



WE DEFY FOUNDATION

2024

PROVE THEM WRONG

WE DEFEY

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OUR STORY

Retired United States Army Sergeant Joey Bozik, a triple amputee who had his legs and right arm amputated after his Humvee hit a roadside IED while serving in Iraq, had been a wrestler and martial artist in his teens.

Alan Shebaro, a former US Army Special Forces Weapons Sergeant and the first Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Black Belt in U.S. Army Special Forces Regiment ("Green Berets"), completed multiple deployments to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and has spent much of his career teaching and training a broad spectrum of people, including many from our U.S. Special Operations community - U.S. Army Rangers, U.S. Navy Seals, U.S. Air Force Special Operations, Tactical Air Control Party (TACPs), Combat Controllers (CCTs) and U.S. Marine Force Recon.

Bozik eventually relocated to North Texas and started looking for a place for his daughter to train and gain self-defense skills when he came across Alan Shebaro's Jiu Jitsu academy. After enrolling his daughter in class Shebaro approached Bozik to see if he would be interested in learning some self-defense skills himself.

Bozik was a little worried about it at first. Shebaro realized his years of instruction would need to be retooled in order to properly teach Bozik Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Together Bozik and Shebaro developed new systems that would work for Bozik.

Shebaro said. "I told him, 'If you're willing to have patience with me, I'll have patience with you.'"

The patience paid off. Bozik continues to train with Alan Shebaro today. Bozik has found community, health and a regained sense of purpose through his involvement with the gym and Jiu Jitsu itself.

This created the model and set the foundation for the mission of We Defy Foundation.

MISSION & VALUES



Mission

We provide combat veterans coping with military connected disabilities a long term means to overcome their challenges through Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and fitness training.

Values

WE ARE COMMITTED to our country, to creating a better life for our veterans and their families, our team and accomplishing our mission by providing training and support.

WE EMPOWER through integrity, discipline, personal accountability, mental and physical development, improved coordination, flexibility, adaptability, confidence, patience, and selfless service.

WE EVOLVE and expand our reach with the help of our volunteers, our sponsors, and approved training facilities to stay relevant and effective for the long term.

WHAT WE DO

WHAT WE DO

We raise money to pay for qualified disabled combat veterans to receive specialized instruction and attend Jiu Jitsu classes for 1 year at vetted and approved training facilities across the country. On average it takes approximately \$2500 to pay for an annual scholarship. Our goal is a minimum of 45 new veteran athletes per month, with a goal of funding at least 540 veteran scholarships as of 13 Feb 2024.

WHY BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu provides a means for people to find themselves and connect to others around them. Nothing is handed to you in Jiu Jitsu. You must show up every day and earn it. This empowers our athletes to take control of their lives, join a community of motivating people and improve their overall mental and physical health.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT

