



In FOCUS

Newsletter

Issue 12
August 2016

FOCUS Marines At Work - Page 2



Focus Marines Foundation
Serving Wounded Warriors
Since 2010



FMF Chairman Walt Suhre

The Dog Days of Summer are in full swing in the Midwest. Great time to find a cool one and reflect. In our seventh year – 22 FOCUS courses completed -- single digits short of 600 graduates of the program. Incredible!!! And even more importantly, we're growing stronger every day. What a privilege to serve those who have given so much and served us so well.

And what support!! Consider:...

- **Volunteers by the hundreds:** Team Leaders and staff who devote a full week at the Farm each session – FOUR times a year. Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society CCVN nurses and the St. Charles County EMT, all so critical to medical care; Graduate mentors; set up/break down crews; house-keepers; our venerable kitchen crew; our transportation crew who are on the go round the clock; and on and on.
- **Those generous in-kind contributors,** including Lews Fishing Tackle, the Monday Night Brisket ladies, the St. Louis Barbeque gang, those generous folks from Butler's Pantry, Psychological Associates and those wonderful "hookers" from Quilts of Valor.
- **Our program facilitators** – Dan Dorr, Sona Van der Hoot and Patrick Dean -- together with our magnificent motivational speakers, John O'Leary, Gunny Pop and Justin Constantine. Lecturers on money, on interviewing and on volunteering, as well as human resources professionals who conduct mock interviews.
- **Last, but in no way least, those hundreds of generous supporters whose cash contributions** make up the difference between our total cost per FOCUS course (\$139,700 average in 2016) and the value of in-kind contributions per FOCUS course (\$95,900 average this year). Without them, none of this could occur. All contributions received are from the private sector --- government funds are neither sought nor accepted. We are committed to serving our Veterans in need wherever they may be, throughout the country – and at no cost to themselves to attend.

THANK GOD FOR ALL OF THEM AND GOD BLESS ALL OF THEM!!

Now, Graduates, its your turn. All these folks who so generously gave for you did so to help you move ahead in life, to become productive citizens for yourselves, your families and for society as a whole. To those of you who have taken the tools given you at FOCUS, have accepted responsibilities for yourselves and your futures and are moving ahead, we here at FOCUS are enormously proud of you. Heartiest congratulations. Stay the course Down 7, up 8. Unfortunately, I talk to too many of you who have

lapsed into a pre-FOCUS state, victims surrounded with self-pity and complacency. "Unemployable"--- "Totally Disabled" --- ABSOLUTE AND UTTER NONSENSE!! Since when do Marines allow non-Marines to define them and tell them what the can and cannot do?? You have tools to get the job done and a network of support. USE THEM. Whatever else, show your appreciation for all those named above who gave for you that you meant it when you left FOCUS with new found hope and determination. TOUGH LOVE, GALS AND GUYS --- TOUGH LOVE! Get off your collective butts and move!!

Semper Fi,
Walt



FOCUS Marines At Work

This issue of the InFOCUS Newsletter is dedicated to the hundreds of FOCUS graduates that have attended FOCUS and worked hard to improve their lives and transition into civilian society. Every aspect of the FOCUS program is developed, planned, critiqued, and adjusted to meet the specific needs of these young men and women.

Even though each FOCUS session is in a peaceful tranquil setting far removed from the hustles of everyday life, it is far from being a retreat. The participants work diligently from the first to the last day of the session – sometimes 12-14 hours a day – to address their personal issues that result from the emotional wounds of war.

Cont. Pg. 7 " Marines "

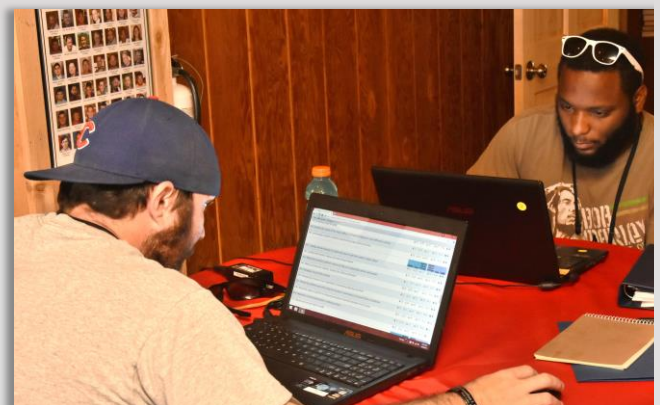
FOCUS June 2016

Participants attending the June 2016 FOCUS Course demonstrated the value our Graduates see in FOCUS. The number of attendees referred by Graduates is growing exponentially. There couldn't be a higher compliment than for our Graduates to go home and encourage their fellow Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen to apply for and attend a FOCUS Course as soon as they can.

