



GratitudeAmerica Strategic Plan

Nonprofits serving veterans face many challenges and opportunities. GratitudeAmerica embarked on a strategic planning process at the 2017. Both the Executive Director and board of directors developed this strategic plan with the understanding that GratitudeAmerica would play a central role in helping veterans become the next greatest generation.

While several elements of this strategic plan address immediate economic conditions, the plan is designed to ensure that GratitudeAmerica is well prepared for what comes next.

Vision:

To provide free, first-class retreat programs for America's combat veterans, wounded warriors and, their families to reconnect and recover post trauma. We envision a world where all combat veterans, and their families have the training, skills, and support they need to transform their struggle into lifelong Posttraumatic Growth.

Mission

GratitudeAmerica's mission is to provide critical support for service members, veterans, and their families by conducting meaningful restorative retreats to assist participants affected by deployment exposures such as combat related stress and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Values: Integrity, Partnership, Community, Empowerment, Responsibility

Who We Serve: Any post 9/11 Veteran who served in combat regardless of discharge status from the Active Component, Reserve, or National Guard.

Who We Are: A Veteran-led organization who uses the proven science of Posttraumatic Growth to heal, train, and advocate for combat veterans who have experienced combat related trauma.

We develop and deliver transformative programs to ensure these remarkable men and women transform struggle into strength for lifelong growth, so they can live the great lives they deserve.

Our Programs and Services:

Military Support Retreats: GratitudeAmerica Military Support Retreats are a breakthrough, NO COST, 4-day immersive and intensive experience designed to help combat veterans and their supporters make peace with their past so they can begin planning for their new mission at home. Open to any post 9/11 Veteran who served in combat regardless of discharge status from the Active Component, Reserve, or National Guard, our retreats focus on post traumatic growth. We provide a supportive environment in which veterans can connect with their peers, gain critical coping skills and, interact with licensed counselors to begin healing where needed. Our retreats provide various activities including, nature-based recreation, yoga, breath awareness, kayaking, and dolphin interactions. In many cases our retreats act as a gateway for deeper levels of care.

Warrior PATHH: Warrior PATHH (Progressive and Alternative Training for Healing Heroes) is the nation's first non-clinical program designed to cultivate and facilitate Posttraumatic Growth amongst those struggling with PTSD and/or combat stress. Warrior PATHH enables these remarkable men and women



to transform times of deep struggle into profound strength and growth. All Warrior PATHH instructors have walked this road from struggle to strength, and the blended team of trained combat veterans and civilians leverage their own experiences to guide attendees. This 18-month program begins with a 7-day retreat, initiating students into the Warrior PATHH. Students are then supported for the following 77 weeks via the myPATHH technology platform, regular Team Video Chats, alumni coaches, and the Warrior PATHH Student Guide and Journal.

GratitudeAmerica's Organizational Competencies are: (Competitive Advantage)

- Quality Program Delivery Excellence
- Flexibility
- Regional
- Interpersonal (Relationship Building)
- Teamwork

Our Goals 2021-2025

Goal 1: Strengthen GratitudeAmerica for Long Term Sustainability

GratitudeAmerica is a grass roots organization and since 2011 has had a slow and steady growth. After eight years of providing programming, we have proven our retreat models. However, the future is never guaranteed, and we must become more sustainable.

Strategies: Major Donor Cultivation

- a. In the past, donor cultivation was solely left to the Board of Directors and Executive Director. As we grow, it will be imperative to meet new donors outside of our existing circles to grow our donor network.
- b. Hiring contract development assistance will be key to introduce GratitudeAmerica to new potential donors.
- c. Reengaging lapsed individual donors and developing new means of keeping donors abreast of GratitudeAmerica's successes.
- d. Identifying the true cost of programming to include staffing costs. Set a goal to fundraise for each Military Support Retreat beginning in 2021.
- e. Formulate a plan to replace Avalon Fund Support and prepare to replace that funding by April 2024.
- f. Hire a full time development/marketing employee to aid in execution of development strategy.

Goal 2: Increase and Expand Offerings

Since 2019 GratitudeAmerica has offered approximately 10 Military Support Retreats and 12 Warrior PATHH programs yearly. It is our plan to offer more Military Support Retreats yearly and consider opening to first responders where applicable.

Strategies: Needs Analysis



- a. Conducting a needs analysis to determine if we could increase veteran thru put. Adding more programs without understanding to the number of unserved veterans would be futile. 18% of applications to Military Support Retreats at rejected for being outside reasonable commuting distance. 34% of those applications come from the South East United States indicating that adding three retreats per year would fill an unmet need.
- b. Analyzing the cost of adding additional programming.
- c. Understanding staffing need for increased Military Support Retreats.

Goal 3: Adding a Permanent Retreat Center

As we grow our programing frequency it will become necessary to find a permanent location to hold Warrior PATHH.

Strategies: Researching locations, assessing needs, and securing funding.

- a. GratitudeAmerica's current strategy of not owning property is currently serving our needs. Sharing property with other non-profit organizations is appropriate and fiscally responsible.
- b. Not having permanent space causes us to have MOUs with other organizations and there is a possibility of non-renewal causing us to suspend programming until a new space is secured.
- c. An analysis must be conducted to determine if we should have our own property or could we partner with another organization and build a space on their property.

This project will require immense funding and a capital campaign will need to be created.

Goal 4: Study Efficacy of Military Support Retreat Program

Use results of empirical research to educate others in the sector about the efficacy of our programs and Post Traumatic Growth.

Strategies: Gather existing research findings, conduct new research, and share with the mental health community.

- a. Partner with an educational institution or research psychologist to conduct additional research surrounding our post retreat outcomes. Conducting increased research will come with some price tag.
- b. Research papers and journal articles will be prepared in an effort to make Post Traumatic Growth and Nature Based Recreation utilized as mainstream treatment.

Situational Analysis (SWOT)

INTERNAL	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Strengths</h3> <p>What is your organization amazing at?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Understanding the unique needs of Veterans.</p> <p>What differentiates you from other nonprofit organizations serving your cause?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">We do not have offices or property to maintain.</p> <p>Do you have a novel approach?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Our programs are based on PTG.</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</h3> <p>What areas haven't you committed time to yet?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Web and Social expansion.</p> <p>Where did you fall short last year?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Grant diversification.</p> <p>What aspects of your strategy didn't have a positive ROI last year?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Programs for specific groups (ex. Families)</p>
EXTERNAL	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</h3> <p>What fundraising trails do you have yet to blaze?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Obtaining diversified grants and sponsorships.</p> <p>Is your organization dedicated to fostering innovation and growth?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Growth has been exponential year over year.</p> <p>What organizations might strengthen your value proposition through partnership?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">K9s for Warriors.</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Threats</h3> <p>What factors put your organization at risk?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Donor interest in supporting veteran causes.</p> <p>What political or environmental issues, if any, surround your cause?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">COVID and economic downturn.</p> <p>Do you face any managerial challenges, such as high turnover, in your day-to-day operations?</p> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;">Managing a team who works entirely remotely.</p>