, communities and country toward a better future. Our unique program focuses on our members as the most integral part of the solutions, we strive to create. Our program faces, head on, mental health challenges and the lack of necessary and deserving support and resources. By anticipating outcomes, members build stronger peer relationships and develop a new sense of purpose. Creating a new team of amazing human beings, true bad-asses, who share the same experiences, good, bad, and uniquely challenging, is what we make sure we achieve.



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, and recognize their earned scars. The huddle, facilitated by specially trained member facilitators, offers support and shared experience to help each other choose effective and sustainable, personal development, strategies. This peer-to-peer mentorship is supported by professional staff, who also provide connections to appropriate services.





MERGING
VETS &
PLAYERS



MVP recognizes that, whether injured on the playing field or on the battlefield, 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 health condition that accompanies multiple kinds of trauma. As a result, both vets and players face transitions that are often accompanied by a loss of purpose and identity.

MVP members can also participate in service projects and network building events. Events are inclusive of family, and friends and strengthens the foundation for life transition.

OUR PEOPLE



Jacob Toups

Executive Director



Noel Huerta

Las Vegas Chapter Coordinator



AJ Perez

Marketing Manager



Bobby Wise

Chicago Program Manager



John Sterling

Atlanta Chapter Coordinator



Denver Morris

Los Angeles Program Manager



Issac Saldivar

Las Vegas Program Manager



REACH

Over 1,500 participants in four key cities.

HOURS

8,439 hours of programming provided.

