

ANNUAL REPORT

20 24





WELCOME

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Healing Wave Aquatics,

As a client was getting ready to leave, she stepped into my office. "For the first time I can feel my mind connected to my body," she said. Her words echoed what many clients feel at HWA. It's a privilege to share our 2024 Annual Report with you.

Highlights from 2024:

- HWA achieved **evidence-based research** about the efficacy of our aquatic therapy program as a valid treatment option for reducing PTSD symptoms and supporting mental health.
- 125 program clients gained mental health support through aquatic therapy with an average **decrease in PTS symptoms of 23%** between their first and last sessions.
- Two new staff positions created to better support clients: Behavioral Health Specialist and Client Care Coordinator.
- Two new board members: Carlos Danny Carreón, US Navy-Retired with master's degree in Organizational Leadership, and Rob Green, Executive Operations Leadership
- HWA was in the Media:
 - "It's Wellness Time" Podcast of the Southern Indian Health Council
 - "Peaceful Waters," article about HWA published by San Diego Health & Human Services in all County newspapers on Veterans Day 2024.
- Funding partnerships with Midway Foundation, Cushman Foundation, San Diego County D3, Naval Officers & Spouses Club, and our community of donors with 30 new donors in 2024.

All of these efforts lead toward a community of well-being. Thank you for being part of HWA!

Warmly,

Elizabeth Berg, Executive Director



RESEARCH

It's Scientific: Research Shows Efficacy of HWA Program in Decreasing Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress

A 2024 research study of our program was conducted by Dr. Thomas Rutledge, PhD, ABPP, Staff Psychologist at the VA San Diego Healthcare System and Professor of Psychiatry at UC San Diego. The research was published in the journal, *Stress & Health* in April 2025.

The retrospective report provides the first quantitative assessment of a novel, non-exposure-based behavioural treatment called trauma-informed aquatic therapy in a military population with established PTSD. The study assessed 111 participants of HWA.

Researchers found, "in this clinical sample of active-duty and military veterans participating in up to eight weekly sessions of treatment, we observed statistically and clinically significant reductions in PTSD symptoms." They also found:

- Treatment participation was very high overall.
- There was a high level of external validity with a broad sample of active-duty and military veterans referred by a community provider or self-seeking treatment.
- Participant satisfaction levels were also rated highly, with a mean average rating of 4.9/5.

You can say – based on your data – not only that your veterans get meaningful improvements in their PTSD symptoms, on average, but actually enjoy the process of getting better. Your satisfaction numbers might be higher than I've ever seen for a PTSD treatment!

— Dr. Rutledge



We want to express our sincere appreciation to Dr. Rutledge for his time on this research and manuscript. We also want to thank our incredible team of practitioners and staff for their work to support these outcomes.



MISSION

The mission of Healing Wave Aquatics is to support individual wellness and management of complex stress through aquatic therapy.



VISION

Our vision is to expand our research-backed program to support a better quality of life for individuals dealing with chronic trauma.



VALUES

We are guided by our core Values: Respect, Honor, Courage & Compassion

CLIENT DATA & OUTCOMES



126

TOTAL CLIENT COUNT
Veteran: 102
Active Duty Military: 15
Caregiver: 9

86%

CLIENTS SAW A DECREASE
in PTS symptoms following
their 8-week program

-23%

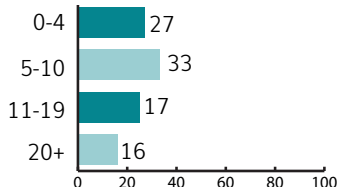
AVERAGE
DECREASE
in PTS Symptoms

861

TOTAL SESSIONS
in 2024



YEARS OF SERVICE



PARENTS WITH KIDS
Almost half of our clients have
children. A total of 56 children under
age 18 had a parent who participated.

