



2025 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Through Hurricane Helene and beyond,
we are building a thriving community together.



Contents

- 1 From Our Leadership
- 2 Creating Solutions: *Your Impact in 2024*
- 4 Building Thriving Communities: *First Responder Services*
- 6 Strengthening Families: *Family Services*
- 8 Fostering Purpose & Hope: *Workforce Development & Entrepreneurship*
- 10 Saving & Transforming Lives: *Mental Health & Wellness*
- 12 Hurricane Helene Relief Efforts
- 14 Board of Directors
- 15 Donor Recognitions
- 16 Our Team

Our Mission

Upstate Warrior Solution (UWS) connects local veterans, active-duty military, first responders, and their families to resources and opportunities, leads them through the process of self-empowerment, and inspires the community to embrace them as valued neighbors.

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Together we will continue this life-saving work for decades to come.



We set out in 2013 to build a support network through which local warriors and their families could thrive. Our goal to reach all 100,000 Upstate veterans was ambitious. In 2022, we raised the bar to include first responders. Through collaboration, we've made great strides, connecting with over 12,000 warriors. But we know this is just the start. With continued partnership and investment from the community, we will continue this life-saving work for decades to come.

Mastin Robeson
Major General, USMC (Ret.)
Chairman of the Board



The nature of our work has always been two-fold: coordinating rapid response for critical needs while also providing the holistic support that helps prevent a future crisis from happening. In these pages, you'll see examples of success for both aspects of our work. Our Upstate community is made stronger when veterans' aspirations are resourced, when first responders have access to mental health support, and when warrior families find aid when they need it most. Our team remains energized by this work and is staunchly committed to our mission.

Charlie Hall
Lieutenant Colonel, USMCR
President, UWS

Our Vision

We envision a future in which our warriors and families are restored with a sense of purpose and are effectively supported by the Upstate community.

Together we are creating solutions.

PICKENS / OCONEE / ANDERSON / GREENVILLE / SPARTANBURG

2,263

LOCAL VETERANS
SERVED

358

FAMILY MEMBERS
SERVED

164

FIRST RESPONDERS
SERVED*

4,341

LIFE-CHANGING RESOURCES
PROVIDED IN 2024

UWS EXPERIENCED A 23% INCREASE IN CLIENTS IN 2024

609

HEALTH CARE
ASSISTANCE

553

BENEFITS
ASSISTANCE

550

HOUSING
ASSISTANCE

123

WARRIORS
EMPLOYED

264

LEGAL
ASSISTANCE

132

FINANCIAL
WELLNESS

121

TRANSPORTATION
ASSISTANCE

114

BASIC NEEDS
ASSISTANCE

*Veterans who were also first responders: 31

Our county-based warrior advocates work every day to streamline care and create solutions through collaboration. Our offices in Easley, Clemson, Seneca, Anderson, Greenville, and Spartanburg serve as resource hubs, mobilizing community partnerships to get the job done for our warriors.

Andrew A. / Army Veteran

When we connected with Andrew, he had lived in a large drainpipe for three years. Our team successfully coordinated transitional housing. Unfortunately, Andrew had difficulty adapting to the environment and ended up homeless again. We connected him to employment resources and provided basic needs while we sought a long-term solution.

With persistence, Andrew secured an apartment through Section 8 housing and landed a new job in landscape maintenance. However, his first rent payment was due before his first paycheck. In collaboration with Spartanburg Housing Authority, we were able to provide financial support to Andrew during this critical time in his journey toward stability.

Today, Andrew is thriving in his new job. He recently secured a vehicle and enjoys playing guitar at his church on the weekends. With support from our Spartanburg advocate, he also reconnected with family he hadn't seen in years.

"I'm enjoying all the little stuff you take for granted [about having a home], and I love my job. There's a Bible verse that says it's a gift from God to enjoy your work. I've always wanted that, and now I have it. I'm grateful for everything UWS has done." —Andrew A.

Leonard P. / Marine Corps Veteran

Leonard moved to the Upstate for a new job; however, the transition did not go smoothly and led to homelessness. When our Anderson advocate met him, the Elkes Lodge #1206 stand down event was only a few days away, and we made sure Leonard was able to attend. There he connected with more than 20 organizations with resources to support him, including VA housing and Goodwill HVRP. Those connections were a turning point. In time, Leonard became housed through Alston Wilkes Society and he got his feet under him with his new job. Recently, he signed a lease for his own apartment with financial support through Goodwill.