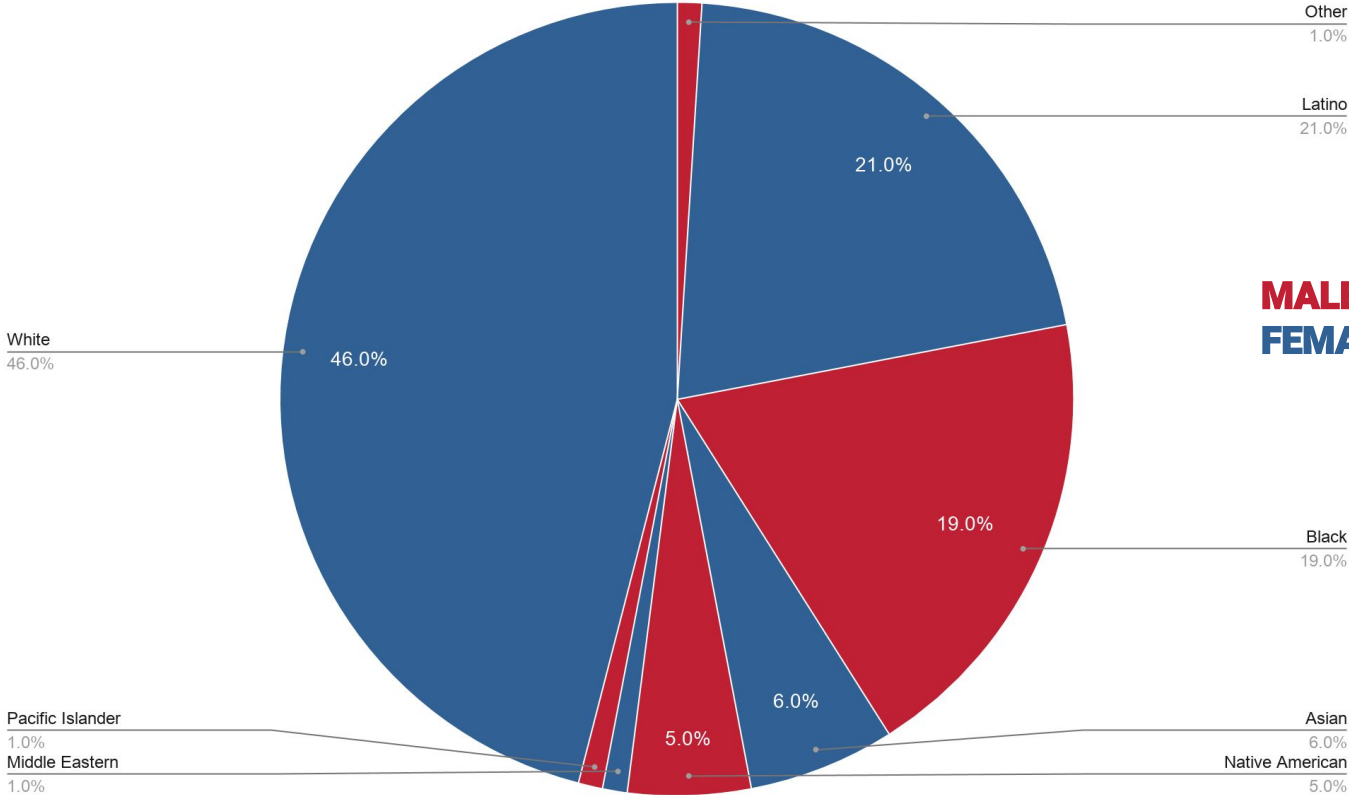
PROGRAM SATISFACTION

91% of participants report high levels of satisfaction in the program offerings.

RESOURCE REFERRALS

90% of program participants report high levels of resource referral satisfaction.

OUR TEAMMATES



MALE - 84%
FEMALE - 16%

The NFL & MVP: The Perfect Team

Both sports and military rely on teamwork, trust, and accountability to complete the mission. Many parallels exist within these two worlds and by teaming up together, MVP and NFL organizations empower both combat veterans and former professional athletes off the field of battle.

The Chicago Bears continued their support for our Chicago Chapter by donating \$5,000 this year.

The Los Angeles Rams invited the LA Chapter to a practice session & hosted a workout at their training facility.



How Zappos Empowers Us

In 2019, we announced our newest partnership with Zappos. The partnership intertwined our core values in pursuing growth and creating a rich culture. The Zappos logo was placed on each of MVP's earned member jerseys. The jersey is not something you can purchase, but rather earned from your commitment to yourself and the program. The MVP jersey is a symbol of hope and a promise to yourself that you will continue to stay resilient and on a positive path. Another component of our partnership is the love of community and service to others. The love and service to others empowers and re-instills confidence that they can create a new identity and purpose.



The Zappos.com logo is displayed in a large, bold, black font. The 'Z' is particularly large and stylized. Below the 'Zappos' is the '.com' in a smaller, blue font. To the right of the '.com' is a blue circular icon with a white 'Z' shape inside. Below the entire logo is the tagline 'POWERED by SERVICE' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. The background of the logo is white, and it is set against a backdrop of a large cardboard box.



MERGING
VETS &
PLAYERS



CHAPTER LOCATIONS

Los Angeles, CA
Las Vegas, NV
Chicago, IL
Atlanta, GA



Coming Soon

New York, NY

Expansion Cities: Atlanta & Chicago

Merging Vets and Players grew extensively across the nation in 2019. In Atlanta, we worked with new partners such as Vetlanta, Warrior Alliance, and the Atlanta Falcons to reach out to combat veterans and former professional athletes, in need. Each week our program was filled with stories of hardship and triumph that resulted in many of our members securing job opportunities, forming new peer relationships, and giving back to the Atlanta community.



In Chicago, POW! Gym hosted our sessions each week by talented trainers and staff. With the support from partners like the State of Illinois' Veterans Affairs Department, the Chicago Bears, and the McCormick Foundation, veterans and athletes found a second home in our program. Within a year, many were connected to critical resources from the VA, mental health retreats, employment resources, and a dedicated team of peers to support them, along their journey.





OPERATION JUMP 22

In November, MVP partnered up with Operation Jump 22, a nonprofit founded by a few Marines and friends who wanted to create exciting, impactful, life-changing events via skydiving. Taking place at Go Jump in Oceanside, CA, over 200 people arrived to cheer on skydivers sponsored by people, businesses, and donors. With fresh coffee provided by Trident Coffee and delicious BBQ from Bastards Canteen, all gathered in a private hangar bay filled with vendors, raffle prizes courtesy from some of our partners, music, and community. MVP board member Randy Couture was in attendance to help support the event. While the event was a success in that it raised over \$30,000, the real impact came from members/supporters who skydived in honor of their fallen brothers and sisters and signing their names on the "Wall of Remembrance."



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Each year, Merging Vets and Players partners 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 a member in each of our chapters to be reunited with loved ones during the holiday season. We know relationships matter and even more so, during the holidays.

