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Forever Warriors Partners with United Way Emerald Coast to Launch Grants for Military Support Programs

Fort Walton Beach, FL - November 5, 2024 – In honor of National Veteran and Military Families Month, Forever Warriors (FW), established by Step One Automotive Group (SOAG), is excited to accept applications for Cohort #2 of the Forever Warriors Foundation Grant Program. With \$40,000 in funding available, grants will support programs dedicated to enhancing resiliency, well-being, and reintegration for military service members, reservists, and veterans in Okaloosa County.

In September, Forever Warriors selected Cohort #1 grantees and awarded \$56,000 to EOD Warrior Foundation, Fisher House of the Emerald Coast, The Honor Foundation (Eglin Campus), United Way Emerald Coast, and Veterans Serving Veterans.

Programs selected for Cohort #2 will receive funding from January through March 2025, with individual grants typically ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

“At Forever Warriors, we understand that the transition from military to civilian life can be challenging. We are dedicated to funding programs that provide essential support for our veterans and service members. This grant initiative reflects our belief that by enhancing community resources, we can foster resilience and improve the quality of life for those who have served our nation,” said Maureen Bierman, Marketing Director, SOAG/FW.

Forever Warriors chose United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) as its partner to manage and facilitate these grants. UWEC will support non-profits throughout the application process, oversee reporting requirements, and maintain communication with funded programs. “We’re thrilled to partner with Forever Warriors on these exciting endeavors. We have an in-depth understanding of local non-profits and community needs, a strong established grants process, and are proud to lend our expertise to these important efforts. Together, we’re building a more resilient support system for those who have given so much,” said Kelly Jasen, UWEC President & CEO.

Forever Warriors Foundation’s commitment aligns with UWEC’s mission to create lasting community impact by empowering local organizations. Applications are open through November 22, 2024. Interested organizations can find more information and apply at www.united-way.org/FWFgrant or by emailing volunteer@united-way.org.

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Forever Warriors is a private foundation powered by Step One Automotive Group and dedicated to helping active-duty military transition to civilian life by connecting them to the resources they need. The organizations that we support are mostly veteran run and volunteer and are dedicated to helping military and veterans with everything from career placement to mental health to medical recovery and treatment to community engagement. We support those organizations run by veterans who understand what those transitioning out of the military are facing because they have been through it themselves. Visit <https://www.forever-warriors.org/>

United Way Emerald Coast is a local, volunteer-governed organization that works with hundreds of partners to fight for the health, youth opportunity, financial security and community resiliency of every person in Okaloosa and Walton counties. To drive positive change, United Way Emerald Coast evaluates our community's diverse needs, mobilizes the caring power of the community, and directs resources to the areas that will have the most positive impact in our community. To learn more, visit www.united-way.org.



Forever Warriors presents \$16,000 to United Way Emerald Coast's Mission United program at a recent Crestview Area Chamber of Commerce event.

Pictured left to right:

Shane Frederic (Origin Bank, UWEC Volunteer), Mia Mortensen (UWEC), Sheila Fitzgerald (Okaloosa County, UWEC Volunteer), Maureen Bierman (SOAG/FW), Kelly Jasen (UWEC), Darra Flanagan

(SOAG/FW, UWEC Volunteer), Briley Kennedy (UWEC), Jessica Leavins (City of Crestview, UWEC Volunteer), Tammy Barrientos (UWEC), and Deborah Lawson (UWEC).