

## **COMING HOME PROJECT**

*Troops come home to a community, not a set of isolated services.*

### **Who We Are**

The Coming Home Project (CHP) is a non-profit, non-denominational organization committed to alleviating the unseen injuries of war faced by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, service members, and their families and caregivers. Our programs promote wellbeing across the deployment cycle and provide support for successful reintegration into civilian life through a series of early intervention, prevention and treatment programs that address the *whole person* with an integrative, evidence-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach. These help veterans and families experience a sense of safety and community which supports them in (1) rebuilding the connections among body and mind, heart and soul that can become unraveled during military service (2) renewing relationships with family members, (3) creating and sustaining protective peer support networks (4) eliminating the stigma that interferes with exploring further support and (5) connecting with needed care. Our interdisciplinary team is composed of psychotherapists, chaplains, veterans and family members, and interfaith leaders. CHP builds a community where veterans come all the way home, reintegrating with their families, their peers, their communities – and within themselves.

### **Evidence-based best practice**

In six years, CHP has served nearly 3,000 people from 45 states, in four regions around the country, without government funding. The Defense Centers of Excellence *Review of Post-Deployment Reintegration Programs* recognized CHP as among the top eight programs nationally, and *the only one* that met all of their 14 recommendations and also had significant positive outcome data. Our research, published in *Psychological Services*, a journal of the American Psychological Association, demonstrates the benefit of Coming Home's community-building approach in enhancing post traumatic growth. Stigma was reduced and participants reported highly significant reductions in stress, exhaustion, burnout, anxiety, isolation, hopelessness and emotional "numbness". Furthermore, they reported significant increases in happiness, relaxation, energy, sense of support, and ability to care for and calm themselves. In follow-up studies four to eight weeks out, these positive results remained strongly significant, consistent and reliable.

### **What we provide**

**Retreats: Our Flagship Program** -- Four and five day residential retreats for veterans, service members, and their families, for veterans only, and self-care retreats for their service providers. These create a safe place of belonging and community where participants share stories and experiences in small peer groups (veterans, spouses and partners, parents and grandparents, siblings and so on), learn key resilience practices, enjoy expressive arts and vigorous outdoor recreation in beautiful natural environments, and participate in secular ritual that recognizes, honors and helps integrate experiences. Retreats are not psychotherapy, but they are therapeutic. They are *optimal environments* for connecting and healing that also support new learning, including resilience, family life, and career development skills. Key qualities developed include aliveness, bonding, resilience and purpose. Retreats are peer-support driven and facilitated by experienced licensed psychotherapists and trained veterans and chaplains. Will soon include use of pioneering film on reintegrating into the workforce developed by WILL Interactive, award winning producers of interactive training simulations.

**Provider Education and Support** -- Professional, self-care and wellness skills training for service providers from all branches, Military Treatment Facilities and VA's. Alleviate compassion fatigue and burnout and by helping ensure continuity of services and job sustainability. Include restorative self-care and wellness retreats similar to our veterans and families retreats. *Our educational training videos for providers, produced with UCSF and UCTV, have been downloaded over 2 million times.*

**Veteran Toolkit Workshops**—Bring together peer support and wellness practices with employment strategies, skills and job resources in a one day integrative program, with Coming Home staff and business mentors.

**Equine Assisted Therapy Workshops**—Mobilize the transformative power of relationships between animals and humans to assist in healing the unseen injuries of war.

**Psychological Services** (San Francisco Bay Area only) -- Our cohort of 80 licensed, highly trained psychotherapists provide probono, unlimited psychological services and care ranging from outpatient therapy, medication management, to thorough evaluation and referral.

All CHP programs are free, confidential, and non-denominational. They form a integrated continuum of educational, support, recreational, and clinical services.