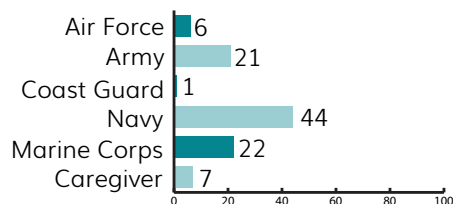
44%



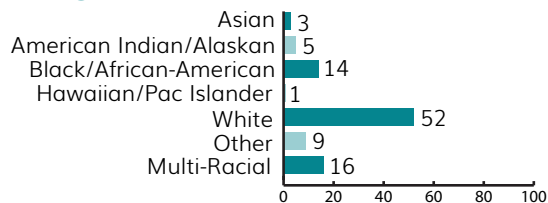
48%

clients had prior suicide
ideation or suicide attempt

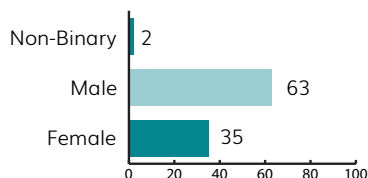
BRANCH



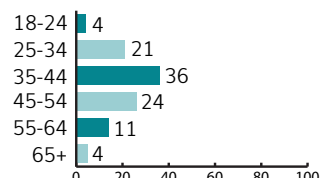
RACE



GENDER



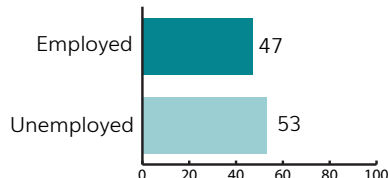
AGE



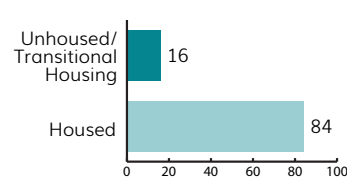
79%

8-WEEK
COMPLETION
RATE

EMPLOYMENT



HOUSING





HWA TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Healing Wave Aquatics is committed to providing a safe and healing environment. We do this by adopting best practices for a trauma-sensitive approach to working with clients.

What does trauma-informed aquatic therapy at HWA look like?

Training and Experience

- Staff and practitioners participate in regular training and discussions.
- Our Behavioral Health Specialist holds a master's degree in mental health counseling and conducts an assessment of various physical and mental trauma, including life-changing events, such as gender transition or survival of suicide attempt.
- Our Aquatic Therapists have all achieved a high level of practice with a minimum of 1,000 hours of training, including: 500 hours of specialized aquatic therapy training, 500 hours of massage therapy training, classes in trauma-informed care specifically for clients with PTS and suicidal ideation, as well as CPR/Life Support certification.

Client Agency

- We explain the process with the client, getting approval, offering opportunities to make changes.
- We make space for communication (even if non-verbal) to give the client agency in making choices about their comfort.

Pacing

- We offer a pace in harmony with the breath.
- We take our time, going slowly, and even taking breaks if needed.
- We provide exit strategies for any challenges that may arise.
- We provide stable support to allow the client's mind to navigate potentially challenging moments because of traumatic memory.
- We ensure time to bring a session to a close gracefully.

Process of Feedback, Layering, and Retention

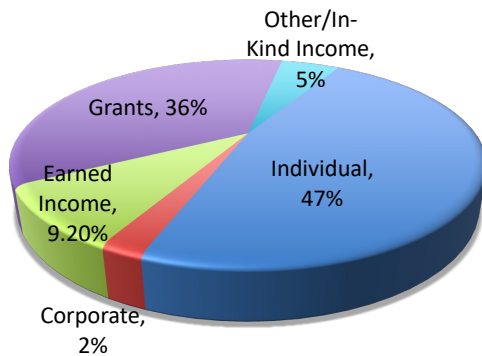
- We use weekly feedback forms to ensure quality of care and adapt to changes.
- Successive sessions allow for individualized care that's in harmony with a client's needs.

Recognition and Celebration

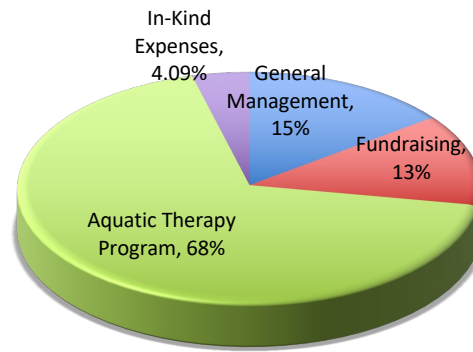
- We affirm a client's progress through each session
- Upon completion of the program, we celebrate with a graduation packet that includes a certificate, a challenge coin, a t-shirt and additional resources for support.

2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Total Revenue: \$653,876



Total Expenses: \$658,880



ASSETS	DEC 2024	DEC 2023
Cash & Equivalents	\$422,726	\$321,110
Contribution & grant receivables	\$1,195	\$1,195
Fixed Assets (Net of accumulated depreciation)	\$688,694	\$785,033
Other Assets	\$6,063	\$18,628
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,118,677	\$1,125,965
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$8,999	\$0
Other Current Liabilities	\$2,203	\$5,357
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$11,202	\$5,357
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	\$1,112,480	\$1,115,478
Temporarily restricted	\$0	\$0
Net Income	-\$5,004	\$5,130
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$1,107,475	\$1,120,608
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$1,118,677	\$1,125,965

