

## Walter Reed Society Assistance for 2024

The WRS has an Open Proffer to the Case Managers and departments that informs them that we stand ready to assist families with the purchase and or reimbursement of medical equipment/items that are recommended by the medical staff. All of the request that are sent to our committee have a recommendation by the patient's provider or they would not be sent. We do not have a sliding scale of our support based on rank to include lodging and other less expensive items as we have been blessed with some great donors who support our work.

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The WRS facilitated the placement of a maquette of the Viet Nam Women's Memorial in the heavily trafficked and visible Hall of Heroes at WRNMMC. The 24-inch maquette was gifted by an anonymous donor and the WRS provided a custom made walnut base and descriptive bronze plaque.

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The WRS funded a year-long art project for pediatric in-patients at WRNMMC that consisted of the custom creation of various art projects each month. They includes a large "tie-dye" project kit, that comes in a box similar to a carry-out pizza box. This kit captures the creative elements of tie-dye in a simple, contained, and organized presentation for patients to participate in on their own or in a group therapy session. Patients can work together in a solo, family, or group environment with little to no mess and a long term reward. The other monthly art kits consist of a small and medium art kit that is custom made each month and designed around the season and or holiday time of year that consists of various arts and crafts projects (drawing, painting, coloring, crafting, etc.)

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Supported the Graduate Medical Education event for National Thank-a-Resident Day.

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Supported for the Holiday Door Decorating Contest sponsored by the Directorate of Quality in support of staff resiliency at WRNMMC.

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Provided a Cubby Bed for a child with the diagnosis of autism disorder with associated developmental delays in speech, self-care, and fine motor skills; hyperactivity; and inattention. The family was medically evacuated to WRNMMC as the Soldier/father was diagnosed with cancer. The Cubby bed was disapproved by Tricare despite the fact that the patient is a risk of elopement at nighttime and increased risk of injury during this unsupervised period. He requires a contained safety bed to reduce nighttime falls and injury to self.

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We assisted the Human Experience Re-imagined Team in providing motivational materials and refreshments.

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Provided a grant for Internal Medicine's Integrative Health and Wellness Memory Training Program.

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Supported the Psychiatric Continuity Services as they provided innovative services to help our beneficiaries reintegrate into the community.

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Provided items for the Quality Directorate in supporting staff resiliency.

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The Society provided a personally designed stroller/wheelchair that has been denied by Tricare for a 7 y/o child with a diagnosis of autism with ADHD with lack of coordination, imbalance, no self awareness, risk for elopement and sensory overload. The request for assistance came via the pediatric mobility clinic.

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The WRS provided assistance for a 23 year old dependent with the diagnosis of spina bifida. He requires a special wheelchair that had been supported by Tricare but Tricare has disapproved his request for modifications and needed maintenance on the chair as he has "aged out" of their coverage. The family lives at Ft. Belvoir and the son is entering college in South Carolina. The WRS provided coverage for the cost for the chair modifications with a special custom seat, backrest and several other items.

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We provided a grant for a family who came to Walter Reed from out of state for the wife who has end stage renal failure to receive a kidney transplant. The father is a medically retired sergeant and they have two sons ages 7 and 11. They covered their travel and lodging expenses with their savings. They expect to be at Walter Reed another 2 months and continue to have bills back home consisting of mortgage, car, and all of their other living obligations.

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We supported activities for the Patient Experience Program for the entire year. The activities include Staff Resiliency Week, Staff Resiliency promotional supplies, Patient Experience Week, Human Experience Class, Holiday contest to boost morale, and support for various monthly and special meetings.

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In a carry over from last calendar year we continued to assist the mother of an active duty Marine while he was being treated for cancer at WR. The WRS provided a monthly grant for this mom and continued to monitor the patient's condition and her need to

remain with him. Thankfully co-ordination was made for them to receive his treatment closer to their home in Michigan.

