



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support of the Veterans Rowing and Kayaking Association, Inc. The idea of bringing veterans of all types out on the water and introducing them to new activities that increase engagement and health is a fantastic idea that can have great value.

Paul reached out to us at East Bay Rowing (EBR) in the attempt to create a model for the Providence RI VA Hospital. Working with veterans has been a long-term goal of EBR since its formation as a non-profit just 4 short years ago. Paul allowed this goal to become a reality, and in a very quick fashion.

EBR is the rowing organization that has worked to develop the opportunity to teach the veterans how to row. We have been working for the past 3 months at our sponsor gym, 426 Fitness in Warren RI. Every other week we have blind and visually impaired veterans ranging in age from 45 to 93 on the WaterRowers. These machines are particularly special for those with vision impairment because they can hear the rush of the water move in the tank and they can feel the pull of the handle against water. It is a special and powerful moment in the room when we have everyone working together to make the swirling sound for a power 10.

We have been talking about long term goals for the program to expand beyond the gym and get on the water in 2015. The other long term goal is to grow the number of veterans we can impact from our current group. There are so many other veterans we can help and frankly be inspired by. Our group is an enthusiastic bunch that wants more! In fact a rowing program creates that familiar camaraderie that many veterans may miss as they age or leave active service.

With additional funding we can make the next phase of this project come alive by working to obtain equipment that we can tailor to the unique needs of this group. Our goal is to get this equipment and effectively engage a greater number of participants regardless of their limitations.

As RI residents (my husband and I), and as both a daughter and son and brother of veterans, I have a personal vested interest in making this program meet the needs of this important group of people. East Bay Rowing is proud to be part of the program with Paul and the Veterans Rowing and Kayaking Association and I am confident with increased funding we can make this program serve an ever larger group of veterans in RI and Southeastern MA.

Thank you,

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