

SUPPORTING MILITARY PERSONNEL THROUGH A FRANCHISE BUSINESS

There is a famous quote that states, *"We don't know them all, but we owe them all."*

This is a saying close to many people's hearts, mine included. I work every day toward the goal of aiding those who have served our country, and it is not a task I take lightly.

My father is a World War II veteran. His continued guidance throughout my life has taught me how to respect and care for those around me. As I've gotten older, my father has begun to share more stories about his experiences he had in the war. These stories have helped me realize my passion for learning from those who have served our country.

My wife Pam and I are the proud franchise owners of 1-800 WATER DAMAGE, a property restoration business, and Blue Kangaroo Packoutz, which focuses on contents restoration. With two restoration businesses, we've always had a healthy respect for history and its mementos. Our businesses allow us to connect with many individuals in our area, but notably, we have connected with and served many veterans.

When working with veterans in our community, we share the stories my father has told us while also taking the opportunity to learn about their own

experiences serving our country. An encounter that truly inspires and sticks with us was with a retired colonel. We were first connected after his home was damaged. Despite the problems he was going through, after hearing about my father's past, he worked to research and find medals for my father first in spite of the damage to his home. In his own time of need, the colonel prioritized being a veteran over a homeowner and connected with my father in an amazing way. My father's past and scenarios like this are what drive me to continue building relationships with the veterans we serve.

How We Serve

In our line of work, we connect with both civilians and veterans on what could be one of the worst days of their lives. We take that seriously and are aware of the deep level of compassion we need to show all of our clients. Our businesses not only allow us to fight for our community, but more so, it allows us to connect with numerous local veterans and help serve them when they face unexpected curveballs like flooding or accidental fires.

The desire to provide for local veterans and be someone they can rely on during their times of need drove us to become a USAA-certified business. This accreditation allows veterans in our local area to relax knowing that we can support their homes when disaster strikes and swiftly restore their possessions. We know that veterans

pride themselves on mementos they have brought home from their enlistment period, and we take pleasure knowing that we can successfully restore these items during times of hardship.

Outside of the services that we provide for veterans, we also offer them a place of employment. We know that getting a job directly after working in the armed forces can be a difficult transition to make. We want to aid veterans in their transitions into civilian life as much as possible, and we enjoy working beside them. We even get a chance to learn about their experiences as they get back into the swing of things. Whether or not their journey with us is long-term or for a few months, we encourage them to find work that brings them joy and happily welcome them back if they decide they want to rejoin our team — no questions asked.

How Your Franchise Can Fight for Those in Need

Figuring out how to initially start helping veterans in your community can be difficult. Although there are many options to choose from, it is best to figure out a way to get involved within your local veteran community to ensure that you provide the most help.

One of the first steps we recommend is to make your business a friendly environment for veterans where they can go if they need assistance. An easy way to build this

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atmosphere, and something we have done ourselves in partnership with Farmers Insurance, is to have Suits for Soldiers events. These events allow them to sharpen up with haircuts, grooming and fresh clothes so they can feel confident going into interviews. As mentioned earlier, transitioning back into civilian life and the workforce outside of the military is difficult for many veterans. Suits for Soldiers affairs allow you to build your

relationship with veterans locally while providing much-needed services.

The confidence your business brings to the veterans in your area can be heightened by continued support to their community. By finding organizations locally that fight every day to support veterans, you can form partnerships that allow you to give frequent donations of supplies and money. This is just a first step toward forming more connections that will allow you

to continually give back and impact the veteran community as much as possible. Overall, it is important to keep in mind that we need to do everything we can to serve those who have served us.

Jim Chiodo is the President of 1-800 WATER DAMAGE in Portland, Oregon and Blue Kangaroo Packoutz of Vancouver and North Portland. Jim works closely with his wife Pam, who is the Vice President of both businesses.