



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2018**

**RIVER DEEP  
ALLIANCE**

**River  
Deep**  
Alliance

# **RIVER DEEP ALLIANCE 2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

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Cover image and the majority of photographs throughout this report by Task Force: ISO



## INTRODUCTION

In 2018, The River Deep Alliance and its member organizations are proud to have worked with an ever increasing number of veterans and other disabled individuals who may be struggling to adapt to their psychological, emotional or physical challenges.

## MISSION

The River Deep Alliance is dedicated to providing healing and support services to military veterans or other individuals with disabilities who have experienced physical injury or psychological and emotional trauma.

## COLLABORATION

We are an innovative and exciting collaboration between six distinct not-for-profit organizations who each work, in their own way, to re-acclimate, re-enable and re-engage veterans or other disabled individuals and facilitate healing through an improved outlook and quality of life. The members share knowledge, ideas and resources, and refer clients to each other's services as needed. Additionally, the groups come together for shared outings and activities—a pivotal program of the alliance.

All of the member organizations have benefited in 2018 from general referrals, expertise, advice, shared outreach and promotion of their classes, events and fundraisers. The alliance committee members met quarterly to discuss issues, ideas, challenges and needs. Specific collaborations are outlined on the next page.

## OUR STORY

The journey to the River Deep Alliance collaboration began 18 years ago when local business owner and outdoorsman, Bob Adwar, in his role as Humanitarian Outreach Chairman for the Denver Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI), began organizing hunting and fishing outings for patients of Craig Hospital, the nation's premier spinal cord rehabilitation hospital. The goal was to provide a relaxing day in the outdoors and show patients what they could accomplish, despite their new limitations. As injured and traumatized soldiers began to return from war zones in need of physical, psychological and emotional healing, the program expanded and started reaching out to Veteran organizations.

Daily life for individuals with a debilitating injury or trauma can be stressful and isolating, leading to depression, anxiety, hopelessness, despair and, in too many cases, suicide. While each organization provides different programs, their client bases often overlap. The Alliance organizes and implements outings that bring clients and their families from all member organizations together for activities—often in the outdoors—that provide a priceless day of peace, relaxation, camaraderie and fun in a safe, supportive environment. These outings are shown to have a therapeutic effect and to facilitate the healing process, greatly improving one's outlook and willingness to reengage in life. The River Deep Alliance funds the logistics of these group outings and provides support to member organizations on an as-needed basis to their bolster programs as they grow towards self-sustainment.



# RIVER DEEP ALLIANCE MEMBERS

## Task Force: ISO

Task Force: ISO empowers veterans to see the world through a different lens using positive imagery and the art of photography. Their Veteran Photographers take professional images of the River Deep outings. These photos are used by the alliance as content for our outing summaries, website, social media and other marketing and outreach. The outing participants benefit by seeing positive imagery of themselves engaged in activities, boosting confidence and self esteem. Task Force: ISO benefits by providing photographic training opportunities in the field to their veteran clients.

## Victory Service Dogs

Victory Service dogs helps local veterans affected with PTSD or other disabilities gain improved quality of life through partnership with a service or support dog. Victory Service Dogs has been able use our shared expertise, consulting and contacts to help them grow, including the creation of more professional looking marketing materials .

## Craig Hospital

As a large, established organization focused on spinal cord and brain injuries, Craig Hospital is able to provide outreach, operational guidance, contacts and credibility to our programs. They have benefited from the alliance by providing their recreational therapy clients with ongoing opportunities to participate in our diverse outings and activities.

## Operation TBI Freedom

As the military program of Craig Hospital, Operation TBI Freedom (OTF) helps the alliance outreach to Veterans suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries. Participation in our group outings helps with the depression, isolation and anxiety that can result from a TBI. The alliance offers ongoing programs that complement the other support services they provide to clients.

## SCI Humanitarian Outreach Program

As the logistical arm and initiator of these programs, the SCI Humanitarian Outreach Program (SCI HOP) brings expertise in organizing the outings, contacts and resources. The alliance has allowed the programs and outreach to expand.

## Anglers of Honor

In addition to the many incredible days of fly fishing Anglers of Honor (AoH) has provided outing participants, they have also partnered with Kast King to provide AoH Fly Rods to participants as well as other fundraising support. AoH has provided crucial organizational and operational support for the alliance.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In our years of experience developing programs, we have identified specific areas where we can stand out. These principles help guide the River Deep Alliance and its programs.

**We understand that if an individual is in crisis, the family is in crisis.** We incorporate participation of families in our programs wherever possible.