With the amount of time between OEF/OIF deployments and the present day increasing, the everyday challenges facing our wounded warriors may be changing but their resolve is ever-present. Many are engaged in securing their financial futures, finding rewarding employment and working through relationship issues at home. They've realized that, with

the right tools and support, they will be able to navigate the civilian world. As soon as they arrive, they know lessons learned at FOCUS are keys to finding personal success. Participants absorb as much information as possible both during and outside of class time.

The value of attending a FOCUS Course is indescribable. The success of the program and the individual accomplishments of the FOCUS participants and Graduates served cannot be defined as a number. Instead, our success is measured in repaired relationships, new-found sense of self, and the knowledge that they are not alone in their journey. FOCUS provides the opportunity for our nation's heroes to find the lives they deserve.





NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY

Moral Injury

Moral injury can be defined as a profound change in a person's sense of right or wrong. It attempts to explain emotions felt by veterans and active service members in response to the ethical and moral challenges of war. Moral injury is not PTSD and cannot be diagnosed like PTSD or other psychological effects of war. Moral injury cannot always be detected, which may make it even more difficult to treat.

Unlike PTSD moral injury is not necessarily the result of an attack. Instead, it occurs when an individual experiences guilt, shame, and/or a feeling of betrayal following a transgression of their deeply held beliefs, which can result from actions taken or witnessed in combat.

The "moral injury" term has been adopted by the DoD and VA as a way to explain the mental effects of war that cannot be attributed to PTSD. Although a moral injury may have symptoms similar to those seen in PTSD, those who have sustained a moral injury also often feel extreme shame or guilt for acts they have committed or witnessed in combat. They might exhibit self-sabotaging or harmful behaviors, and some may attempt to take their own lives.

Service members may also be reluctant to discuss their internal conflict for fear of being condemned by family, friends, and acquaintances. Because understanding of moral injuries is not complete and research on the topic is still in its fledgling stages, the full effects of this kind of emotional injury are not entirely understood.

Moral injury is not a diagnosis, and since the distinction of the two is still a fairly recent development,



knowledge of moral injury is still limited, and treatments are still in the developmental stages. When moral injury is categorized with PTSD and treated similarly, problems arise, since PTSD treatments focus on eliminating the fear that remains from a particular experience, and fear is not always at the root of a moral injury. A morally injured person might instead find it helpful to discuss and examine the resulting internal ethical conflict, accepting that although he or she may have seen or done something difficult to reconcile or forgive, the act does not have to define the rest of his or her life.

Group therapy has been shown thus far to be the most effective method for treating moral injury, as veterans and service members communicating with others who have experienced similar injuries seem to find themselves better able to vocalize their emotions and pain. The goal of group therapy is for the participants to accept that wrong was done but to also understand it and learn how to deal with it.

Cont. Pg. 5 "Nurse's Corner"

"Nurse's Corner"

(Cont. from Page 4)

A therapeutic program called adaptive disclosure is also a treatment used to treat moral injury. In this form of therapy, the person in treatment discusses the cause of their injury, imagining that he or she is speaking to someone trusted, such as a coach, mentor, or pastor, who will listen to the disclosure and respond with compassion, not condemnation. The goal of this form of therapy is for those with moral injuries to develop self-compassion in addition to accepting their past actions.

If you are a veteran and unsure if you're dealing with symptoms of moral injury, contact a Combat Casualty Visiting Nurse of the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society (<http://www.nmcrcs.org/>). These professional caregivers will help identify your issues, and more importantly find resources and programs for treatment.



FOCUS Graduate Program

FOCUS participants work hard at their respective on-site FOCUS sessions. At the end of each session they all depart the FOCUS campus with goals and a renewed spirit to go forth and conquer their personal issues that have held them back from a successful transition to civilian life.

In order to further support these young men and women when they return home, FOCUS Marines Foundation is pleased to announce a new initiative to formalize the mentoring support for our graduates, the FOCUS Graduate Program (FGP).

