



**Helping Local Warriors and
Their Families Thrive**

2024 ANNUAL REPORT





Celebrating a Year of Continued Growth and Impact

Our 10th year of service brought continued growth for Upstate Warrior Solution (UWS) and impact for local warriors! Thanks to the community's ongoing support and the collaboration of our partners, we saw veterans, first responders, and their families thrive in new ways in 2023.

In this report you'll find examples of our collective impact and an overview of UWS's key programs that foster holistic wellness. As you'll see, suicide prevention is at the heart of our work. In the last year, we've expanded our services to include free ASIST workshops for the community (in partnership with the VA's SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Program) as well as innovative peer support training for first responders, chiefs, sheriffs, and their spouses. Through our holistic case management and these new targeted efforts, our team is laser-focused on saving lives.

In its first year, the Rupert Huse Veteran Center brought new synergy with partners and more streamlined services for our warriors and their families. First responders found hope through mental health support; families experienced healing in our therapeutic art classes. Veterans renewed their purpose through employment; warriors and community members alike found comradery at B2L Gym. Truly, the "Rupe" has exceeded expectations as a one-stop shop serving the whole person.

On behalf of the warriors and families whose lives are being changed daily through your investment in and support of our mission, ***thank you!*** We're only just beginning.

Charlie Hall
Lieutenant Colonel, USMCR
President, UWS

Thank you for your ongoing support!



2023 OUTCOMES & IMPACT



Serving Local Warriors: Our Duty and Honor



1,827
Local
Veterans
Served



257
Family
Members
Served



125
First
Responders
Served*

3,268 Life-Changing Resources Provided



422
Benefits
Assistance



571
Workforce
Development



512
Mental & Physical
Health



420
Housing



226
Basic
Needs



187
Legal



196
Family
Support



244
Recreational
Events



388
Therapeutic
Art



102
Spiritual

* Of the 125 first responders served in 2023, thirty-one were also military veterans.



2023 SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Our county-based Warrior Advocate teams offer boots-on-the-ground support to those we serve. They operate as resource navigators, case managers, and a friendly face when our warriors need it most.

David M. / Air Force Veteran

David was referred to UWS by a concerned citizen who found him in distress at a gas station in Spartanburg. It was clear the veteran struggled with his memory and hadn't showered in months. When our team saw David's deteriorated living conditions, we partnered with United Way of the Piedmont and local veteran advocate, Craig Burnette, to coordinate a full care plan, including emergency food and medical necessities.

Soon after, David was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. He was admitted to Richard Campbell Nursing Home and then to hospice care. Because he had no living family, our team stepped in to ensure he ended his life with dignity.

"David truly became like family. The last time Craig saw him, he told him how much he loved us and that we are his family." —Lauren O'Dell, UWS Spartanburg Advocate

Tim F. / Army Veteran & Volunteer Fire Fighter

Tim lives with his disabled wife and two grandsons on a fixed income. When we connected, they were in severe financial difficulty with only \$17 in their bank account. Moreover, their home was in critical need of repair. To keep warm, Tim and his family ran as many as four space heaters at a time, an unsustainable solution that only increased their power bill.

Our team coordinated with the Oconee County Veterans Council to refuel Tim's propane tank. We also helped him navigate the process of filing for VA benefits to help ease their finances moving forward. Today, we're collaborating with Emmanuel's Hammer to complete home repairs and reduce their energy costs.

"Sometimes life gets hard; you just hold on the best you can. Working with UWS has made a big difference for us!" —Tim F.



2023 SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS



Herman M. / Air Force Veteran

When we met Herman, he and his family were living out of a car. Our team supported his search for housing with Alston Wilkes Society and provided immediate assistance through toiletries, gas cards, and cold weather clothes. Over the holidays, they participated in UWS's Operation Thanksgiving and Christmas Blessings programs which provided meals and individualized gifts. Knowing the importance of community through difficult times, we also introduced Herman to Vets Helping Vets Anderson (VHVA) for peer support and helped him get to their weekly meetings.

When Herman and his family finally secured housing, UWS worked with VHVA and Patriot Partners of the Upstate to provide furniture and household items to help make their new apartment feel like home.

"I'm so grateful for how responsive UWS was when I needed help. We so appreciate all that UWS did for us." —Herman M.



2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Our seven key programs extend our services to first responders and families, provide specialized outreach and opportunities, and enhance the overall quality of life for those we serve.



First Responder Program

Like our veterans, our first responders answer the call to serve. That service often comes with many of the same challenges, including service-related injuries, PTSD, and vicarious trauma. Through our First Responder Program we strive to fill the critical resource gap for local law enforcement, fire fighters, and EMS personnel. When our first responders are healthy and whole, our entire community is strengthened. Since August 2023, we've provided peer support and crisis intervention training to 89 police, fire, and EMS (to include 18 chiefs and sheriffs) and 18 first responder spouses. This network is active and effective.

"What a blessing UWS has been to provide peer support training! There is a vacuum in our area for the training and UWS has filled that hole!"

—Sgt. Bennie Durham, Greenville County Sheriff's Office



Family Services Program

Our warriors don't serve alone. Their families provide irreplaceable support while making their own sacrifices and carrying their own aspirations. Our Family Services Program provides opportunities and resources that serve the whole person: therapeutic art classes (provided in partnership with Premier Arts Collective), personal development courses, educational events for children, hike outings, Operation Christmas Blessings, and more.