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We support activities during Nurses Week, 6-10 May 2024. Hospital leadership hosted daily events for the nursing staff to show their appreciation. The refreshments covered multiple Nurses' Week events, including a breakfast for approximately 500 nursing staff and a pizza party for approximately 600 nursing staff. These events covered both day and evening shifts to reach both the inpatient and outpatient nursing staff.

“Walter Reed Nurses are extremely thankful for the donation and blessing that Walter Reed Society provides!”

“Thank you once again for support from the Walter Reed Society. The week was a tremendous success, made possible by your support.”

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The Society supported the WR Chief Experience Office with their Human Experience Reimagined classes.

They responded, “We are so very grateful for the grant from the Walter Reed Society to launch our efforts to provide additional resiliency support for our staff here at Walter Reed. These funds allowed us to show appreciation and added value to the lives of our Front Desk Staff and Resilience for our staff members!”

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We funded cooking demonstrations by Chef Egg for the Partial Hospitalization Program’s cooking programs.

“Once again, Chef Egg was inspiring to work with and made a great positive impact on patients enrolled in the Department of Behavioral Health’s Partial Hospitalization Program.”

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The Society supported the Occupational Safety Department’s Summer Safety Day in June.

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The Society supported efforts with the federal observances and cultural awareness events for May and June 2024. The month of May is recognized as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Holocaust Days of Remembrance and June is recognized as Pride Month. The Assistant Chief of Staff’s Office sponsored events to celebrate the achievements and contributions of these members of our organization.

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The WRS supported the 2024 Ethics Symposium at WRNMMC.

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The Society received a referral from the Ft. Detrick AER Office for a spouse of an active duty Army soldier who is on an unaccompanied assignment in Korea. The spouse decided to relocate to Boonsboro, MD where she has a sister and to be close to Walter Reed for the care of her daughter who has Rubinstein Taybi syndrome requiring extensive home care. The family has been in the Army's EFMP. There were a number of other family stressors. The WRS provided a great to assist this in-need family.

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We provided funds to purchase a non-medical containment bed (Cubby Bed) for the 11 y/o daughter of a active duty soldier stationed at Ft Belvoir. The daughter has been diagnosed with Phelan McDermid Syndrome. Her medical team submitted a request for this bed but it was denied by TriCare.

Comments of a provider: "This equipment is being requested because the usual payors (CMS, Medicaid, Humana, Tricare, etc) consider this item to be a "luxury item" and as such they no longer approve some durable medical equipment for pediatric and adult patients. This has happened in pediatric and adult medicine in the special needs population (think EFMP) over the last several years.

It is extremely frustrating as a physician and subject matter expert in the field to be told that your opinion/evaluation of this child/adult has less value because of the costs associated with a needed piece of equipment. And, even when you offer robust explanations of how this equipment can improve the quality of life for the patient and family and how ultimately it will diminish the burdens on the healthcare system, the need goes unmet.

This is one of the many reasons I am thankful we have an organization like the WRS to help fill what feels like a widening gap in healthcare that ultimately impacts us all."

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The WRS provided a special wheelchair per a request for assistance via the MATC for a retiree who is in need due to his medical condition. He was involved in a military training accident that resulted with this injury. He underwent surgery in Feb 2024 for cervical myelopathy. Post-op he continues to have numbness in the upper extremities which impairs his ability to perform a functional grip and grasp pattern. His ability to ambulate is impaired from his cervical myelopathy and lumbar radiculopathies. He can ambulate in the house with a cane but has fallen multiple times. He is not ambulating in the community and using a K4 manual WC on loan from the VA.

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The Society provided support for the National Capital Consortium's 2024 Chief Residents Leadership Symposium.

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The Society responded to a request for assistance via the WRNMMC Mobility Clinic for a 20 y/o AD USAF who was sent to WR from his assignment in Tampa. He was diagnosed with inoperable cancer and so far chemo is keeping it at bay. He gets short of breath and tires very easily and this is unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair. He doesn't have a way to transport the regular power wheelchairs. This wheelchair is a new carbon steel that the clinic finds very useful in many situations and is not available through Tricare. It will allow him independence to get around in his room in building 62 and the hospital area. It will also facilitate transport for him to get around in the community.