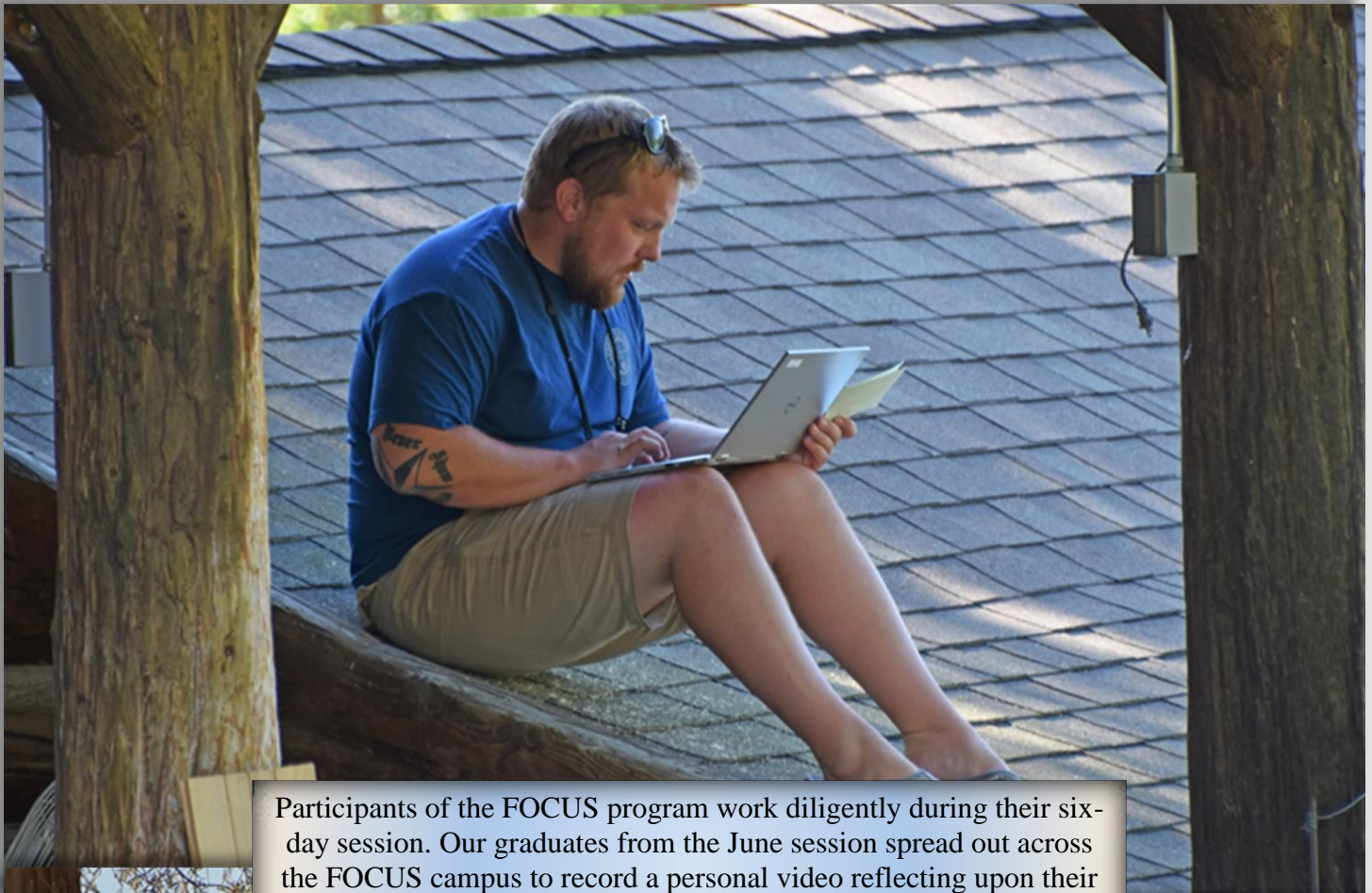
This program will provide ongoing support for graduates long after leaving FOCUS. It features enrollment tracks to advise and offer mentoring on pressing issues like employment, education, finances, health, etc. Another key component of the program is bi-weekly FOCUS ONLINE sessions to address many of these topics, plus provide more in-depth discussions of topics covered during the on-site FOCUS sessions. The goal of FOCUS ONLINE is to provide a virtual extension of the on-site session moving forward,

A FOCUS ONLINE session for graduates will soon be announced that covers the details of the FGP program. It will also provide information on how to enroll in specific tracks to get the specific mentoring support you need. To insure an invitation to the FGP announcement session, please send an email to help@focusmarines.org.