"Community collaboration made all the difference for Leonard. Events like the Anderson stand down highlight the network of partnerships we've built to help ensure no veteran slips through the cracks. UWS will continue to be a resource for Leonard as he integrates into the community!" —Josh Colburn, UWS

Together we are building communities that thrive.

First Responder Services

Service above self is the core of all first responder creeds. To experience longevity in these fields, however, we believe it is crucial to address the weight that can come with service. We are committed to providing solutions for first responder wellness and to mobilizing the community in support of the exceptional men and women who serve and protect us.

Mental Health & Peer Counseling

The 2024 #StayWithMe Rowing Marathon raised awareness of first responder mental health and gave the community a tangible way to help increase local resources. As a result, we provided free peer counseling training to 80 first responders (including chiefs and sheriffs) and spouses. Participants experienced the cathartic nature of peer support and formed a proactive network which we saw in action throughout the year.

Survivor Benefits for Families

We continue to advocate for statewide legislation extending healthcare benefits for first responder spouses when a line of duty death occurs. Currently, they can lose benefits within 30 days. These families deserve our wholehearted support, and we will stay the course until this need is met.

Appreciation & Remembrance

In 2024, we proudly supported LEAD (Law Enforcement Appreciation Day) Greenville's annual event. It was also our honor to help coordinate a special Greenville Drive recognition for Cpl. Lucas Watts (Oconee County Sheriff's Office) who was critically injured in 2023. We honored South Carolina's fallen through the Palmetto Heroes Hike and by opening the Blessed Are the Peacemakers gallery at the Rupert Huse Veteran Center, commemorating Officer Allen Jacobs (Greenville PD) and Deputy Andrew Mazur (Greenville County Sheriff's Office). We will never forget their sacrifices.

"I shared things I hadn't talked about to relieve the weight, and I learned how to listen and ask the right questions to someone struggling. I learned that it is possible to get help and be able to help others." —First Responder Peer Support Participant



4

TRAINING EVENTS
PROVIDED

80

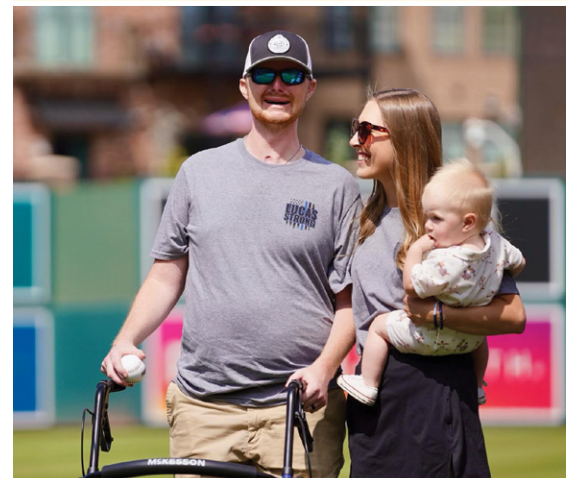
PARTICIPANTS IN
PEER COUNSELING

27

STATE & LOCAL
AGENCIES TRAINED

18

SPOUSES WHO
RECEIVED TRAINING



Together we are strengthening families.

Family Services

Providing holistic support for warrior families is central to our mission. Our family services program meets spouses, caretakers, and children where they are and provides opportunities for growth, wellness, and community integration to them and the whole family.

Bravo Explorers

Last year, our Bravo Explorers program provided educational events for more than 70 children. These included a week-long summer camp with Warehouse Theater, as well as a family-focused financial wellness event planned by our teen intern and facilitated by Spero Financial.

Cornerstone Heroes

In 2024, our second Cornerstone Heroes cohort graduated from the three-year personal development program. Facilitated by a licensed counselor, this program is geared for spouses and caretakers experiencing a life-changing event (anything from losing a spouse to domestic violence). Participants are led through goal setting and educational seminars (years one and two) and finally into community service leadership roles (year three).

Operation Christmas Blessings

With support from the community, Operation Christmas Blessings served over 35 veterans, active military, and first responder families in need of assistance in 2024. Participants received personalized gifts for their children, fresh groceries, stocking stuffers, and more at a festive gathering at the Rupert Huse Veteran Center. These families remain in our care network throughout the year as our advocacy team continues to provide holistic support.

"My son has always been the "performer". Usually this gets him into trouble, but I wanted him to see there are healthy outlets that can even develop into hobbies, lifelong interests, and even careers. He got outside his comfort zone, made friends, and had fun! Thank you to everyone involved in facilitating this great opportunity!"