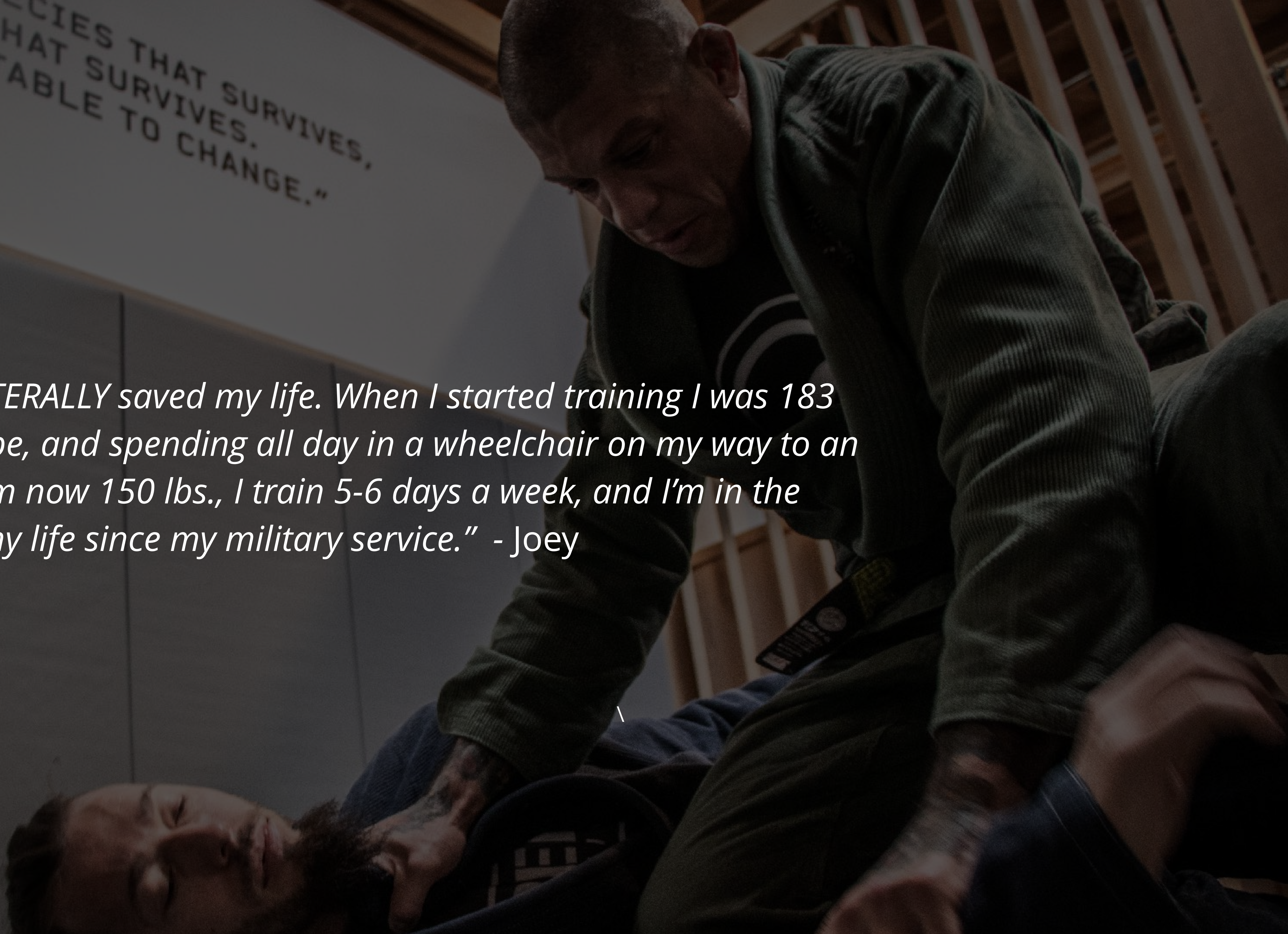
A study from the University of South Florida analyzed male US active duty service members and veterans from the Tampa area in a 5-month (40 sessions) Brazilian Jiu Jitsu training program. "Study participants demonstrated clinically meaningful improvements in their PTSD symptoms as well as decreased symptoms of major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety and decreased alcohol use."

"BJJ can be viewed as a problem solving opportunity for the practitioner that may instill a resilience that translates to life outside the gym. It has been suggested that a self-defense curriculum may provide an enhanced exposure therapy-like experience. Allowing veterans to repeatedly practice problem solving and successfully resolve difficult, uncomfortable struggles may promote re-learning how to be effective in adverse circumstances. Perception of being capable of contribution to the resolution of a traumatic event may lead to fewer symptoms of PTSD."

"A potential benefit of BJJ is that it forces its practitioners to engage in social interaction; the only way to practice and learn is to have training partners to grapple with. In addition to social interaction, the training paradigm in this study could also provide a degree of social support, since the participants were interacting with others who shared similar life experiences." SOURCE: Military Medicine, Vol 184 November/December 2019

...SPECIES THAT SURVIVES,
...THAT SURVIVES.
...ADAPTABLE TO CHANGE."

"Jiu-jitsu has LITERALLY saved my life. When I started training I was 183 lbs., out of shape, and spending all day in a wheelchair on my way to an early grave. I am now 150 lbs., I train 5-6 days a week, and I'm in the best shape of my life since my military service." - Joey



REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Compliance Partner The Foundation Group (<https://www.501c3.org/>) provides the We Defy Foundation with up to date advising on our state and federal compliance filings, including IRS Form 990 preparation, state charitable registrations, and state specific guidance to ensure annual ongoing compliance with each state's Division of Charities' fundraising regulations.

