



Pamlico Rose *Building Wellness "Vet by Vet"*

Pamlico Rose, a Washington, NC nonprofit, advances health and wellness programs for Veterans—“Vet by Vet.” Many Veterans struggle with transition, including social and community reintegration from military to civilian life. This struggle has a variety of causes. For example, trauma experienced during service may cause lasting effects on the mind and body. When a Veteran becomes a civilian, this transition can cause relationships with loved ones and friends to suffer. Such strain may result in addiction, depression, unemployment, homelessness, and the final insult to their injury, suicide. This is especially true if the Veteran is coping with PTSD as a result of trauma experienced during military service.

Transition can be even more challenging for female Veterans. Women in the military suffer from both similar and different experiences than men due to a lower exposure to combat but a much higher risk of sexual harassment or assault. Female Veterans face socially conflicting role expectations of mothers, partners, and warriors, often coupled with being a single parent. Many of these women lack a support network of other female Veterans and find seeking help through the VA difficult due to a continued belief in the VA's association with the military, the scarcity or limitations of health and medical programs for women, and/or the perceived male-centric culture of the VA.

Building a strong foundation of wellness and resilience can help female Veterans overcome the effects of trauma and an uncertain future. Through its projects Pamlico Rose offers an integrated approach, *Total Life Fitness* (TLF), modeled on the Department of Defense's *Total Force Fitness* and the Department of Veteran Affairs' evolving patient-driven approach to serving Veterans. TLF connects mind, body, spirit, and community through behavioral skills such as mindfulness and anxiety management, as well as attention to interpersonal competence. TLF includes *meaningful and persistent attention* to daily activities and events that feature nutrition, exercise, meditation, and spirituality—all building resilience to aid in recovery or in managing symptoms of trauma.

Current focus areas of Pamlico Rose include:

- Providing a three-month reintegration experience for female Veterans in recovery from substance abuse, concentrating on wellness/healthy living, resilience, and building community at the *Rose Haven Center of Healing* facility in Washington, NC. The residents will enter as a cohort and identify educational, professional, or personal goals to work on while in residence, with guidance from staff, local learning institutions, or other organizations. Residents will participate in activities and experiences consistent with TLF, such as garden maintenance, yoga, physical exercise, and nutrition, while also volunteering a set number of hours with local nonprofits. Residents will continue personal counseling and therapy while at Rose Haven through the local VA or social service agencies and will be expected to remain alcohol and/or drug free while in residence;
- Offering multiday TLF retreats and online learning events for Vets that promote health and wellness to aid in transition for female Veterans, and in the future, for other Veteran groups;
- Sponsoring and hosting events/activities to promote awareness of at-risk and transitioning Veterans.

In partnership with Veterans and Veteran organizations, Pamlico Rose will act ethically and with integrity, always considering what is best for the Veteran when advancing its mission. The organization will be mindful of its civic responsibility to contribute to the sustainability of the community. As good stewards, Pamlico Rose will direct its efforts toward the benefit of preservation and reutilization of local cultural, historic, and natural resources as it pursues its mission and projects.

For questions or more information, visit www.pamlicorose.org or contact Pamlico Rose CEO, Dr. Robert Greene Sands, robert@pamlicorose.org.