—Father of a Theater Camp Participant

73

CHILDREN AT
EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

23

FINANCIAL WELLNESS
PARTICIPANTS

35

FAMILIES SERVED BY
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Together we're fostering purpose and hope.

Workforce Development

Finding continued purpose after the military through meaningful employment is a key factor for both economic stability and mental health. Our workforce development team connects warriors and spouses to opportunities that foster purpose and hope.

The transition period from military to civilian life is a particularly critical time. Many experience a sense of lost identity which can lead to mental health challenges. To help address this need, UWS has partnered with the Department of Defense's SkillBridge program, which enables service members to gain experience in the civilian workforce prior to leaving the military.

UWS has served as a host site and placement coordinator for 12 service members, helping them secure opportunities with TD Bank, Jankel Tactical Systems, and others. Our team had also facilitated networking and mentorship opportunities in the service member's field of interest, strengthening their social capital as they prepare to reenter the workforce. *All but one of our program graduates have been hired by their host sites.*

"My 22-year career in the Army provided many opportunities to hone my ability to plan strategically, manage resources efficiently, and lead diverse teams under pressure. What I lacked was a civilian network and the vocabulary to translate my skills into terms someone with no military background would understand.

"UWS and the SkillBridge program gave me the opportunity to demonstrate those skills with Jankel Tactical Systems, learn new ones, and prove that I could add value to an organization with a completely different mission set than I was used to. A year later, I am happily employed at Jankel and thoroughly enjoy what I do every day."

—Aaron Halter, Army Veteran



69

NEW WARRIOR
ENTREPRENEURS

5

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS
PROVIDED

17

BUSINESSES ESTABLISHED
(SINCE 2023)

211

ENTREPRENEURS SUPPORTED
(SINCE 2023)

176

REFERRALS TO COMMUNITY
RESOURCES (SINCE 2023)

Entrepreneurship Program

Our entrepreneurship program serves as both a hub for existing opportunities and a catalyst for filling resource gaps. After establishing a baseline understanding of the challenges facing warrior entrepreneurs, we shifted efforts to one-on-one casework to help warriors clear hurdles to business growth and establishing a donor-advised fund to support these small businesses.

Although still in its early days of development, the Upstate Warrior Catalytic Fund facilitated by Abundance Capital has already seen growth and been put to good use. Greenville Local Development Corporation awarded UWS a grant specifically for the purpose of seeding the venture fund in 2024. The first major loan went to Precision Anatomy, a veteran-owned business and tenant of the Rupert Huse Veteran Center providing cadaver-based training to medical professionals. This is a perfect example of how investing in the success of small businesses truly benefits the whole community.

"Starting a business takes a lot of hard work and dedication, and we would not be where we are without the incredible support we have from UWS and their network. Through these opportunities, we've received the funding we need to make our programs operative. We look forward to taking this investment and using it to grow our business and offer premier cadaver-based training to the military and civilian medical world." —Mark Lyons, Precision Anatomy, VP & COO (USMC)

691

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES PROVIDED

123

WARRIORS WHO
BECAME EMPLOYED

41

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

12

TOTAL SKILLBRIDGE
PARTICIPANTS VIA UWS

4

WARRIORS CURRENTLY IN
SKILLBRIDGE PROGRAM

85%

PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAM
GRADUATES HIRED BY HOST SITE

Together we are saving and transforming lives.

Mental Health & Wellness

Ending warrior suicide through whole-person wellness is at the heart of our work. In 2024, our mental health initiatives included therapeutic workshops, peer mentorship, and even prevention training for the community.

Therapeutic Workshops

In 2024, we partnered with Eden Farms and a licensed counselor to lead veterans through a four-month equine therapy program. Participants completed the course and unanimously affirmed the benefit of sharing their mental health challenges with others. Additionally, nearly 100 warriors, spouses, and teens experienced our therapeutic art workshops. Offered in partnership with Premier Arts Collective, these classes provided opportunities for cathartic self-expression and social connection.

"It was so peaceful to get to ride the horses. The group work helped because we were with veterans who understood each other. Most of us don't want to say we need help. We're afraid of what others will think. But the reality is that talking to people is the way to start working through our problems." —Brian P, Equine Therapy Participant

Veteran Peer Mentorship

Our justice-involved veteran outreach team recruited and served as mentors for veterans in treatment court and Anderson's new mental health court, which saw its first participant graduate in 2024. Separately, we supported the local "I Got Your 6" network which provides peer support of all kinds, including crisis intervention. In one instance, a member experiencing suicidal ideations reached out to a fellow veteran for support. That member activated the network through the group chat, and we got the veteran the mental health help he needed.