**We believe in consistency.** We provide diverse, year-around opportunities for participants so they can avoid returning to a state of crisis and despair.

**We believe in providing an instructional foundation.** Our goal is to enable clients to explore new interests or start a new hobby with the confidence to build on their experiences.

**We believe in the power of cooperation.** The collaboration within our alliance allows us to offer more resources to our mutual client base and provide a sense of community.

**We believe in positive and inclusive experiences.** Each individual is treated with dignity and encouraged to enjoy each experience without pressure.





## GROWTH AND SUCCESS

### Program Diversity

We are proud to have expanded our outing opportunities for clients with diverse interests, like art, cooking and pop culture. We partnered with the Art Students league of Denver and Cottonwood Art Center in Colorado Springs who have programmed a variety of art classes for our clients, utilizing their facilities and experienced staff of instructors. Specialty Appliance generously provided kitchen space in their Greenwood Village appliance showroom, so cookbook author Leslie Fangman could teach a class on cooking wild game meat. We also worked with the planners of Denver's Comic Con pop-culture convention who provided free passes to clients and their families. We have expanded our outdoor offerings thanks to new outfitter relationships with Amy Duncan, who provided a wild hog hunt in Texas, Peter Pauwels of Camp Bullwheel in Montana and the El Capitan Ranch in New Mexico who have provided multi-day hunting and fishing outings on their properties.

### Adaptive Equipment Development Collaboration

Alliance committee members started an exciting initiative with engineering students from the Colorado School of Mines. The students are designing new user-controlled adaptive equipment that will allow disabled patients improved access to archery, fishing and shooting. The students will be working with us throughout 2019 and will be attending many of our outings in order to understand the needs and challenges of our clients. This collaboration was made possible by Quality of Life Plus, an organization whose mission is to foster and generate innovations that aid and improve the quality of life for those who have served our country. We are thrilled to be involved in this partnership and believe firmly in it's potential to better lives.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We have had many opportunities to raise awareness of our alliance and to educate the community about our mission.

We are thrilled to continue our work with Flatiron Films who has provided professionally filmed and edited videos of our program. These videos are shared on our marketing channels to help tell our story and those of our clients to garner support.

We gained press attention in the June 2018 Your Hub section of the Denver Post print edition that included an article we submitted about our new collaboration. Alliance Committee Chairman, Bob Adwar spoke on the The Americhicks radio program on station KLZ 560 AM several times about our programs and to invite listeners to our Sporting Clays Fundraiser in July 2018. We also have an ongoing relationship with popular radio personalities, Peter Boyles and Stephan Tubbs of KNUS 710 in Denver. We will continue to partner with them for future promotion and awareness.



We held our first fundraising event, with 60 participants joining us for a day of Sporting Clays at Kiowa Creek Sporting Club. We are already planning the event for 2019, in collaboration with the Building Owners Association of Colorado (BOAC) who will offer additional participants and outreach.

In addition to larger scale fundraising events the River Deep Alliance has launched several smaller fundraising efforts. We participate in both the Kings Soopers and Safeway Community Fundraiser programs. Each store donates a percentage of the dollar amount loaded to grocery gift cards purchased and used by our supporters. Additionally, we have joined the Amazon Smile program to receive cash back from purchases through our link, and we have joined the Facebook Peer-to-Peer Fundraising platform.



# 2018 PROGRAMMING REPORT

## Programs

- Archery Instruction
- Art Classes
- Equine Therapy Sessions
- Family Fishing and Fun Days
- Hunting
- Fly Fishing
- Wild Game Cooking Class
- Camping/Ballooning
- Holiday Party
- ComicCon Pop Culture Convention

**Total Programs: 41**

We generate outing reports after each program with a written detailed summary and photographs that are posted to our website, social media and sent to stakeholders.

## Program Participants

- Programs: 41
- Craig Hospital Participants: 109
- Veteran Participants: 402
- Family Member Participants: 537
- Volunteers: 353 (Including Guides, Instructors, Outfitters, etc.)