- IRS Form 990 is the information (tax) return that all 501(c) nonprofits must file annually. It focuses on financial activity and identifies areas of compliance, governance, structure, procedures and activities.
- Charitable solicitations registration is currently required in 41 states plus Washington, DC, prior to soliciting the public for donations.

The Foundation Group helps ensure our IRS Form 990 is submitted on time and posted publicly. They provide an annual review of our books, help direct operational improvements and identify regulatory and compliance priorities. They also provide guidance on questions such as commercial co-ventures, tax considerations, and how to classify specific expenditures.

Completed State Solicitation Registrations
California, Minnesota, and Texas

In-Progress State Solicitation Registrations
Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Utah

External Audit - Annual external auditing is being performed from 2021 on. Reports will be available alongside our IRS Form 990s on the We Defy website.

Planned State Solicitation Registrations

All 41 states by late-2024 that require registration for permission to solicit donations, in descending order by planned activities and donor interest.

SALIENT NUMBERS

948k

Revenue raised in 2024

788

Approved Training Facilities *(40% Growth)*

416

Active Ambassadors *(56% Growth)*

1190

Scholarships awarded

0

Backlog of approved veterans waiting for funding

49

States with affiliate gyms and 2 US Territories

45

Athletes a month entering the program based on current funding levels

600+

Enrolled Athletes at a time

FINANCES

2022 ACTUAL

\$807,703
TOTAL REVENUE

\$712,000
TOTAL SPENDING

\$569,600
PROGRAM SPENDING

2023 ACTUAL

\$944,733
TOTAL REVENUE

\$1,002,379
TOTAL SPENDING

\$831,975*
PROGRAM SPENDING

2024 FORECAST

\$1,250,000
TOTAL REVENUE

\$1,242,585
TOTAL SPENDING

\$1,056,197
PROGRAM SPENDING

— We are an entirely volunteer run organization. **This allows us to keep our program to overhead expense ratio to near 80%. It is our goal to drive every dollar possible to our veteran athletes.**

— It currently costs approximately \$2,500 to fund a one-year scholarship for a disabled combat veteran in our program.
— Annual external audits are being performed from 2021 on.

GRANTS:



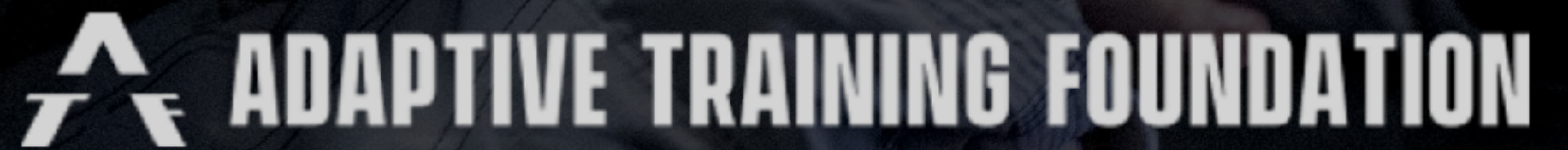
CORPORATE SPONSORS:

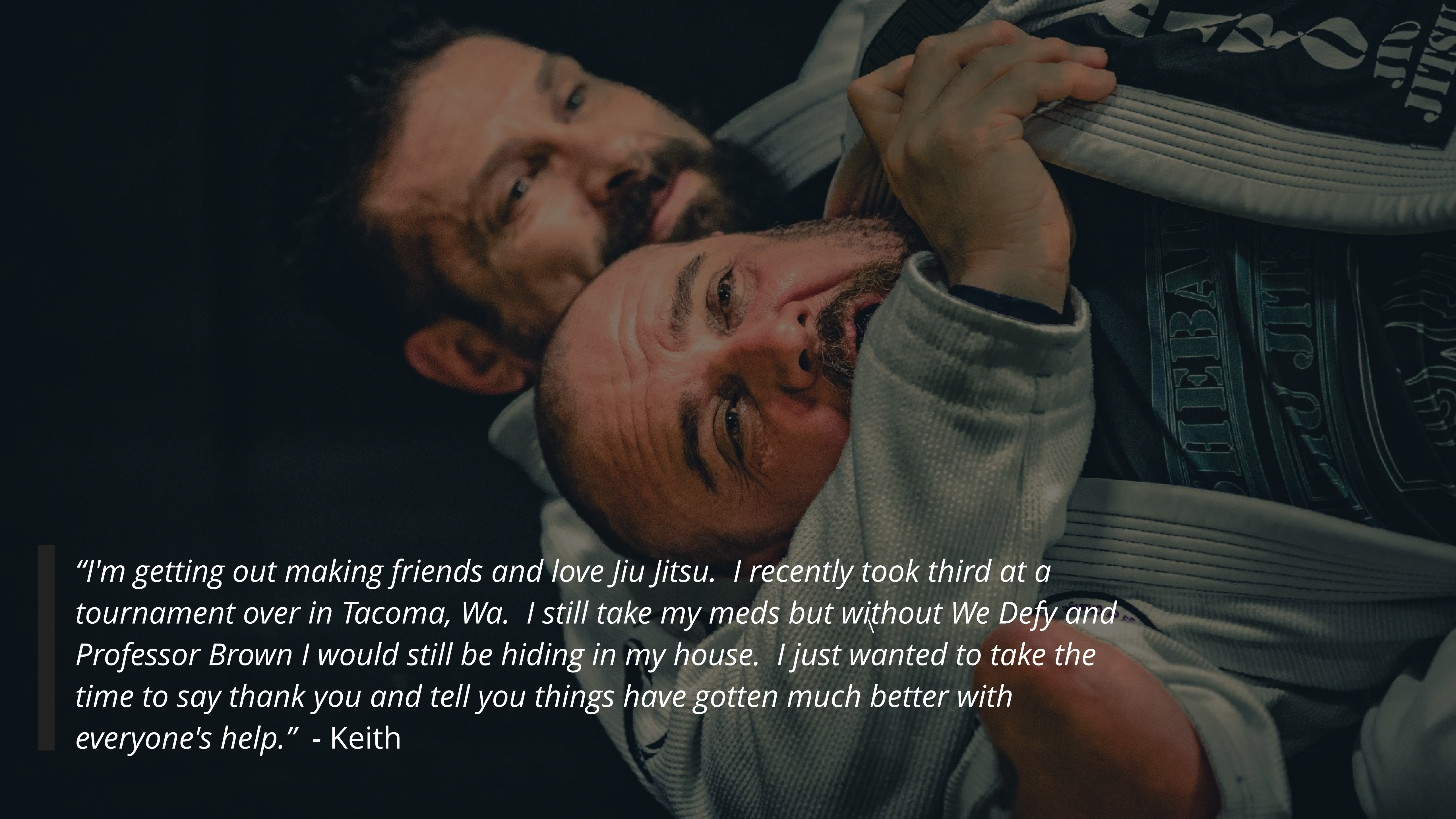


NON PROFIT PARTNERSHIPS:



WHO ARE YOU CARRYING?



A photograph of two men in a Jiu Jitsu gi. The man in the foreground is bald with a goatee, looking upwards. The man behind him has a beard and is adjusting the collar of the gi. The gi is dark with white stripes and text, including 'JITBAK' and 'JIT'.

"I'm getting out making friends and love Jiu Jitsu. I recently took third at a tournament over in Tacoma, Wa. I still take my meds but without We Defy and Professor Brown I would still be hiding in my house. I just wanted to take the time to say thank you and tell you things have gotten much better with everyone's help." - Keith

BOARD



Travis Larson, President

Travis started training Jiu Jitsu in 2014, earned his blue belt under former board member, Professor Gina Franssen in 2016 and his purple belt under Professor Manuel Flores at Daimyo BJJ in Tucson, AZ. Mr. Larson has been a consistent supporter of the Foundation since its inception. He graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in 1996, has built a career in Software Development and managing remote teams working for Northrop Grumman/Peraton since 1999. He brings a background of strong project & budget management, process improvement and remote & distributed team leadership skills to the board. Travis has experienced firsthand the mental health benefits of training in Jiu Jitsu. The camaraderie, support and accountability in the Jiu Jitsu community were critical to his recovery from a hemorrhagic stroke in late 2015. His wife and three children are also active Jiu Jitsu students.