Teak Safiya Wilson is from San Diego, CA. In 2007, she joined the Georgia Army National Guard after she fell out of work and was burglarized. A career in the service, provided her, an opportunity to start, a new career and gain a new team of peers. In 2009, Teak deployed to Afghanistan and then medically retired from the Army in 2013 due to injuries from her deployment. Much like other veterans, she struggled in her transition lacking the kind of peer support she had in the service. Now, she's pursuing carpentry certifications at Atlanta Technical College, while also working for the Georgia Department of Veteran Services as an Appeals Officer. (cont.)



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

(Teak cont.) Teak continues to serve her community through her current role, the support she offers her team at MVP, and as a peer mentor with Wounded Warrior Project.

For Teak's Home for The Holiday's experience, she chose to see her battle buddy SSG Sumpton Jackson. They met in 2008 at Fort Lee during AIT and they've been friends ever since. Through the really hard times for her both during the service and transition out of the service, he's listened and been a strong shoulder. He's currently stationed in Hawaii continuing to serve. Family comes in all different forms and Teak sees her battle buddies, like SSG Sumpton Jackson, as another member of her extended family.

Eddie Quehl was born in the Philippines and moved to the US at a young age, when he and siblings were adopted by a Marine Captain. He was raised in the Midwest in a Decatur, Illinois. High school was hard for Eddie and he lacked guidance. Feeling like he needed direction, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, after high school. He enjoyed his time in the service, from the physical and mental challenges of bootcamp to joining the 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion in the middle of the war in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, half of his unit was sent to the front lines in Afghanistan and many didn't return. He did not deploy, but did witness the aftermath, where many of his fellow Marines suffered from depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, due to the immense (cont.)

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

(Eddie cont.) amount of stress. At his two-and-a-half-year mark in 2012, he was deployed to protect the US embassies abroad. In 2015, he transitioned out and lost many of those he served with both during and after their service.

Transition was challenging for Eddie. He could not find his purpose and he still grappled with losing many of his Marine friends. He found MVP Las Vegas during his transition, where he joined a community to support his mental and physical wellness.

Eddie chose to go home to Decatur for his Home for the Holidays experience. He met with his family and friends close by. They reconnected and had a wonderful experience at The Drake Hotel in Chicago. The staff at the hotel surprised him with a fully decorated room, his favorite snacks, and a place where he could create new memories with the ones he loves.



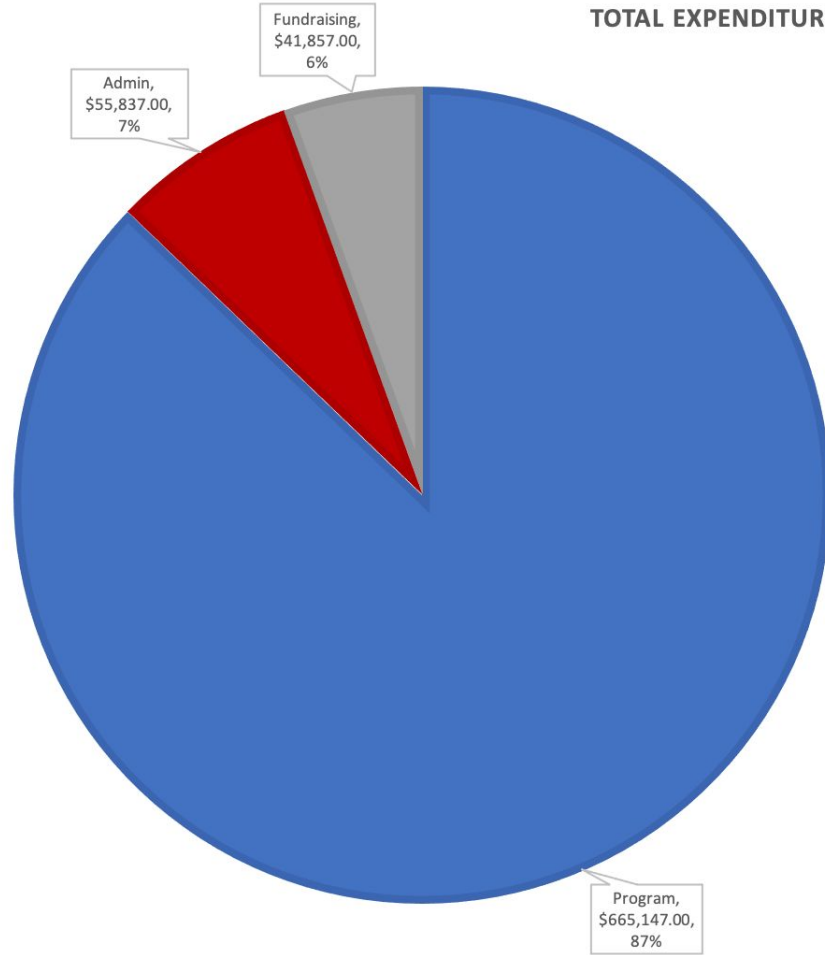
Condensed Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2019

