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Wounded Veterans Suit Up for a New Career with Haven Hospice and Dignity U Wear's 'Suits for Soldiers' Initiative

Jacksonville-area Non-profit Organizations Give Back to Soldiers as They Prepare to Enter the Civilian Workforce

Jacksonville, Fla. (June 21, 2010) – Last Friday morning served as the start of a new day for 11 wounded veterans in Jacksonville, thanks to Haven Hospice and Dignity U Wear. The veterans were fitted for new suits and accessories at Men's Wearhouse as part of Haven Hospice and Dignity U Wear's new "Suits for Soldiers" initiative that provides free business clothing for veterans preparing to embark on a new career.

"It is an honor to help local veterans through our Suits for Soldiers project," said Tim Bowen, president of Haven Hospice. "Together with Dignity U Wear, we are proud to have the opportunity to give back to the men and women who have given so much through their dedication and service to our country."

The Suits for Soldiers initiative supports Jacksonville's Wounded Warriors Project. Through a 12-month program, the Wounded Warrior Project provides an integrated approach to address long-term needs for education, training, advocacy and secondary rehabilitative care for wounded warriors. Upon completion of the program, soldiers are fitted for new business suits for use as they prepare to reenter the civilian workforce.

"Experiences like this have given me the reassurance to know that I, we, will succeed," said Andrew Coughlan, a wounded soldier who is completing in the Wounded Warrior program and was fitted a new business suit. "This is a new chapter for all of us. We are moving from military suits to business suits. It's, in a good way, overwhelming, but exciting because we all know we are going to make it."

Coughlan, who served on a 13 month tour in Baghdad and suffered from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) upon his return, is completing the final requirements of the 12 month program. He will begin an externship with the Jacksonville Jaguars in the fall so that he may use the skills and information he learned through his sports management degree.

"We know that the transition from military uniform to professional business attire can be challenging," said Bob Bryan, executive director for Dignity U Wear. "That's why we're so pleased to be able to help provide a great start to our local heroes as they prepare for a job interview and new career."

The 11 soldiers who were fitted for new business suits and accessories today will receive their new attire on Friday, July 23 at a special ceremony hosted by Haven Hospice and Dignity U Wear. The event will take place at the St. John's Town Center Men's Wearhouse from 9-10 a.m.

For more information about the event on July 23, please contact Genelle Thomas at (904) 383-9624 or Jenni Williams (352) 271-4655.



Soldier Brian Overfield likes how he looks in his new suit.



Soldier Carlos De Leon is being fitted for a suit.



Soldier Andrew Coughlan finishes up trying on his new suit at the Suits for Soldiers event at Men's Wearhouse.

About Dignity U Wear

Dignity U Wear distributes brand new clothing it receives from apparel manufacturers, distributors and retailers through a network of nonprofit social service agencies throughout the United States. The organization specializes in receiving, warehousing and distributing brand new clothing to people in need at absolutely no cost to them. Since it was founded in 2000, the organization has provided more than 6.6 million pieces, valued at \$112million, to more than 435,000 people. For more information, visit www.dignityuwear.org.

About Haven Hospice

Haven Hospice is North Florida's expert in end-of-life and palliative care and has been recognized as a national Circle of Life Award® winner for leadership in improving the care of patients near the end of life or with life-threatening conditions. Haven Hospice has also been recognized as a Florida Pacesetter for its leadership in promoting advance directives. Haven Hospice has served more than 45,000 patients and families since 1979 and has been licensed in Florida as a not-for-profit hospice since 1980. For more information, visit www.havenhospice.org or call 800-727-1889.

About the Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of the Wounded Warrior Project is to honor and empower wounded warriors. Its purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of severely injured service members, to help severely injured men and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, apolitical organization headquartered in Jacksonville, FL. To get involved and learn more, visit www.woundedwarriorproject.org.

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