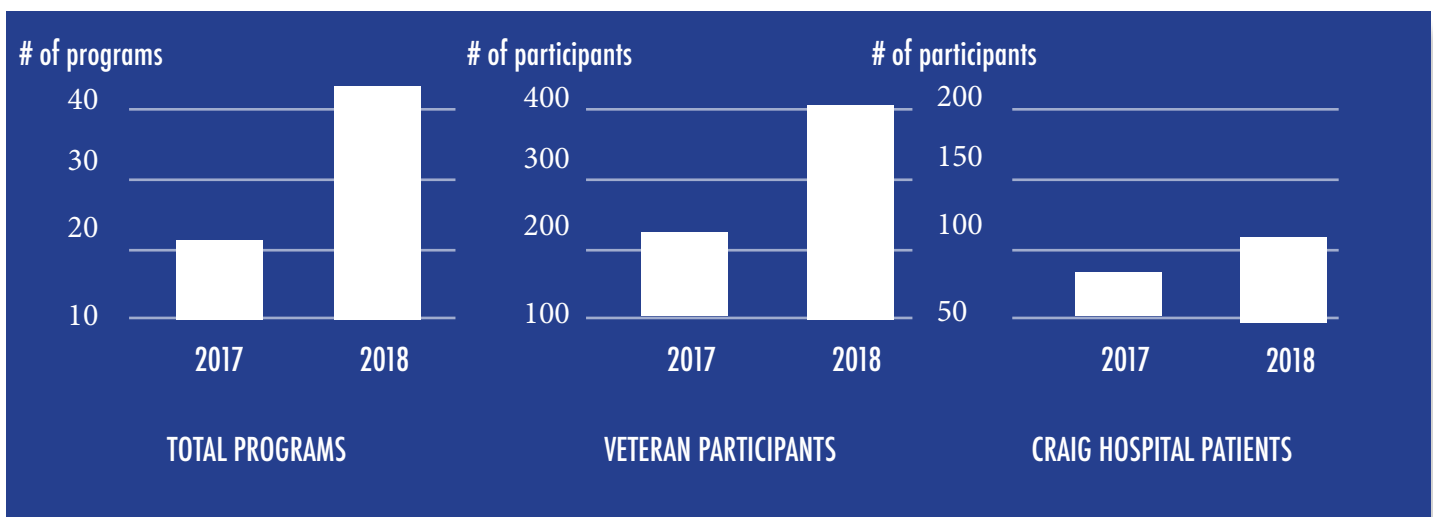
**Total Over All Participants: 1401**

## Programming Hours

- Program Hours: 724
- Participant Hours: 11,781

**Our total participation including clients, family members and volunteers has doubled since 2017.**

## 2017 VS 2018 PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANTS



# PROGRAMS



## ARCHERY INSTRUCTION SESSIONS

RMS Gear in Lakewood Colorado hosted our participants and families for six sessions of Archery Instruction.



## ART CLASSES

The Art Students League of Denver and Cottonwood Art Center in Colorado Springs hosted art classes in drawing, painting, book arts and ceramics.



## COOKING CLASS

Cookbook Author Leslie Fangman held a class on cooking wild game at the Specialty Appliance showroom in Greenwood Village, CO.



## EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY SESSIONS

StableStrides hosted Equine Assisted Therapy Sessions that focused on helping veterans learn and practice coping skills for symptoms of anxiety, PTSD, and depression.



## FAMILY FISHING & FUN DAYS

Colorado Youth Outdoors Swift Ponds Facility was the perfect setting to offer clients a day of relaxation with their families. The days included fishing, boating, archery, lunch and community building



## HUNTING/TRAP SHOOTING

A variety of outfitters hosted us for hunts including pheasant, dove, antelope, wild hogs and more!



## FISHING OUTINGS

Anglers of Honor and Lincoln Hills Fly Fishing club provided access to premier waters for fly fishing and instruction. The facility has been restored to allow access for individuals with disabilities.



## CAMPING/BALLOONING WEEKEND

The Pikes Peak Ballooning Society hosted a Celebration-of-Honor Balloon Fly for Veterans at Eleven-Mile State Park in Colorado. Our clients camped, fished and boated with their families the day before.



## FAMILY HOLIDAY PARTY


Bass Pro Shops in Colorado Springs was the site for our Annual Holiday Party with Operation TBI Freedom. The celebration offered bowling, Santa visits and lunch.

# PROGRAM EVALUATION


River Deep is dedicated to providing the highest quality experience possible for our program participants. We work diligently to tailor and design events that specifically target the physical, social and emotional needs of our participants. In an effort to make the River Deep experience effective and positive, we are continually evaluating and measuring our impact through informal check-ins with participants and family members/caregivers, as well as through a formal follow-up evaluation tool. We use the feedback to help us refine and enhance the experiences in order to continually reach for our greatest impact.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION RESULTS River Deep Alliance Outings


We routinely receive glowing testimonials and accolades through our informal check-ins. Below are the results from our formal evaluation tool. **On a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) 2018**  
**Participants reported:**