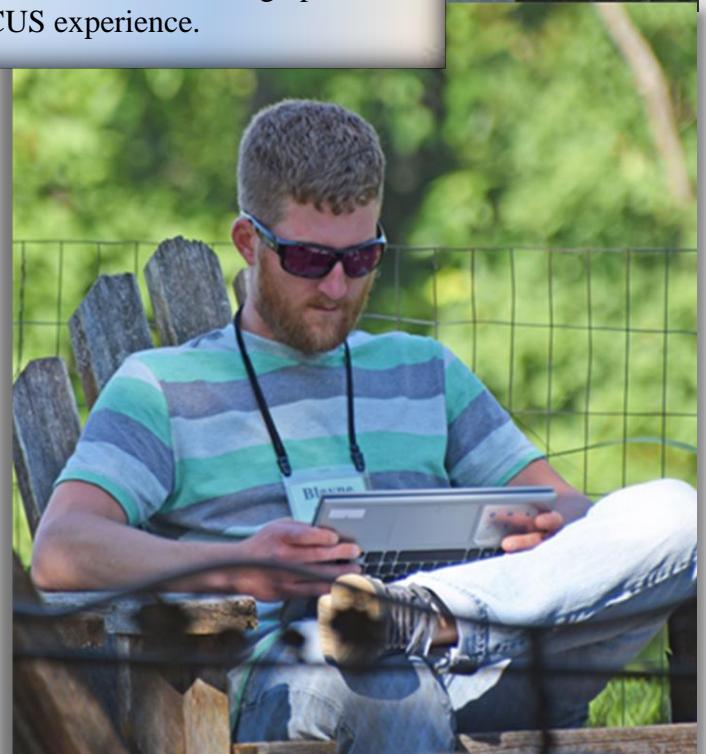
"My husband before FOCUS was searching and disillusioned. After FOCUS he came back with more purpose than I had ever seen in our 8 years of marriage. He became a Marine again. He had a renewed vision to not be disabled but to enable his other Marines to get help. His renewed purpose has changed our family. ... God, through FOCUS, has given my family purpose."

Miatta. - California
FOCUS November 2015





Participants of the FOCUS program work diligently during their six-day session. Our graduates from the June session spread out across the FOCUS campus to record a personal video reflecting upon their own personal FOCUS experience.



"Marines"

(Cont. from Page 2)

On the first morning of the program, participants commit themselves to an online skills assessment survey that compares skill level vs interest in a wide range of disciplines. At the end of the week, they receive a 22 page report that helps them target areas of interest to develop into marketable career skills.

The following three days of FOCUS challenge participants to dig deep and expose their emotional wounds and face issues head-on. These days involve heavy lifting emotionally and, most often, result in a life-changing experience. The last two days of the program provides these young warriors an opportunity to explore their individual needs for personal growth. Sessions cover education, finance management, resume building, interviewing techniques, and development of goals to work toward when they return home.

Finally, the last segment of the course gives participants time to reflect on their FOCUS experiences by recording a video on their computer. The goal is to capture their "FOCUS Feeling". They are encouraged to summarize the most important lessons learned during FOCUS and commit to applying those lessons when they return home. The video is saved front-and-center on their computer desktop to serve as a constant reminder in the weeks ahead of how to move forward with the tools acquired at FOCUS.

"This experience has been an eye opener in helping me identify a sense of purpose, direction, and connection with brothers in arms. I am anxious but equipped with tools to carry on the fight."

Jared M.. - South Carolina
FOCUS November 2015

FMF Volunteers

Over 200 volunteers assist FOCUS Marines Foundation in various capacities throughout the year. From FOCUS sessions which require 2,500 volunteer hours each session to fundraising events, our volunteers give generously of their time and talent.

