In the midst of our twentieth year, I reflect on the qualities and characteristics that define us as an organization and have driven our success over the years. Optimism, resolve and our collective resilience have all played a part, inspiring and fueling us in equal parts.

These traits don’t stop at the door of Higher Ground. Dedication runs strong among the community that makes up our staff and Board. Tenacity defines our valued volunteers. Resilience is a thread woven throughout our organization, creating a strong bond that unites Higher Ground participants near and far.

And your resolve as a donor is vital. Without you, we couldn’t continue to meet the overwhelming and ever-increasing need for Higher Ground programs.

But at the foundation of Higher Ground is an unmistakable sense of belonging, a feeling that’s shared among all who make our programs happen and those who take part. It transcends geography and physical space. It’s a phenomenon all our stakeholders recognize, and with it comes a profound sense of purpose that unites us all in the Higher Ground mission.

In the pages to come, you’ll read the stories of our heroes, those individuals who embody these traits to their core and lead lives of purpose.

It’s my privilege and honor to serve as Higher Ground Board Chair, and I’m committed to serving this organization over the coming years with the same strong values that have moved us to the forefront over the past 20 years.

We’re proud to be an industry leader in serving the heroes among us. Thank you for joining me in supporting them and their journey.

-Jeff Rust, HG Board Chair
“The overnight camp was wonderful. You gave us caregivers real relief and time to be with others who ‘just get it.’ Most important, we could actually fully relax as we knew our kids were with such kind, compassionate capable people. You all are gifts to us and we appreciate what you do so much!”

-Kristian Donahue, Parent of HG Participant, Logan

Logan and his family are grateful for your support. By donating to our recreation program, you give families like Logan’s the opportunity to experience the thrill of recreation among peers and with ease.
"I learned I’m not alone. All of us at this camp are now bonded, banded and united. I’d lost sight of this feeling once I left the military. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to experience unity, connection and togetherness. Your financial generosity provides experiences that reach into the heart of what matters most and creates a small ripple in our own thoughts, ideas, beliefs and values. It’s life giving.”

-Kate Caffrey, Los Angeles Chapter Veteran Ocean Sports Camp Participant

Veterans like Kate are often skeptical about what our programs can provide. What will it cost? What will she get out of it? Because of donors like you, we’re able to provide a camp at no cost to the veteran.

Their experience is 100% free, door to door. Our week-long camps help veterans and their families feel like themselves again and walk away with a sense of belonging and a newly revived sense of trust, not only of others, but also trust in themselves.
“Higher Ground recognizes that community is important at every level and that even the most independent disabled athletes can’t truly test their limits without support they really trust. The Higher Ground programs are such a vital cornerstone of our community.

Thank you to all the rad folks at Higher Ground and everyone who supports them!”

-Anna Soens, Participant, Coach
“Higher Ground has provided me the opportunity and privilege to share my passion of the great outdoors while contributing to the healing process of the men and women who have bravely served our country.”

-Mike Keenan, HG Volunteer

Mike Keenan pictured on left with Higher Ground participant and another volunteer
2019 HIGHER GROUND HIGHLIGHTS

OVER 30,000 PROGRAM HOURS
We spent 30,000 program hours last year bridging the gap between disability and belonging.

88 CENTS OF EACH DOLLAR
donated went to support critical programs that changed lives. Every dollar you donate makes a difference in the life of a veteran or a child.

10,017 VOLUNTEER HOURS
Our volunteers are our heroes. This past year, they spent 10,017 hours heading to the slopes, trails and rivers with our participants, supporting them along the way.

“I know that by giving to Higher Ground I am giving the gift of joy to many who thought they would not feel joy again and that in itself is the greatest gift.”
- Adrian Norris, Advisory Board Member and Donor

253 VETERAN FAMILIES SERVED
Higher Ground is the only Veteran program that invites each veteran’s supporter to be part of the journey for the week, as well as the three-year follow up.

LOOKING AHEAD

INCREASED RESEARCH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND SERVE OUR POPULATION
Higher Ground is working in conjunction with:
• Clemson University – research study on post-traumatic growth, general self-efficacy and self-determination among veterans and their supporters
• Boise State University – research study on adults with cognitive disabilities and creating measurable impacts on their health and lifestyle

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES
• Higher Ground New York and Los Angeles Chapters are maximizing regional resources to provide day and week long programs to their local veteran community
• Support through the VA Adaptive Sports Grant will help provide critical funding

EXPANDED RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES
• Spearheaded by the generosity of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, the Idaho team is reaching more adaptive athletes through more widespread recreation outings, including fly fishing, skiing and mountain biking

OPERATION SERVE MORE (SIERRA MIKE)
The following will help us better serve the more than 1,000 veterans on our waiting list:
• A new custom database solution will enable us to meet the needs of significantly more veterans and their families on a more national scope
• Growing resource directory participant network

For additional information contact:
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