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Walk to help Wounded Veterans, May 19 in Rose Tree Park

A remarkable program that helps wounded veterans and their families is Operation First Response, a national organization that serves all branches of our nation's wounded heroes, assisting them and their families with personal and financial needs.

At the May 9 weekly meeting, Delaware County Council presented a resolution and commended the efforts of Operation First Response, highlighting the upcoming Walk for the Wounded event that has raised more than \$2.5 million dollars since its inception more than a decade ago which is organized by Nick Constantino, senior advisor to Operation First Response.

"In Delaware County, we are dedicated to supporting our men and women in the Armed Services, and the 39,000 veterans now living in our county," said Council Chairman John P. McBlain, "A remarkable program that helps wounded veterans and their families is Operation First Response, a national organization that serves all branches of our nation's wounded heroes, assisting them and their families with personal and financial needs," said McBlain.

This year's 11th Annual Walk for the Wounded and Warriors 5K Run will take place on Saturday, May 19 in Rose Tree Park. Last year marked a decade of Delco hosting this event, and when the final tally was taken, the event had raised more than 2.5 million dollars.

This year one of the well-deserved recipients of those dollars is retired Chief Warrant Officer Trevor Jenni of the United States Army who will be giving the keynote speech. He will talk about his military service in Afghanistan during Operation Freedom, his time at Oyster Creek Power as a terrorism squad leader, and his final years as a Blackhawk Pilot flying 350 hours in Iraq. Due to multiple injuries he was medically retired from the Army in 2015.

The emcee for this year's event is CBS3's Nicole Brewer who will be joined by hundreds of military veterans and the Phillie Phanatic, who hasn't missed a single WALK since the first in 2007.

As in previous years, the day will boast a festival-like atmosphere, with live music and activities including Rock Climbing, Zip-Lining and Free Falling. There will also be a Tribute to a local fallen hero, Army Sgt. Allen J. Dunckley and a military vehicle display that may include a Chinook Ch47 Helicopter.

The mission is to help these wounded heroes get through their recovery period and transition from military life to the civilian world. The financial aid they offer is based on individual needs and can range from rent and utilities, to home alterations to add accessibility, to clothing and travel expenses.

"It is hard to comprehend what our servicemen and women face in a combat situation, or serving in a hostile country. But it's just as hard to comprehend what it must be like to return to civilian life after suffering life-changing injuries, often followed by mounting bills," McBlain said.

Operation First Response offers financial aid to veterans based on individual needs and can range from rent and utilities, to home alterations to add accessibility, to clothing and travel expenses.

The mission is to help these wounded heroes get through their recovery period and transition from military life to the civilian world. For more information and to register for the event, residents can visit www.walkforthewounded.org.