TOTAL ASSETS	\$	451,640.00
Total Liabilities	\$	34,078.00
Total Net Assets	\$	417,562.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$	451,640.00

Statement of Activities for the Year Ending December 31, 2019

Revenue, Public Support & Other Income		TOTAL
Contributions and Grants	\$	903,573.00
Other Income	\$	600.00
Total Revenue, Public Support & Other Income	\$	904,173.00
Total Expenses	\$	762,841.00
Change in Net Assets	\$	141,232.00
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$	276,330.00
Net Assets, End of Year	\$	417,562.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$762,841



CHICAGO VETERAN - OSCAR KUSH



My name is Oscar Kush; I am from Chicago, IL, where I grew up on the southside. I reside here with my girlfriend and our new daughter, Winifred, and she is my "why." I joined the United States Marine Corps as a 0341 Mortarman upon graduating high school and served with 1/1 WPNS CO. 81'S PLT from 2010-2014, deploying with 13th MEU in 2011 and Afghanistan in 2012. I was a state qualifier wrestler in high school, which also helped with my athletic side to compete in Mixed Martial Arts, both amateur and professional, for several years between 2013 and 2018. Currently, I am the Marketing Manager at J. Blanton Plumbing and Gym Manager at Rio Jiu-Jitsu.

After I separated from active duty in 2014, I pursued college, while still training in MMA. I traveled a lot and trained at many places all over Southern California. Fought on UFC Fight Pass and got a Fight of the Night performance for Victory Fighting Championships in 2018. I now, mainly focus on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, where I'm currently a purple belt working towards my black belt. I've competed nationally and coached internationally in both MMA and Jiu-Jitsu. I've been to 30 countries at just 29 years old. In 2015 I backpacked through Europe by myself for a month. (cont.)

OSCAR (cont.)

MVP has reinforced my will to stay in shape physically and mentally. The environment of the program fuels you to do better. Recently, I have found that my confidence in speaking has gotten better as a direct result of helping facilitate the sessions. I feel like I'm starting to come into my own in an aspect that I usually have struggled with.

This organization has been an enormous support for me during my military and professional athletics transition and has really empowered me to do and be better. I look most forward to talking to members, who can relate when sometimes it seems impossible. Weekly, MVP is a support, to help keep me level, and that mean a lot to me. The members are my family. I make sure to look for them if they are absent and do my best to track them down and get them back into the program.

MVP motivated me to get involved in the veteran community and has been the catalyst in my drive to become a leader once again. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this program and know that this is still only the beginning. They have really made it possible to connect with more athletes and understand their struggles and push to help find resources for them, in a world that doesn't offer much. I highly recommend this program to both Combat Veterans and Former Pro Athletes.

Kami Craig - US Olympic Athlete



Kami has been successful in all levels of water polo. Beginning her career in Santa Barbara at the age of twelve, she eventually became one of the top centers in the women's game. After swimming and playing water polo at Santa Barbara High School, she continued her water polo career at the University of Southern California. In her four years there, Kami was an instrumental player, helping her 2010 team win the NCAA title. She was also awarded the Pete Cutino Award in 2009 and 2010, a prestigious award given to the top collegiate individual of the season. Kami also made an immense impact for Team USA, helping the team win three Olympic medals. She earned a silver medal in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and reached the top of the podium in both the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympic games.

As a member of Team USA for thirteen years, Kami has a number of international successes to accompany her three Olympic medals. She is also a three-time World Champion, a three-time Pan American Games Champion, and a two-time World Cup Champion. Many years of competing at the highest level have led to many great moments but, "standing on top of the podium hearing our national anthem being played was by far the proudest moment of my life," Craig said about her team's gold medal wins in both 2012 and 2016.