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The Society also received a request from the WRNMMC Mobility Clinic for an active duty dependent in the DC area. This is a 17-year-old spastic diplegic with cerebral palsy who is cognitively intact however the hemiplegia prevents the performance of many of the mobility related activities of daily living without expending a great amount of energy. She underwent a "leg lengthening surgery" in February and is doing well. She would benefit from a mobility aid such as this Q50R carbon fiber Quickie wheelchair as it will afford her the opportunity to engage in activities safely both at home and in the community with greater energy conservation and with a greater degree of safety. She is going to college next year and needs a wheelchair that will allow her to be independent and that is easy to transport. This item is not covered by Tricare but was provided by the WRS.

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We provided support for the National Capital Consortium Graduate Medical Education graduation at the Strathmore in June 2024.

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The WRS provided a safety bed for a 6 y/o patient referred by the Pediatric Mobility Clinic at WR that Tricare denied. This bed is for a 6 year old with epilepsy, congenital hypotonia hypermobility syndrome, short stature, and bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. He has no safety awareness and has been eloping from his bedroom nightly. The parents have other children in the family as well. They have tried a child lock on the door and various measures to contain him to the bedroom at night. He is able to get out the bedroom and goes to other bedrooms in the house and wakes everyone up and dismantles the belongings in the rooms. He has recently sustained leg contusions from removing his mattress from his bed frame and pushing both the mattress and the bed frame to climb toward the door lock. "The safety bed would greatly benefit the patient and family."

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The WRS provided support to the monthly Director's Town Hall Meetings.

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The WRS provided support for Organization Day at WRNMMC.

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At the request of a Case Manager the Society provided a grant to a former enlisted Navy member who was medically discharged with a 100% disability rating. She has been experiencing housing challenges and has been in and out of subsidized housing to include homeless situations. She has been unable to work due to her medical condition.

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The WRS has continued to provided vouchers for taxi support for patients who were brought via ambulance to the Emergency Department at WRNMMC and had no way to get back home. These vouchers are managed by ED personnel.

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The WRS was approached by a Case Manager from the Physical Medicine and Rehab Department with the request to support the spouse of an active duty member. He was a professional skydiver who was injured during a skydiving accident in Kenya and transported to WRNMMC with mild TBI, multiple fractures and other issues related of his accident. He had progressed to the point of being ambulatory with the aid of a walker and was ready for driver evaluation, training and equipment.

Not covered by Tricare or insurance companies his evaluation and training was provide by the Water Reed Society.

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The WRS sponsored 35 junior enlisted members to attend the WRNMMC Murder Mystery Dinner in October.

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Supported the annual Joint Service Graduate Medical Education Selection Board.

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The Society provided a grant to the Silver Spring Town Center (SSTC), Inc to support their programs for arts and recreation for citizens in Montgomery County and the Silver Spring area. They offer events in an ongoing manner with many of their activities in Veterans Plaza in Silver Spring. This support is meant to extend our footprint and community knowledge about the WRS and our work as part of our marketing campaign. We will be listed front and center on all of their activities throughout the year along side their current sponsors.

SSTC events feature documentary films about Veterans, host a hands-on art activity for Veterans and their families and community, showcase musicians who are Veterans, host talks related to veterans in our area, offer historical presentations about Walter Reed and other activities that we feel important.

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The Society received a request for assistance from a Case Manager in the mobility clinic for an active duty patient who has been at WRNMMC for the past 3.5 years being treated for metastatic melanoma that started in the lungs and has spread to organs and pelvis. She has been involved with several clinical trials both at WRNMMC, Pittsburgh and Houston. She has been attached to the Pentagon while undergoing treatment.

The current request is for a more advanced wheelchair since the cancer now involves her pelvic area. The clinic has provided her with a loaner and it makes a huge difference in her ability to be more mobile. Tricare would not cover the recommended wheel chair. The WRS did.