Since 2020, we've supported more than 130 families with food boxes, personalized gifts, and school supplies through Operation Christmas Blessings.

2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Employment & Entrepreneurship Programs

Loss of purpose is a key risk factor for suicide. Our Employment Program mitigates this by providing workforce readiness and networking support to job-seeking warriors and spouses. Whether we're supporting critical cases, hosting a SkillBridge participant, or facilitating career advancement, our team fosters hope through employment.

Our Entrepreneurship Program is for the go-getters ready to turn their big ideas into sustainable businesses. Through this program warriors and their spouses find mentorship opportunities with seasoned executives, business coaching, guidance on securing investments, and more.

"Jose was unemployed and unsure where to turn. We connected him to a position with the SC Department of Corrections. While he completed the lengthy hiring process, our partners at North American Rescue provided a temporary job to keep him afloat. A great example of Upstate collaboration!"—Shannon Sports, UWS Employment Program Manager





Justice-Involved Veteran Outreach Program

For many veterans, unaddressed trauma can lead to negative outcomes, including substance misuse and justice involvement. In partnership with detention centers and law enforcement agencies, our Justice-Involved Veteran Outreach team connects at-risk and incarcerated veterans with opportunities to regain stability. We work closely with Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) and behavioral health providers to divert warriors from self-destructive paths and to open new possibilities.

Eight Upstate veterans successfully graduated from VTC in 2023. UWS provided mentors and comprehensive case management to support them throughout the program and beyond.



Recreation Program

Warriors and their families experience the wellness benefits of physical and social activity through our Recreation Program. In partnership with Prisma Health's Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation Hospital and many others, we offer free opportunities ranging from archery to surfing, skiing to yoga, and beyond. We see amazing things happen when warriors get out of their comfort zone and try something new.

"When I reached out to UWS, my life changed. I was introduced to pickleball and learned to use compound bows at a local archery range. My family and I've gotten out into the community more ... they made us feel wanted, appreciated, and that we matter."

—Jeff S., USMC Veteran



Spiritual Support Program

Serving the whole person includes addressing the spiritual needs of our warriors and families. Research confirms that practicing spirituality increases individual purpose and hope, key protective factors against suicide. Our Spiritual Support Program connects warriors and families to faith communities where their spirituality can grow and flourish.

In 2023, our team helped warriors connect to over 100 spiritual support resources within the Upstate faith community.



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"Through their service, our veterans and first responders pay the personal cost of ensuring our freedom and safety. Our country and communities are stronger because of their sacrifices, and it's our honor to support them in every way possible."

—Charles T. Wong, Jr. | Air Force Veteran & Former LAPD Officer

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY & STEWARDSHIP

We are accountable for what has been entrusted to us.

We know that every financial gift to UWS is not only an investment in our mission but a pledge of trust that we will deliver. Transparency is our pledge in return.

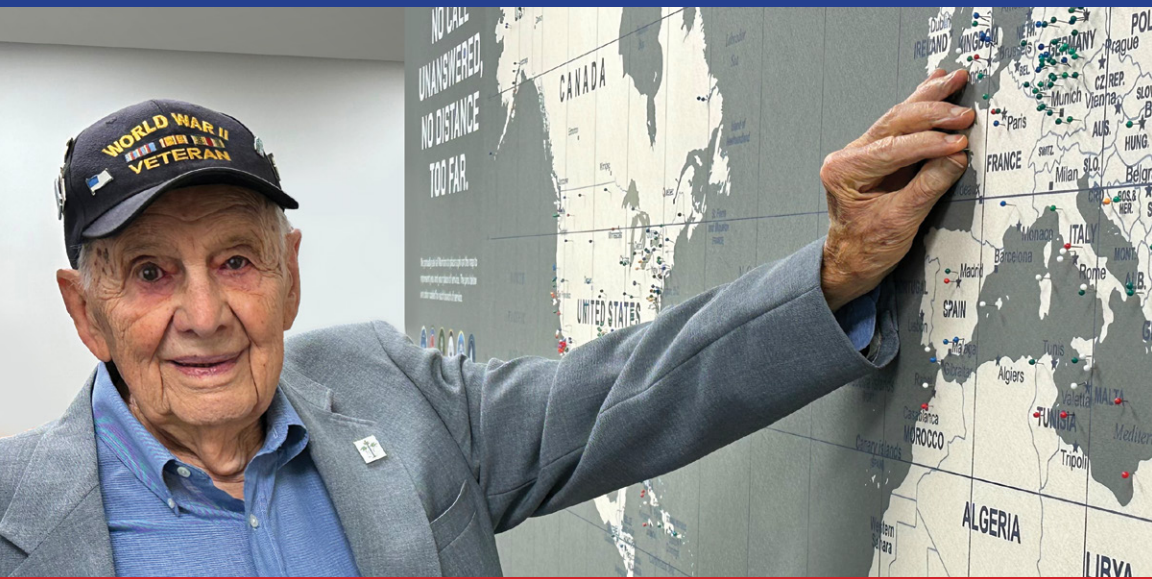
Scan the QR code to view our annual IRS 990 forms and third-party audits.



**Together we are helping local warriors
and their families thrive.**

Thank you for your support!





Thank You for Investing in the Lives of Our Local Warriors!



www.UWS.us | (864) 520-2073 | PO Box 27232, Greenville, SC 29616