When reflecting on her Merging Veterans and Players experience Kami shares, "My introduction to Merging Veterans and Players came at a perfect time during my transition out of athletics. (cont.)

Kami (cont.)

Although water polo was a large part of me, I now know it's not all of who I am. The team and community that I developed through MVP was and continues to be a safe space to process and communicate challenges and successes of learning who I am outside of my sport. There is a certain power in connecting with others who share similar experiences to your own. For me, I found trust and understanding in the MVP huddle. I greatly value being able to show up as I am and to be supported at any phase of my journey.

MVP has been a consistent support, allowed me to serve others and to be served, given me a physical outlet, and has placed me back on a team. I am grateful to have experienced and to have witnessed the power of MVP and its ability to give its members purpose through challenging times. MVP is a safe space for any athlete or military to connect, empower, and to be empowered. I love my MVP team!"

Since Kami's retirement in 2016, her focus has been on empowering the next generation of athletes. Kami is making an impact at RISE Athletes, an individualized mentoring program that connects Olympians with youth athletes. Kami's work revolves around one-on-one mentoring to help athletes cultivate confidence and provide tools for personal growth in sport and life. She is, also, passionate about supporting athletes, who are transitioning out of their athletic careers and looks forward to continuing to learn in this area.

Kami is pursuing a certification with the Coaches Training Institute to become a certified coach. She also trained with the Center for Council, has completed anti-racism training through the Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso, and is working on a certification as a mindfulness instructor.

Kami is the Co-founder and coach for Camps4Champs, which are private water polo camps designed to build team comradery for female water polo athletes. Champs4Champ's mission is to empower and inspire young women through the sport of water polo.

KAMI (cont.)

You also may have heard her voice during a motivational talk. Kami has had many speaking engagements/opportunities with corporate, university, and youth athlete audiences to share her experiences and disclose what lessons she has learned in her journey. Her voice is not only heard on the stage, she, also, has a background in sports broadcasting, covering both men and women's Pac-12 and USA water polo games.

Kami's many passions continue to push her into many areas to share her experiences, inspire, and empower.



DONORS & SUPPORTERS

Albertson's Foundation

American Airlines

AT&T

Bellator MMA

California Foundation For Stronger

Communities

Chicago Bears

Chicago Cubs

City National Bank

Deloitte

Fox Sports

Gugliotta Family Foundation

Hilton Hotels

Illinois Department of Veteran's
Affairs

Marines Care Foundation

Mountain Primal Meat Company

National Football League (NFL)

Navy Federal Foundation

Northwestern Wireless Association

Peter & Stacy Hochfelder Charitable
Foundation

Raiders Foundation

Robert McCormick Foundation

Rock N Reilys

Seattle Seahawks

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

SMAC Entertainment

Southern California Gas Company

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

The Beam Family

The Blank Family

The Garland Family

The Gostfrand Family

The Hakes Family

The Hoesser Family

The James Family

The Jones Family

The Kelley Family

The Kirstie Ennis Foundation

The Kreitz Family

The Morini Family

The Pack Family

The Quinn Family

The Slater Family

The Starker Family

The Sullivan Family

The Weiss Family

The Whitworth Family

The Woodson Family

Vertical Bridge

Walmart Foundation

Workday

Workforce Software

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.

WAYS TO GIVE

A man with a beard and a green cap is leaning over, coaching a person in a blue shirt in a gym. In the background, other people are exercising, including one person lying on their back on a mat and another person holding a medicine ball.

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, helping them to 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 can thrive. We offer a multitude of corporate partnership opportunities, from sponsorship of high-profile events, to experiences that enhance our members' success. Through MVP partnerships, your company will invest in a better future for combat veterans and former professional athletes, while gaining valuable recognition and exposure.

WAYS TO GIVE

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 our 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.



WAYS TO GIVE

Stock Donations

Donating your stock is an easy way to provide sustainable support for our organization. Through our partnership with Neuberger Berman, we can offer the opportunity for you to transfer ownership of your stock in a form of a donation. You'll receive a tax write off and the feeling of giving to a lifesaving program in return.

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.

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