**1. I FELT MORE CONFIDENT AS A RESULT OF THESE OUTINGS** 


74% reported a score of 5  
26% reported a score of 4

**2. I HAD POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS AS A RESULT OF THESE OUTINGS** 


100% reported a score of 5

**3. I HAD POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH FAMILY/CAREGIVERS** 

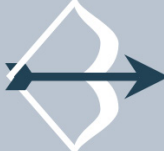
89% reported a score of 5  
11% reported a score of 4

**4. I WAS ABLE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE** 

78% reported a score of 5  
11% reported a score of 4

**5. THE OUTING PROVIDED MOTIVATION TO LEAVE MY HOUSE AND SPEND TIME OUTDOORS** 

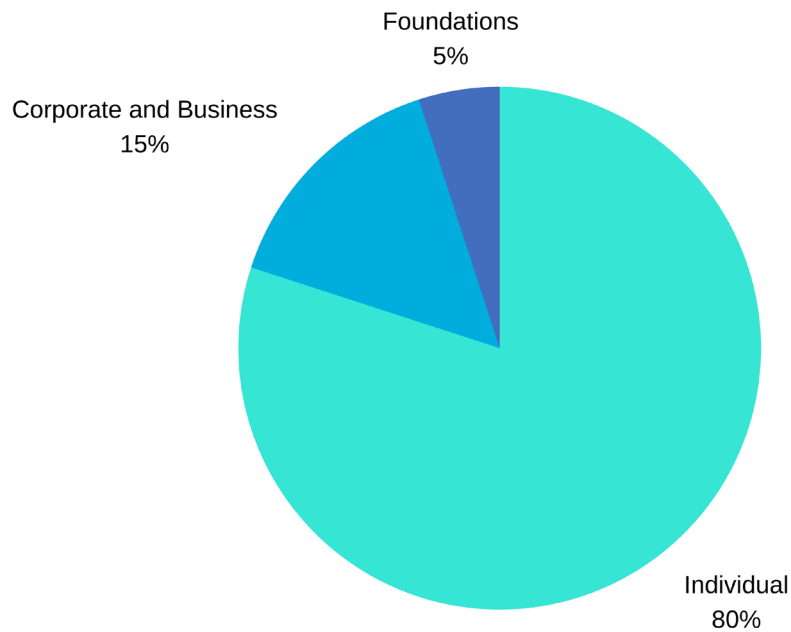
80% reported a score of 5  
11% reported a score of 4

**6. I ENJOYED ENGAGING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** 

80% reported a score of 5  
13% reported a score of 4



# 2018 FINANCIAL SUPPORT



A very special thank you to Mr. Robert F. Smith for his generosity as a catalyst to this worthwhile program.

## VOLUNTEERS

Al Noraker  
Alan Dunlap  
Alan Robinson  
Allen Strong  
Amy Duncan  
Deborah Donner  
Devron Coddday  
Ethan Emery  
Angling University  
The Flyfisher Guide Service  
Joe Hubbard  
John and Natasha Jugl

Justin Hudson  
Leslie Fangman  
Mark Bassagani  
Matthew Graeve  
Patrick Duane  
Randy Pruitt  
Reid Atkins  
Rob Krisner  
Scott Polak  
Shannon Boyles  
Travis Jones  
Tyler Trouillot



## PARTNERS/OUTFITTERS

Our partners and outfitters are a vital part of our programming and we would like to acknowledge their assistance in making our outings successful.

Allen Strong–Holyoke CO

Amy Duncan–Vernon Texas

Art Students League of Denver

Camp Bullwheel–Madison River, MT

Cottonwood Art Denver–Colorado Springs

Colorado Youth Outdoors–Windsor CO

Pop Culture Classroom–Denver ComicCon Producers

El Capitan Ranch–New Mexico

Eleven Mile State Park–Colorado

Lincoln Hills Fly Fishing Club–Black Hawk, CO

Leslie Fangman

RMS Gear–Lakewood, CO

Stable Strides (Formerly Pikes Peak Riding Center)–Elbert, Colorado

Specialty Appliance–Greenwood Village

Ballooning Clubs–Pikes Peak (BSOPP), Colorado Balloon Club, AAAA from ABQ New Mexico

Valhalla-Bijou Hunt Club–Bennett, CO



## SUMMARY

We are honored to work beside our courageous participants. We are deeply grateful to our exceptional volunteers and donors. We are thrilled by the tremendous growth we experienced in 2018 and are energized and excited as we look to the future.





[www.RiverDeepAlliance.org](http://www.RiverDeepAlliance.org)



@riverdeepalliance



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