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Giving wounded soldiers a second chance

By Jordan Fenster

Ask Eric Cohen about what the Wounded Marine Career Foundation has done for him, and he almost waxes poetic.

“They have provided a future for us,” Cohen, 24, said during a press conference Tuesday. “I have something to live for now.”

According to Nick Popaditch, the program's deputy director, the Wounded Marine Career Foundation “provides a very bright future” — a way to translate the same skills marines and sailors learn in the service to the working world.

Every marine in the program is at least 90 percent disabled. Cohen for example, was brain damaged in a non-combat automobile accident, making a career in the Marines impossible.

Now, Cohen, in the foundation's first graduating class, has learned film editing and “pulls all-nighters” perfecting his craft.

Brett Saboski, also in the first graduating class, a friendly smile on his face, accosts photographers and journalists and asks professional questions: “What kind of camera do you use? Did you start out as a writer?”

Popaditch said there is a therapeutic aspect to the education as well. Primarily involved in various forms of journalism, the servicemen and women involved find sharing their own life histories a cathartic experience.



“Telling your story is probably one of the healthiest things you can do,” he said.

Two Fairfield-based organizations are hosting events for the Wounded Marine Career Foundation. On Friday, April 4, starting at 7 p.m., the Fairfield Museum and History Center will offer foundation founders and graduates a chance to share their stories of recovery. Fairfield First Selectman Ken Flatto will be on hand to issue a proclamation in honor of the organization.

Then, on Sunday, April 6, graduates of the inaugural class share their personal stories during the 10 a.m. service at Southport Congregational Church, followed by an interactive presentation featuring the founders and graduates immediately after the service.

Both events are free to the public.



Southport Congregational Church is located at 524 Pequot Avenue in Southport. For more information, please call 255-1594. The Fairfield Museum and History Center is located at 370 Beach. For reservations, call 259-1598.