SUPPORT & REVENUE	DEC 2024	DEC 2023
Grants & Contributions	\$559,384	\$544,599
Program Revenue (Earned Income)	\$60,150	\$52,342
In-Kind Income	\$26,979	\$3,913
Interest Income	\$7,363	\$421
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$653,876	\$601,274
EXPENSES		
Program services	\$448,973	\$338,877
Support Services		
Fundraising	\$84,953	\$106,149
Management & General	\$97,975	\$147,206
In-Kind Expenses	\$26,979	\$3,913
Total supporting services	\$209,907	\$257,267
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$658,880	\$596,144
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	-\$5,004	\$5,130
NET ASSETS-BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$895,011	\$889,881
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$890,007	\$895,011

QUOTES FROM CLIENTS AFTER SESSIONS 1-8

SESSION 1

I feel heard and respected. I feel as if some unexpected transformation is on my compass now.

SESSION 2

The feeling of peace and calmness was notable after my session. I now feel calm and relaxed.

SESSION 3

I am beginning to trust more. Today was emotional. A hug I didn't know I needed.

SESSION 4

Today I felt an overwhelming feeling of peace and gratitude, regardless of current stressors in life.

DONORS & EVENTS

HEALING WATERS CHAMPIONS

A huge thanks to our 2024 Healing Waters Champions! By donating \$500 or more, these dedicated donors provide the financial foundation critical to providing aquatic therapies for military veterans, active duty personnel, first responders and caregivers living with the debilitating impacts of post-traumatic stress.

HEALING WATERS CHAMPIONS 2025 DONOR LIST

Anonymous	Joanie and Bill Huck
Windel Antiporta	Zoe and Myles Huck
Carolyn Balkwell	Gates Ingram
Dan Becker	Janet Bark Photography
Elizabeth Berg	Lisa and Sean Keith
Kristin and Jeff Bingham	Lori Moore
Jane Chou	Judy and Frank Pezzanite
Colovos Family Foundation	Philip Russ
Greg and Barb Darling	Nancy Ruttenberg
Kate and Will Dendy	Dr. Beth Scalone
Beverly Elliott	Christopher Seidel
Andrew Feaster	Chris and Steve Sumpter
Esther Fischer	Illiana Van Meeteren
Margaret Hannegan	K. Yontz Valor Fund

GRANTS

Cushman Foundation
Midway Foundation
Navy Officers Spouses' Club
San Diego County Board of Supervisors D3

EVENT SPONSORS

Bright Rentals
Cal Private Bank
Picture Bakery
North County Water & Sports Therapy Center
Tiny Frog Technologies
La Mesa Glass, Inc.
Sharp Health Plan
Sycuan Casino

HWA AT THE BAY

Guests at HWA at the Bay 2024 spent a lovely fall afternoon in Coronado enjoying fun lawn games, live music, delicious food and refreshing drinks. Emcee Justin Earp led a captivating program that was framed by panoramic views of Glorietta Bay. The annual event raised critical funding in support of our program.



RIPPLE EFFECT DONORS

Thank you to our Ripple Effect donors! These committed supporters provide monthly, ongoing help to sustain our program, ensuring that those who need it can receive the life-affirming benefits of aquatic therapy.

Do Not Hate Renovate
Elizabeth Berg*
Margaret Hannegan*
Myles and Zoe Huck*

*Also Healing Waters Champions for 2024

SESSION 5

[My practitioner] is amazing. I noticed feeling in a better mood and my sleep has improved.

SESSION 7

So beautiful and magical. I didn't want it to end. I almost fell asleep. Super relaxed and refreshed.

SESSION 6

Such peace. I've been doing well but the maintenance is amazing. Changing into a better more present person.

SESSION 8

Not feeling like the journey was ending but rather beginning. Thank you for being there for me along the way. This program was awesome!

THE HEALING WAVE AQUATICS TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sean Keith, Interim President
Andrew Feaster, Secretary
Will Dendy, Treasurer
Rob Green, Member
Carlos Danny Carreón, Member
Justin Earp, Member

STAFF MEMBERS

Elizabeth Berg, Executive Director
Tyson Bierwolf, Lead Practitioner & Operations Manager
Tanyeka Humphrey, Client Care Coordinator
Susan Johnson, Development & Communications Director
Kim Zimmer, Behavioral Health Specialist

PRACTITIONERS

Tyson Bierwolf
Karly Balli
Lupe Rodriguez
Melissa Forester

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE CONSULTANTS

Greg Darling, Accounting
Zoe Huck, Development



I feel an overwhelming sense of calmness giving me more control about how I feel about past traumas, and the therapy is unlike anything I have ever experienced.



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