Suicide Prevention Trainings

Empowering the community to step into the breach for those in crisis is a critical part of saving lives. In collaboration with the VA's SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Program, our team facilitated three ASIST prevention trainings in 2024. Through these sessions, participants gained practical skills and hands-on training to intervene and save lives.

"Just two days ago I responded to a call involving someone threatening suicide and I froze. I feel much more prepared now!" —Suicide Prevention Training Participant



511

THERAPEUTIC ART
WORKSHOPS PROVIDED

484

RECREATIONAL EVENTS
PROVIDED

112

PEER MENTORSHIP
RESOURCES PROVIDED

24

TREATMENT COURT
MENTORS TRAINED

75

SUICIDE INTERVENTION
PARTICIPANTS





Together we are aiding those most in need.

The wake of devastation from Hurricane Helene in September of 2024 was difficult to believe. While Upstate residents dealt with extensive damage and were without power for weeks, our neighbors in Western North Carolina saw destruction that will be felt for years to come. Of course, the impact of this historic storm was felt most especially by those already experiencing economic instability.

To aid in recovery efforts both locally and regionally, our team joined forces with many longtime partners across the Upstate and Western North Carolina. With support from the Bob Woodruff Foundation, we were able to provide vital resources to Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministries and supported the veterans displaced when their transitional residence flooded.

Whether it was clearing fallen trees so veterans and their neighbors could safely get out of their homes, assembling meals for first responders and powerline workers, or assisting with demolition for flooded homes, our team was proud to be a part of the recovery efforts. What Helene showed us, among many things, is what we as a community can accomplish when we work together for those most in need.



Working together to
rebuild communities.

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Our vision of an Upstate community where warriors and their families thrive will only be realized and sustained through community collaboration and investment. Our most heartfelt thanks to the following major donors who helped us save and improve lives in 2024!

ATO Fraternity

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United Way of Greenville County

United Way of Pickens County

United Way of the Piedmont

US Department of Veteran Affairs

Vincent and Joan Cialdella

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY & STEWARDSHIP

You've partnered with us by investing in our mission. We pledge efficacy and transparency in return.

UWS's federal tax forms and third-party audits will always be readily available on our website. Scan the QR code to view.



"Our first responders and veterans are the backbone to our thriving cities and country, giving their time, service, and sometimes even their lives for our safety. I commend UWS for the important work they do for our local warriors and consider it an honor to support their mission."

—Ally Powell, South State Bank & UWS Board of Directors

OUR TEAM

Committed to Service. Fueled by Patriotism and Comradery.



30

UPSTATE WARRIOR
SOLUTION STAFF



6

RUPERT HUSE
VETERAN CENTER STAFF



23

VETERAN
STAFF MEMBERS

378

YEARS OF COMBINED
MILITARY SERVICE



6

FIRST RESPONDER
STAFF MEMBERS



76

YEARS OF COMBINED
FIRST RESPONDER
SERVICE



5

STAFF WHO SERVED AS
BOTH FIRST RESPONDERS
AND MILITARY

8

SPOUSES & CIVILIAN
STAFF PASSIONATE ABOUT
THE CAUSE

"Serving my fellow veterans is what gives me purpose. This work is not always easy. You have days when you win and days when you don't. But making sure veterans who want and need help get it, making sure no one falls through the cracks, that's what keeps me motivated." —Serge McAvoy, Greenville Warrior Advocate

"As a Marine Corps veteran and a former probation officer, the struggles I see our veterans dealing with hit home to me. In my role, I get to be there for them on some of their worst days, giving them grace, at times tough love, and helping them move forward on a better path. I get to exercise my deeply held faith by embracing their brokenness and walking beside them on their path of recovery. What could be more rewarding than that?"

—Jonathan Keever, Justice-Involved Veteran Outreach Program Manager

Become Part of the Solution.

Donate

All donations are tax-deductible and stay in the Upstate serving local warriors and their families.

ONLINE
www.UWS.us

Scan the code and click Donate.




BY MAIL
Upstate Warrior Solution
PO Box 27232, Greenville, SC 29616


Visit

Experience the impact of community-based warrior care by touring the Rupert Huse Veteran Center located in Greenville at 770 Pelham Road.

Join the Conversation

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Together we are saving and transforming lives.