Mike Anderson, Treasurer

Mike Anderson is an active Brazilian Jiu Jitsu competitor and coach. He earned his Black Belt from Professor Alan Shebaro in 2019 after more than 10 years of consistent training and competing. Mike trains at the We Defy Foundation Headquarters in McKinney, TX and has been actively supporting the foundation since its start. Mike has spent his career in the financial services industry and is a Financial Advisor working with families and small businesses. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in Consumer Science and Personal Finance and brings a comprehensive background of budgeting, money management, and financial planning to the board. Shortly after moving to Dallas from Minneapolis in 2011, Mike met and began training Jiu Jitsu with Professor Alan Shebaro. As the We Defy Foundation took shape, Mike was able to see first hand how important a tool Jiu Jitsu can be to deal with some of the physical struggles and mental health issues facing everyone, especially disabled combat veterans.





TJ "Blitz" Kreutzer VP/Director of Operations

TJ graduated from the US Air Force Academy in 1999 with a degree in Behavioral Sciences. Over the next several years he attended NATO's premier fighter pilot training course, EURO-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training (ENJJPT) and became an F-16 fighter pilot. He served overseas in Korea and deployed to Iraq as a combat flight lead, and was recognized as the Hill Air Force Base Flight Lead of the Year in 2005. Later he served as an instructor and evaluator pilot at ENJJPT, overseeing student training and managing several operational components of the program. During that time he also earned an MBA from Texas A&M - Commerce. He retired after more than 20 years of service in 2019. TJ began his Jiu Jitsu study in earnest in 2015 and has been an active Masters competitor, medaling at several IBJJF Worlds level events and appearing on multiple Fight 2 Win cards. TJ is currently a brown belt. One chance meeting with a struggling veteran after a Jiu Jitsu class inspired him to search for a volunteer opportunity. Soon after, TJ became aware of We Defy Foundation and applied to serve as an ambassador. TJ is passionate about helping people understand why Jiu Jitsu works as a tool for helping disabled combat veterans cope with their challenges. He firmly believes that components of the practice, such as human touch and personal accountability, are easily overlooked and yet integral to the healing process. TJ uses the organizational skills he practiced as an Air Force officer to help manage the day-to-day operations of We Defy Foundation.

Kevin Linderman VP/Director of Development and Marketing

Kevin Linderman started his Jiu Jitsu journey in 2016 under Alex Martins at AMBJJ in Dallas, TX. Kevin currently is a brown belt. To put it mildly, Kevin is an evangelist for the sport of Jiu Jitsu and believes anyone and everyone should be able to share in the camaraderie, fellowship and overall journey that is Jiu Jitsu. Kevin earned his undergraduate from the University of San Diego in Psychology and his Masters from the University of Colorado in Information Systems. At his core, Kevin is a creative problem solver, that is self-motivated, leads by example, and motivates others through hard work and dedication.





Steve Hargett - Secretary

Steve Hargett enlisted in the Marines in November of 2001 while still in High School and was shipped out to bootcamp shortly after graduating in 2002. After finishing Infantry School, he was sent to 1 st Battalion 7 th Marines, "Suicide" Charley Company. In January of 2003 only 2 weeks after arriving at his duty station his unit shipped out to Kuwait. Steve deployed with 1/7 for 10 months in 2003 and again in August of 2004. After his second deployment Steve was sent to Mojave Viper to be an Urban Warfare instructor with the focus on urban patrolling with tanks. After the Marine Corps Steve worked overseas in the private sector as a security contractor. Shortly after leaving the Marine Corps a friend that served with him in Iraq invited him to join a Jiu Jitsu class and from there he was hooked. "As someone who has directly benefited from the power of Jiu Jitsu, I want to share my Jiu Jitsu Journey with as many people as possible. Jiu Jitsu can fill a void that many veterans feel after leaving the service, it provides you with a group of individuals that are all sharing the same struggle, overcoming obstacles, and being uncomfortable together. Jiu Jitsu has done so much for my life- it is my passion and mission to share this amazing art with everyone who wants to benefit from it". Steve is a Jiu Jitsu Black Belt under Sensei Xande Ribeiro and has been training Jiu Jitsu since 2007. He is an active competitor and is currently the number one ranked Medium Heavy NoGi competitor in IBJJF. Steve is the Founder and Owner of Hargett Performance in La Quinta, California. community of individuals ready to face the challenges that we will all encounter in daily life. Steve resides in Austin, Texas with his beautiful wife and 3 daughters.

THANK YOU