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The WRS assisted the family of a Navy member who was injured in a military vehicle accident in Guam. He has severe TBI, multiple fractures, was in a coma for over a month and is still unable to speak. He was sent to the VA's TBI center in Tampa but is now residing in building 62 at WRNMMC awaiting medical board action.

Having used up all their savings and maxed out their credit cards, the current request is to help the family celebrate the holidays both here and at home with their son. The Society provided assistance with this request.

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Supported wellness activities for the Ob-Gyn Oncology Fellowship Program.

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Supported farewell activities for the Directorate of Quality.

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Provided the Pastoral Care Department support to celebrate the Jewish Holiday Rosh Hashanah.

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As an exception to our usual policy, we provided support to a 100% disabled veteran with an an 8y/o autistic son and spouse who lost her job due to illness. This is an exceptional case and there is no doubt that the needs are genuine.

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Provided support for 2nd Annual GME Professionals Day.

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We are in the process approval for the purchase of books to restock the Walter Reed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) patient/family book collection.

NICU personnel said: "We would like to restock these for the staff/parents of our "tiniest heroes", many of whom spend their first several months after birth in the hospital."



## **WRS Support for Alexander T. Augusta Military Medical Center**

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The Walter Reed Society provided commissary cards for 90 enlisted personnel at Alexander T. Augusta Military Medical Center during 2023 Holiday Season.

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In a continuation of last year's support, the WRS provided vouchers for taxi support for patients who were brought via ambulance to the Emergency Department ATAMMC and had no way to get back home or were transported from WRNMMC to AAMMC via ambulance and had no way to get back to their POV at WRNMMC.

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The WRS supported a breakfast for "Doctor's Day."

"We are incredibly grateful for the support that the Walter Reed Society consistently provides!"

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The WRS provided support for the 3rd Annual Research Symposium at ATAMMC.

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The Society supported a week-long celebration for Nurses Week at both ATAMMC and the Pentagon's DiLorenzo Clinic.

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Provided support to purchase equipment to bolster internal fund-raising efforts

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The WRS provided a grant to repair and refinish outdoor furniture at the Intrepid Spirit Center at Fort Belvoir. The work was completed by volunteers.

ATAMMC said: "We think it (the furniture) looks great!!! Our outdoor space will be nice for our patients again."

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The WRS provided support to the "One Team Festival" deigned to promote teamwork and camaraderie among the staff at ATAMMC.

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The WRS provided support for both the Pentagon's DiLorenzo Clinic's monthly morale events as well the clinic staff's Holiday event.

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The Society supported the ATAMMC 2024 Hospital Ball in September 2024.



## WRS Collaboration with Other Non-profits

Several years ago the Society made a conscious effort to expand our collaboration with other non-profits. We saw this as an opportunity to be a “force multiplier.” Most of the efforts have been in the NCR but on occasion we reach out beyond to assist non-profits that are well known to at least one and sometimes more of our Board members. Some of these listed below are continuations of successful collaborations from 2023 or before.

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The WRS funded quarterly wounded warrior dinners for the **Disabled American Veterans** Night-Out Program at the American Legion Post 41.

From the DAV: “Again, thank you so much for all you do!”

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The WRS supported the Day of Belonging for the **Community Building Art Works** event at the Strathmore in September.

They responded: We’re so grateful for Walter Reed Society's support. We hosted our event at Strathmore Mansion's capacity this year and had to cap registration before the event. We outgrew our venue and are looking for a larger venue next year to support growing demand for this meaningful occasion.

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In collaboration with **Mission M4**, a pediatric gaming station was provided to improve the therapeutic environment and provide a much need distraction for children and their families as they receive care on the inpatient pediatric ward at WRNMMC.

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In collaboration with **Mission M4**, the WRS assisted with replacement and upgrade of the MRI in-bore viewing system at WRNMMC.

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As in previous years, the WRS funded the **Oakleaf Club of Greater Washington’s** stuffed animal program providing stuff animals to children being cared for at WR.

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In a continuing collaboration with the **American Red Cross** the WRS purchased Inner Balance Bluetooth sensors for distribution to appropriate patients referred by providers with the hospital. The Inner Balance sensor and app teach you how to shift from stress and frustration to balance and resilience with real-time feedback, based on your own heart rhythm.

