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**Foundation's BRAIVE Fund Initiative Awards Grants to Support  
Military Service Members, Veterans and Families**

**Miami, FL - Sept 8, 2009** - Twelve nonprofits have received \$1.9 million from Dade Community Foundation to serve and support troops and veterans on the homefront who have served our country in Afghanistan and Iraq since 9/11. The Foundation awarded the grants through its BRAIVE Fund Initiative - established to assist military service members, veterans and their families impacted by deployment.

"Scattered throughout our community are individuals who have sacrificed so much in service to our country, yet are struggling with the stresses, hardships and challenges of deployment and re-adjustment to civilian life," said Charisse Grant, Vice President for Programs at Dade Community Foundation. "The BRAIVE Fund represents our opportunity to invest in this community's ability and commitment to be of service to a new generation of service members and veterans who call South Florida home."

In late 2008, Dade Community Foundation received a \$5 million two-year grant from the California Community Foundation through its Iraq-Afghanistan Deployment Impact Fund (IADIF). IADIF was created in 2006 in response to a multitude of unmet needs arising among these military service men and women and their families as a direct result of their deployment. Since 2003, more than 1.8 million American troops have served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) in Afghanistan and Iraq - and thousands have been deployed multiple times. Since its inception, IADIF has distributed more than \$245 million to 46 nonprofit organizations across the country.

Two other Florida foundations - the Community Foundation in Jacksonville and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice - were also awarded \$5 million each to support nonprofit agencies in their regions. Florida is home to 20 major military installations and three joint commands, with their thousands of active-duty troops and families and approximately 34,000 members of guard and reservists from all services. The three Florida foundations established a statewide partnership called the **Florida BRAIVE Fund**. Each community foundation administers its own funding program to serve a multi-county region. They created a website, [www.floridabraive.org](http://www.floridabraive.org), share information and collaborate on grants.

The BRAIVE Fund Initiative at Dade Community Foundation serves Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward, Palm Beach and Martin Counties. The first round of grants to the 12 nonprofits focused on serving Miami-Dade and Monroe. As the initiative expands to the other counties, the Foundation seeks to create resources in the "civilian community" to complement and coordinate with those already provided by the "military community" through government veterans organizations and the military branches themselves. Along with grantmaking, the Foundation is helping foster service coordination, training and education activities.

"The Foundation is deeply grateful to the many individuals who helped us shape this initiative, offering their extensive knowledge of the military community and needs of our returning troops," Grant said. "We are honored to be able to use our grantmaking experience and philanthropic relationships to play a role."

Established in 1967, Dade Community Foundation is Greater Miami's permanent philanthropic endowment for enhancing the quality of life of all Miami-Dade County residents. The Foundation provides non-profit organizations funding support and technical assistance for programs and projects which benefit the community. And for its many donors, the Foundation provides an effective vehicle for charitable giving and grantmaking expertise about quality programs across a broad spectrum of community issues and needs.

Visit <http://www.dadecommunityfoundation.org/Site/wc/wc143.jsp> for a list BRAIVE grantees and contact information. For more information call Charisse Grant, Vice President for Programs of Dade Community Foundation at 305-371-2711 or [Charisse.grant@dadecommunityfoundation.org](mailto:Charisse.grant@dadecommunityfoundation.org).



**BRAIVE FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDERS  
MIAMI-DADE & MONROE COUNTIES**

**CENTRAL INFORMATION & RE-ADJUSTMENT, RE-INTEGRATION ASSISTANCE**

**Concept House** - \$250,000 – **Operation Veterans Link Up** in partnership with the Miami Vet Center - Provides outreach, information and comprehensive service to help OEF/OIF service members, veterans and families with re-adjustment and re-integration to civilian life, employment, education and career planning. Services include linkages to other community resources, job fairs, employment counseling, support for veterans attending colleges and universities and mental health counseling. The program also works to coordinate care services for OEF/OIF clients among various service providers. Staff also conducts education and training on best practices for other health and social service professionals.

**FLAIRS (Florida Alliance for Information and Referral Services)** - \$152,990 – to create the BRAIVE Helpline information, referral and crisis counseling system that will serve the entire state of Florida. Designed around the current need to provide support to OEF/OIF service personnel, veterans and their families, the system will be built through the existing state network of 2-1-1 centers and their online resource directory capacities. The BRAIVE Helpline – being funded by all three Florida foundations - will utilize a single toll-free 800 number to connect to a live crisis counselor 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The online component will be searchable database of services locally available.

**FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

**American Red Cross, Greater Miami & The Keys Chapter** - \$629,000 - **BRAIVE Emergency Assistance Program (EAP)** - Provides financial assistance for all South Florida counties to assist OEF/OIF service members, veterans and families who face financial hardships, unanticipated and emergency needs related to their deployment and service. Managed centrally by the Red Cross, EAP funds can be accessed by a network of trained “Trusted Agent” organization or through direct client referral to the Red Cross. The “Trusted Agents” network of frontline service providers has made the EAP broadly accessible through a range of groups already working with troops, veterans and families.

**Florida National Guard Foundation** - \$88,000 - **Florida National Guard Emergency Relief Fund** – Supports a statewide program of financial assistance for National Guard members. The program assists eligible Florida National Guardsman impacted by deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan with financial emergencies, and also provides reintegration assistance and programs following a deployment.

**RE-ADJUSTMENT FROM TRAUMA & INJURY**

**Center for Independent Living of South Florida** - \$95,000 – **The INVEST Program** – Provides a range of services and support to help OEF/OIF veterans with disabilities and their families gain and maintain independence. INVEST provides direct services, support and links to other services that assist clients with employment, housing, child care, transportation, food, clothing, emergency needs and support in coping with death, disability, emotional distress and economic hardship.

**Shake-A-Leg Miami** - \$100,000 – Provides water-sports based experiences along with counseling to help OEF/OIF veterans cope with re-adjustment issues, including, but not limited to, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The program partners with the Miami Vet Center and Veterans Ocean Adventures to use water sports and sailing to heal and empower individuals facing re-adjustment and physical challenges. Water activities along with the counseling create a safe, non-clinical setting to enhance veterans’ recovery from combat experiences and injuries and their re-integration into civilian life.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH

**Concept House** - \$70,000 – **The VETS Program (Veterans Engaged in Transitional Services)** - Provides comprehensive, residential and outpatient treatment for substance abuse, and mental health treatment and support services to move OEF/OIF veterans toward recovery and self-sufficiency. The agency uses evidence-based treatment approaches for substance abuse and mental health issues as well as interventions for PTSD and other trauma-related conditions. To promote economic self-sufficiency, the program includes employment assistance and supported housing options.

## FAMILY SUPPORT & STABILITY:

**CCDH** -\$70,000 – The program seeks to identify military families for whom deployment presents unique challenges due to having a child with developmental disabilities. CCDH provides individualized needs assessment, services and support to address their unique personal and educational needs and help them access other community resources they may need.

**University of Miami - Mailman Center for Child Development** - \$100,000 - **The Young Warrior Program** - Targets families with children birth to age 5 to help them manage challenges related to deployment. The program provides educational workshops for parents about warning signs of trauma and distress symptoms in young children. It also provides counseling addressing child-parent attachment issues, and support groups on child care and behavior issues, separation, mental health and bereavement.

## EDUCATION & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**Miami Dade College Foundation** - \$75,000 – **The PAVE Program** - Provides a career pathways program that includes outreach, educational and support services tailored to veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. PAVE conducts activities to increase awareness about opportunities available to OEF/OIF veterans and family members. It assists with their transition into post-secondary education, civilian career development, and provides educational, career and support services to address re-adjustment issues.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

**Legal Services of Greater Miami** -\$75,000 – **The Military Legal Advocacy Project** - Provides a range of legal services to assist OEF/OIF service members, veterans and families. Services include assistance securing benefits and services through the Veterans Administrations and representation in VA appeals. The program also assists with civil legal problems, such as mortgage foreclosures, eviction, consumer and tax related issues. The agency will also be conduct community education workshops.

## SKILLS & CAPACITY BUILDING

**Youth Environmental Programs** - \$200,000 – to develop a “Military Family Peer Guide” - a specialized peer-based, psycho-educational outreach and education tool for use by individuals and agencies serving OEF/OIF services members and families. The guide - based on interviews that capture real-life experiences - will assist families with issues related to planning and preparation for deployment, returning from deployment and on-going and long-term mental health support needs. The project will provide trainings for service providers on how to use the tool in conjunction with services.

The BRAIVE Fund Initiative is also facilitating efforts to build service providers’ capacity and competency to meet the unique needs of OEF/OIF veterans – particularly regarding mental health. The initiative’s consultant program managers – Strategic Partners – are providing staff support to a new *Returning Vets Behavioral Health Task Force* - group of leaders and professionals in the behavioral and mental health field and veteran-serving organizations. The task force is identifying core competencies professionals need to effectively serve trauma victims and designing best-practices trainings to offer in South Florida. In June, nearly 140 participants – including Miami-Dade BRAIVE grantees – attended a best-practices training the Foundation co-sponsored with the South Florida Providers Coalition - a consortium of behavioral health care providers in Miami-Dade and Monroe. The trainings by Dr. Lisa Najavits of Harvard University featured the “Seeking Safety” approach - an evidence-based support program for veterans experiencing both Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse.