

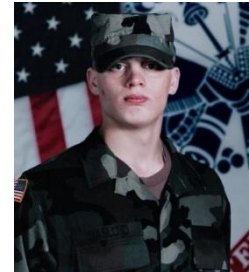
Operation-Engage-America

A Community Day of Support, Awareness and Education for Post Traumatic Stress



You may be familiar with our son, Daniel Somers. He was a CA Army National Guardsman who returned to civilian life from the Iraq war as so many of our warriors do, suffering from invisible wounds. For Daniel it was not only Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury, but also Gulf War Syndrome. His transition to civilian life ended last June when he took his own life, unable to cope any longer with multi-system health issues. We have made it our mission to address the multiple barriers that kept Daniel from receiving the proper treatment he so desperately needed. In that process we hope to ensure that no other veteran or family suffers as ours has.

Lisa and Jeff Naslund of Galva IA know our story; it is theirs as well. Their son, U.S. Army Sgt. Dillion Naslund, completed tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Dillion believed that, as a soldier, he needed to deal with the demons that often flashed in nightmares and cold sweat by himself. He was highly decorated, highly revered, and at a desperate crossroads when he took his life on Dec, 10, 2012 at the age of 25.



We have learned countless facts over the past ten months: Among them, PTSD is not military-specific. It affects our first responders, victims of domestic, child and sexual abuse, even some of those who've experienced natural disasters and automobile accidents. Additionally, there are thousands of people who sincerely want to help. It is estimated that there are 44,000 volunteer organizations in the United States dedicated to helping service members and their families.

So, you may ask, what is the problem? The problem is visibility. As parents of a married service member, we had no idea that there were resources for *us*, resources that could have helped us understand what our son went through, what he was going through and how to help him. We had no idea that we could have called the Veterans Administration and asked to speak with his mental health providers to give them a clearer picture of what changes we saw in Daniel. We had no idea that the Vet Center could have provided us insight and guidance in how to talk to him about his war experiences.

There has been much progress at the VA and DoD since Daniel last "touched" the government system that should have helped him. There is much still to be done. There are those 44,000 organizations trying to fill the many gaps. But how do you know who they are, how do you find them, how do you even know they are there for you?

We would like to start putting those organizations together with America now. We would like to engage America in the process of helping to heal our service members, our veterans and their families. As such, we have partnered with the American Legion, VFW, IAVA, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the VA to bring awareness and support to PTSD and TBI issues by educating the community regarding local resources. We have named our effort **Operation Engage America (OEA)**. Our goal is to have a grassroots event every June, PTSD Awareness month, in as many communities across America as we can. This year's inaugural **Operation Engage America** will be held on June 7th in two cities: San Diego, CA and Des Moines, IA.

One day at a time,
Howard and Jean Somers

Operation Engage America Partners

Howard & Jean Somers		Lisa & Jeff Naslund
American Legion	Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America	Veterans of Foreign Wars
San Diego VA Medical Center	Paralyzed Veterans of America	VA Central Iowa Health Care System

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A Community Day of Support, Awareness and Education for Post Traumatic Stress Request for Community Participants

Our focus this year will be, first and foremost, to educate the families and friends of veterans as to the resources in their own community that can help not only them, but that can help them help their veteran. Secondly, and just as important, there will be resources available for the veteran.

We are seeking community organizations in San Diego and Des Moines to help increase the awareness and dialogue of PTS and community support networks.

Specific information for each city is provided below.

San Diego

Location:

[American Legion Post 731](#)
[7245 Linda Vista Rd, San Diego CA 92111](#)

Time: 1PM – 5PM

Contact: Howard or Jean Somers
4daniel83@gmail.com

Des Moines

Location:

[VFW Post 9662](#)
[1309 NE 66th Ave, Des Moines IA 50313](#)

Time: 1PM – 5PM

Contact: Lisa Naslund
jelinasl@schallertel.net

Please provide us the following information in your email:

Name:

Organization that you Represent:

Email:

Telephone:

In which city you would like to support us (Des Moines or San Diego)?

Operation Engage America Partners

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