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Again in collaboration with the **American Red Cross** the WRS provided Alpha Stim devices for appropriately referred patients. These devices may assist with non-drug treatment of anxiety, insomnia, depression, and pain. Tricare has refused to provide them for active duty patients even when requested by DoD providers.

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Along with the **American Red Cross** the WRS sponsored the second Rose Mologne Award given to a outstanding Red Cross Volunteer at WRNMMC. The WRS provided the recipient an engraved crystal rose bud vase.

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The WRS provided another grant to the local chapter of **Blue Star Families** supporting their work with military families in the area.

Blue Star Families National Capital Region Chapter responded: "We are grateful for the support of the Walter Reed Society enabling us to fulfill our mission to support the military families across our community. Your partnership and active engagement has ensured our programs, events, and the various new initiatives we undertake to be a success."

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The Society provided support to **Wreaths Across America** by sponsoring Veterans' Wreaths to be placed at the US Soldiers' & Airmen's Home National Cemetery. For each wreath we sponsored, volunteers will place a wreath on a headstone and said the Veteran's name out loud, continuing their story for the next generation.

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Support for **Operation Key West** (OKW) to provide quarterly events at Dave and Busters for the pediatric patients and their families at Portsmouth Naval Medical Center. In addition to the quarterly parties OKW provides 12 "Smile Packages" (one per month) to the entire family of an ill child identified in coordination with the hospital.

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The WRS provided support to the **Fisher Houses Bethesda** to purchase needed supplies for the families staying at Fisher Houses.

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At the request and with the support of Carlton Kammerer, WRS Liaison for Sports and Recreation, we provided a grant to the **Salute Military Golf Association** (SMGA) to support a veteran's golf program at the University of the Pacific.

SMGA replied "It is because of donations such as yours, that SMGA is able to highlight the role the game of golf can provide in assisting a wounded veteran's transition to civilian life or back to active duty. Your donation will help pay for golf instruction and golf equipment integral to rehabilitation, as well as expand our mission to new sites. Thank

you for helping SMGA to continue to make a difference in post 9/11 wounded and injured veterans' lives through the game of golf. Not only did you make a difference, you've been part of a wounded veteran's rehabilitation, and changed their lives forever.

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At the suggestion of Carlton Kammerer and Dan Bullis, WRS VP for Patient Services, the Society looked into an organization, **Leashes of Valor**, that provides service dogs to veterans. Founded in 2017 by retired Marine Corps Capt. Jason Haag, who suffered from severe symptoms of post-traumatic stress following three deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Leashes of Valor's motto is "One Leash Saves Two Lives" — the life of a veteran and the life of a dog.

Jason had tried many treatments, but it was a service dog named Axel that ultimately changed his life. "I wanted to give that gift to others," Haag said. Since its founding, Leashes of Valor has successfully paired more than 30 dogs with veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and other "unseen wounds" of their military service.

Leashes of Valor's approach is to, whenever possible, obtain their canines from shelters and rescue groups or are owner surrenders. They train the dogs for up to two years before they are paired with a veteran. The veteran then spends 10 days in residence learning how to work with their new service dog.

The success, the positive influence each service dog has had on the veterans, is impressive. The Leashes of Valor website has photos and testimony from many veterans that capture and communicate the close attachment, the bonding between the veteran and their dog.

The WRS Board of Directors voted to support Leashes of Valor with a significant donation to cover all costs associated with the two year process of raising and training four service dogs including food, veterinary care, transportation, training, and other expenses.

"We are humbled and grateful for this tremendous donation," said Chris Bowers, program director for Leashes of Valor and a retired Marine who lost his leg in a bomb blast in Iraq.

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The Walter Reed Society has been contributing to **AHIMA Foundation** Scholarship Program since 2013. Through this program Veterans and/or spouses are eligible to receive a scholarship to pursue an associate, bachelors, masters degree in health information management or health informatics.