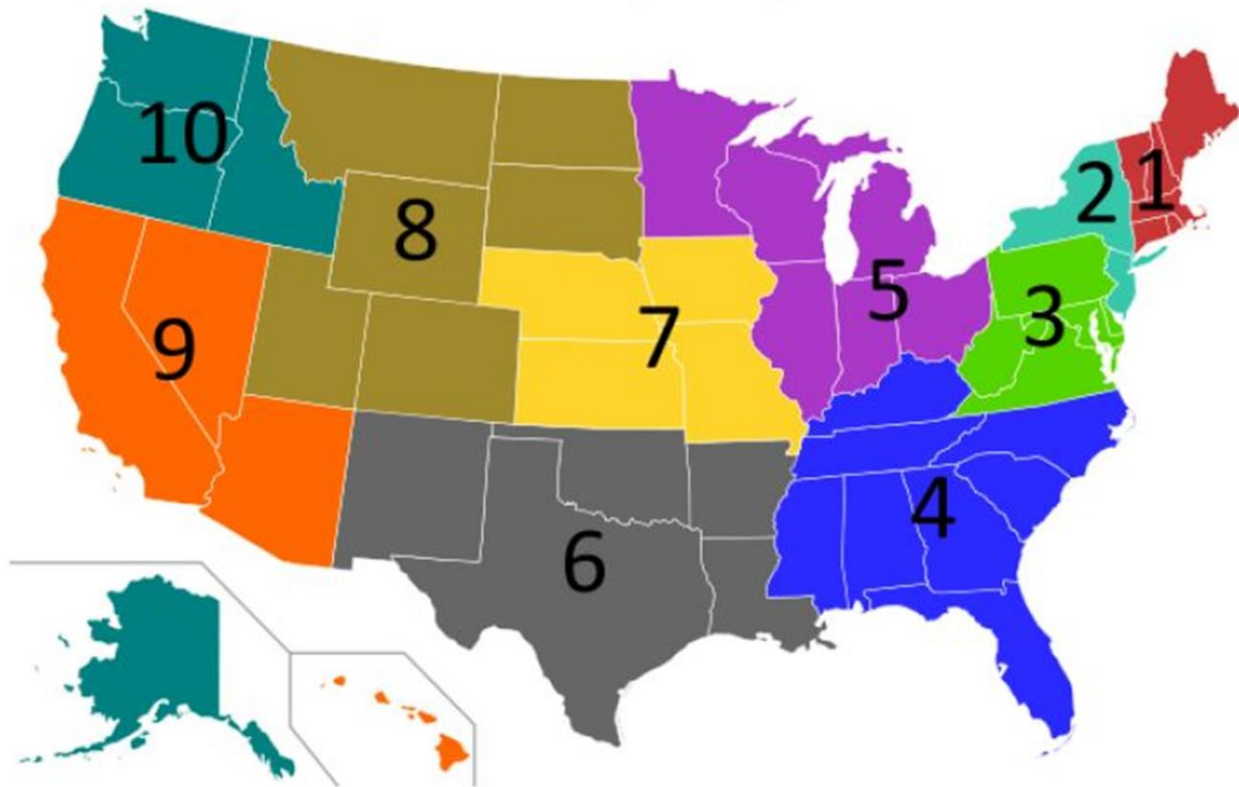
FOCUS volunteers are a diverse group coming from various professions and life experiences. A large percentage of our volunteers have served in the Marine Corps and want to support those returning from post 9/11 conflicts. Others have not served but want to support those who have. Some of our volunteers are retired while others work full or part time giving up their work-place vacation hours to help. All have a deep concern and respect for our nation's veterans.



There are many teams that make the FOCUS week a success. The kitchen crew, audio/visual support, the fishing crew, and facility teams ensure our participants have a great experience. Our administrative team works behind the scenes, assembling binders and providing additional support as needed. Team Leaders and Graduate Mentors work one-on-one with participants and continue to provide support when graduates return home. The transportation team ensures the safe arrival and departure of participants, speakers, and nurses and remain on-site throughout the week. Each individual plays an integral role. The link on the bottom of this page provides more information on FMF volunteer opportunities.

It requires more than 125 dedicated volunteers to support any given FOCUS session. In 2015, our volunteers contributed more than 15,000 man hours to help FMF accomplish our mission!

Quick Facts: FOCUS Participants represent 45 states



FOCUS Graduates By Region

Region 1	12
Region 2	18
Region 3	40
Region 4	185
Region 5	97
Region 6	28
Region 7	52
Region 8	24
Region 9	117
Region 10	16

FOCUS participants come from every region of the United States and represent all four major military service branches. To continue supporting these brave young warriors, FMF will soon commence our annual fundraising campaign.

FOCUS Marines Foundation accepts no government funding. We are funded 100% by private donations, organizations, and grants. Therefore our fall fundraising campaign is a critical part of our FOCUS program.

If you would like to help, you may donate on-line by going to the link below, or mail donations to the following address.

Mail donations to:

FOCUS Marines Foundation,
15455 Manchester Road, #476
Ballwin, Missouri 63022