

# In FOCUS

FOCUS Marines Foundation  
Spring 2019



## A Message from our new FOCUS Program Director

It is a great honor to have been offered the privilege of an expanded role in the FOCUS family, and it is with humility that I accepted. I met some of the FOCUS board members about ten years ago when they launched the FOCUS program. I immediately felt there was something exceptional about this organization. The Marines who comprise the Board, the Team Leaders, and the support staff operated with *Semper Fi* in everything they did. Commitment to mission guided all their actions and decisions. Although it had been many decades since most of them had served, they functioned with a cohesion and mission focus that reminded me of the active duty Marine Corps. I nicknamed them *the St. Louis Marine Mafia* and felt privileged every time I was given the opportunity to assist in the FOCUS mission of healing those who have served our great Nation.

Over the years, I saw a collection of incredible people join the FOCUS family, and the program grew. Dan Dorr and Sona van der Hoop guided the Participants through self awareness and awareness of others, self forgiveness and forgiveness of others, and learning to move forward. The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society Nurses educated the Participants on the wealth of resources available while simultaneously healing physical and mental wounds. The Mentors returned to the program to support and guide, Marine Corps style-leading by example.

Finally, the participants who attended FOCUS have been truly inspiring. They have displayed true integrity, being honest with themselves. They have taken past shortfalls and learned commitment through them. They have returned to responsible and left victimhood behind. They have shown the courage to face future unknowns. During their time in service, they fought for the freedom of others. Through FOCUS, they have realized they have the freedom to assign positive meaning to past negative events and live the sort of life they have earned.

As the newly appointed Program Director, I feel challenged to not only match the monumental accomplishments of the FOCUS program thus far, but also to improve upon them and exceed them. Surrounded by so many great people, I like my prospects. *Semper Fi* and thank you for the honor and privilege of being a part of the FOCUS family.

-Nick Popaditch

## From the Development Desk

In 2012 I met with Board Member Mickey Drake over a cup of coffee to learn more about the FOCUS Marines Foundation. To say the least, it was a life changing cup of "Joe". I remember Mickey saying, "Norm, we are veterans helping veterans, we are Marines helping Marines, and we are saving lives." Needless to say, I was all in, and what an amazing experience it has been.

My first class as a Team Leader was December 2012. As I pulled into the farm where our sessions are held, I remember asking myself, "how did they do this?" At the end of the week, and experiencing all the magic that happens here, I asked myself the same question. How did they do this? This March will be our first FOCUS week of 2019 and just as I did almost 7 years ago, I will ask myself, "how did they do this"? Of course, the simple answer is it was done through vision and hard work by those who came before me. It was done through our amazing volunteer network and the support of our donor community, all of which leaves me humbled. Importantly, none of this could happen without the participation of the courageous men and women from across the United States who attended our sessions to learn new ways of addressing the issues that have held them back for far too long.

At the end of our next class, FOCUS Marines Foundation will have administered our program to more than 800 veterans and we know that as they leave to head back home after a life changing week, they will ask themselves, "how did they do this"? We know the answer don't we? Thank you.

Semper Fi,  
Norm Harriman



### Fundraising Success!

We've had 2 phenomenally successful fundraisers held to benefit FOCUS Marines Foundation!

Thanks to everyone who made the All in for Life Texas Hold 'Em Tournament and Kansas City Mess Night bigger than ever!

We truly appreciate the hard work and dedication involved in the events!

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Just one more way to support FOCUS and its mission!

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## FOCUS Graduates Check In

Just a few highlights from our 2019 FOCUS Graduate Survey:

--Graduates from 24 of the 28 FOCUS Courses participated

--81% of FOCUS Graduates responding have completed their SMART Goals

--Graduates continue to feel they have a mission...even YEARS after completing the FOCUS Course

We are making a difference before, during and after our Veterans attend FOCUS. Find out how you can leave your mark at [www.focusmarines.org](http://www.focusmarines.org).

七転び八起き  
"Fall down seven times, stand up eight."

## We'll miss you, Pete!

We are heartbroken to announce the passing of Pete Wojciechowski.

Pete was a dedicated volunteer and beloved Team Leader within the FOCUS Family.

He changed more lives than he could ever imagine. We are unbelievably proud of all he accomplished and are blessed by the lasting impact he's leaving on the program and the Marines he served.

Fair winds

and following seas,

Marine.

Semper Fidelis



## In their own words...

"FOCUS has changed my life in ways I didn't even imagine were possible. FOCUS gave me a different perspective that allowed me to move past my obstacles and grow. I am a good man!"

"I can't say enough about the program and what I have learned and was able to retain. I will certainly be on the lookout for future candidates that I think will benefit greatly from the program."

"This was exactly what I needed. Thank you, FOCUS."

"It was the best week of my life. I learned a lot this week and what I learned here I will apply every day in my life. So far, FOCUS has been the best program ever."





## Save the Date!

### Mess Night—St. Louis

Thursday, October 17th, 2019

#### Defiance Ridge Vineyards

Join us for a fun, light-hearted dinner steeped in military tradition. This unique event will showcase FOCUS Marines Foundation's mission and the heroes we serve!

More details coming soon!



## Upcoming Events

### March 2019

2-9 FOCUS Course  
22 Buddy Check – Online FOCUS Session

### April 2019

Augusta Brewery Chili Cook Off Fundraiser (date TBD)

### May 2019

4-11 FOCUS Course  
22 Buddy Check – Online FOCUS Session

### June 2019

AD LIFT BBQ Fundraiser (date TBD)  
17 John Ferguson Jr Foundation Golf Tournament

### September 2019

7-14 FOCUS Course  
22 Buddy Check – Online FOCUS Session

### October 2019

17 Mess Night—St. Louis  
22 Buddy Check – Online FOCUS Session

### December 2019

7-14 FOCUS Course  
22 Buddy Check – Online FOCUS Session

Find more event details  
at [www.focusmarines.org/calendar](http://www.focusmarines.org/calendar)



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