June 29, 2017

Ms. Manpreet Mumman and Ms. Kat Casabar
Community Health Promotion Specialists
County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

Dear Ms. Mumman and Ms. Casabar,

San Diego County’s Live Well San Diego vision of a region that is building better health, living safely and thriving fits with the unique role of Wave Academy in the San Diego community. Wave Academy’s mission is to expand the role of warm water therapy as a powerful tool in the healing of undeserved individuals who have experienced trauma, with a focus on active duty military and veterans. Wave Academy’s program specifically supports the Live Well goals of improving the health of residents (building better health) and cultivating opportunities for all people to enjoy the highest quality of life (thriving).

Wave Academy provides its services to about 120 veterans annually from throughout San Diego County. Our services take place at four pools: Mission Hills, Kensington, Poway and Mt. Helix. Veterans access those pools from Oceanside to Chula Vista, and from the beaches to East County.

The statistics about veterans and related mental health problems is staggering. According to PBS, every week more than 1,000 returning veterans are diagnosed with PTS. Every day, 22 veterans commit suicide. On a national level, PTS occurs in about 11-20% of Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars (Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom). In San Diego the rate is even higher. According to the VA San Diego Healthcare System, 24.9 percent of veterans in San Diego who served in post-911 conflicts have a diagnosis of PTS. In addition to PTS, from 2002 to December 2012, thousands of service members were diagnosed with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Furthermore, 76.3% of veterans with a VA service-connected disability rating believe that that their disability is currently preventing them from getting or holding a job. If left untreated, PTS can lead to drug and alcohol abuse, debilitating depression and suicide.

Wave Academy recognizes that the need is great to provide healing for our veterans. About 25 percent of our clients have a combination of challenges, such as PTS and TBI, or PTS and military sexual trauma (MST). Our non-talk therapy allows clients an opportunity recover through the process of weightlessness and the release of stress present in the central nervous system.
By the end of their 8 sessions, 75 percent of our veteran clients have a reduction in post-traumatic stress by at least 24 percent over their level at the start of the sessions. Clients describe positive health outcomes that will help them thrive. This includes: letting go of stress, improved self worth, improved relationships with family members, improved sleep, and decreased pain.

Wave Academy evaluates program effectiveness on the short-term changes and long-term behaviors of clients. In addition to our quantitative measurement tool to track reduction in PTS symptoms, we ask our clients to write about their aquatic therapy experience after each session. Practitioners are also asked to make notes after each session to track progress. This is often the heart of our work.

- "I have been experiencing very real flashbacks recently and am on the verge of crying at any moment. Today was the first tie I have felt safe all week." -- female veteran with PTS and MST
- "I am becoming more trusting with people. I am floating in trust that not everyone will always hurt me." -- double amputee veteran with PTS
- "I came in with resentment and left like a beautiful, light feather." -- veteran with PTS

Wave Academy serves veterans (90%), active duty military (2%) and caregivers of veterans (8%). We serve both male (81%) and female (19%) clients. Our population is 92% low-income; 75% of our clients are unemployed. About a third (30%) are in a transitional housing program to gain stability. More than half (58%) have children. About two-thirds of our clients are between 25-35 years of age.

A partnership with Live Well San Diego will make it possible to connect with other organizations that are improving health outcomes. We recognize there is enormous potential in collective impact and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We are committed to the Live Well San Diego vision.

Warmly,

[Signature]

Elizabeth Berg, Executive Director

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BOARD RESOLUTION

June 30, 2017

WHEREAS San Diego is home to the largest concentration of military personnel and veterans make up 13 percent of the population of San Diego County; and

WHEREAS almost 25 percent of veterans in San Diego who served in post 9-11 conflicts are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress; and

WHEREAS the mission of Wave Academy is to expand the role of warm water therapy as a powerful tool in the healing of undeserved individuals who have experienced trauma with a focus on active duty military and veterans; and

WHEREAS warm water therapy shows a measurable reduction in post-traumatic stress by an average of 24 percent among all participants of Wave Academy; and

WHEREAS Wave Academy serves about 120 low-income veterans annually and 75 percent of our participants are unemployed; and

WHEREAS participants say their 8-weekly sessions of warm water therapy help reduce anxiety, decrease pain, increase sleep, and improve relationships; and

WHEREAS San Diego County's Live Well San Diego vision offers a partnership program to promote the health of residents and contribute to a thriving community that aligns with Wave Academy's purpose as a non-profit organization;

WHEREAS Wave Academy recognizes the power of partnerships and collaboration to help make a collective impact for the health of our San Diego community;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the mission and vision of Wave Academy supports the Live Well San Diego vision, and joins as a partner.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, this 30th day of June by the Board Chair on behalf of the Board of Directors of Wave Academy.

By: ____________________________ ATTESTED: ____________________________

Date: 30 June 2017

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