

BI-ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025

War Survivors Institute

Healing Hearts • Growing Peace



WAR SURVIVORS INSTITUTE

From the President & CEO

The War Survivors Institute (WSI) occupies a unique niche among both non-governmental and governmental organizations who work with war survivors. First we serve ALL war survivors, military and civilians alike. Second we aim to **HEAL HEARTS** and **GROW PEACE**. To some, this seems like a broad set of agendas. Let me explain.

During my long career I have worked with internally and externally displaced civilian survivors and with military survivors, both in the U.S. and in other countries, and in private and government sectors. While all have unique components to their experiences and outcomes, I have found far more commonality than differences between survivors in the events experienced, the immediate felt reactions, and the intermediate and longer-term consequences. All were put in harm's way because of the behaviors of nation-states, and all have consequences because of this fact, in addition to specific injuries suffered. The common broad outcome is disrupted internal balance, and disrupted balance in relationships both small and large. Because of these disruptions, peace is disturbed from inside of each cell, to body systems, to relationships with others. The only way for any survivor to heal is to recapture internal peace and internal balance. This healing is the only way that there will be peace outside of the survivor, between the survivor and others. **HEALING HEARTS** is what **GROWING PEACE** is all about.

Starting in 2022, we were moved by the Russian invasion of Ukraine to travel to Poland and work with displaced Ukrainians. We conducted assessments with 64 people and stress reduction sessions for many. This work is the primary subject of a documentary we produced, titled "My Voice Will Not be Taken," which we premiered at our 2nd annual fundraising dinner this year. We were honored to be invited to join a team in Ukraine in 2024 to help provide training for 32 professionals who are working with both military and civilian survivors in Ukraine. We returned to Ukraine in 2025 to establish partnerships to continue our work, as you will see in the body of this report. One such partnership has helped us touch over 250 lives in Ukraine by screening for anxiety, depression and PTSD with a product we have helped produce and now manage. Meanwhile, we are again offering our Transformational Healing Experiences to survivors in the U.S. as well as abroad. This year WSI established a scholar fellowship program and named our first scholars to this program. Donations and gifts grew 1,300% from the 2022-23 period to the 2024-25 period and 400% from 2024 to 2025, and partnership growth is rapidly expanding.

We thank our partners and donors for their goodness and dedication to our shared work, and we are looking forward to 2026 and beyond with resolve to HEAL HEARTS of survivors and GROW PEACE in our world.

Peace and Healing to you, your immediate family and friends, and to our shared humanity across the globe.



**Michael Hollifield,
M.D., President & CEO**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Hollifield".

Michael Hollifield, M.D.

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Healing Hearts & Growing Peace

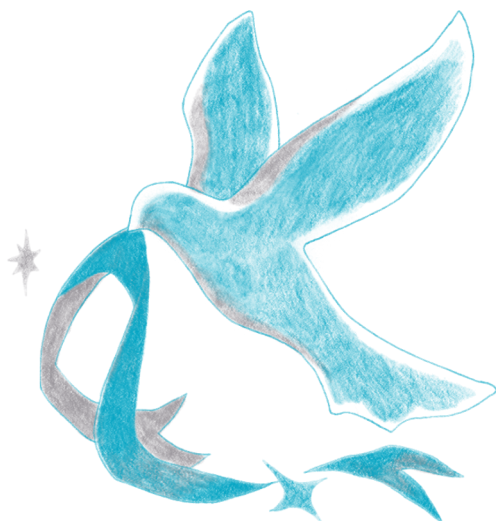
WSI is an international, U.S.-based organization **focused on healing survivors of war and preventing future violence.** We work from a whole-health, trauma-informed approach that recognizes war as a public-health issue affecting individuals, families, and communities.

Our work has **two core pillars.**



Healing Hearts

helps adults and children harmed by war restore physical, emotional, and social well-being through integrative, evidence-based healing programs.



Growing Peace

focuses on prevention—research, education, and community projects that reduce the root causes of violent conflict by promoting cooperation and shared responsibility.

WSI works with ALL war survivors - military veterans, civilians, refugees, and displaced persons. At WSI, we believe lasting peace begins with healing people and strengthening human connection. By restoring health and fostering partnership between communities, we help break cycles of trauma and build a healthier, more peaceful future.

Our Programs & Services



Transformational Healing Experiences

WSI's one- and three-day healing experiences are the foundation of our HEALING HEARTS program. These experiences utilize our 12 principles of healing, tailored for the specific event. The program delivers holistic and evidence-based interventions for adult survivors. We have specialized workshops for children. Specific community integration projects, such as veteran-civilian connection initiatives, and the "Listening to Children" program that engages child survivors in mutual support activities are designed to meet the need of special populations.



Growing Peace Program

WSI believes that peace is grown from inside out and from small to large. The healing hearts program is to facilitate internal peace and to encourage its growth to others and to progressively larger communities. This is our flagship unit for education, such as projects to promote mutuality and prevent violent conflict (WSI annual scholar fellowship, curriculum for integrative health for war survivors and certificate Programs) and research (Novel Interventions for Healing Hearts and methods to Grow Peace).



Refugee Health Screener-15

Our founder was a collaborator and the primary scientist with the Pathways to Wellness Program that developed the Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15), a brief evidence-based screening tool that is valid in many populations for identifying PTSD, anxiety and depression in refugees and displaced populations. It is available in 22 languages and successfully integrated into healthcare settings across the US and internationally. Our comprehensive program includes the RHS-15 screener, community outreach, and provider training to better serve refugees and displaced populations.



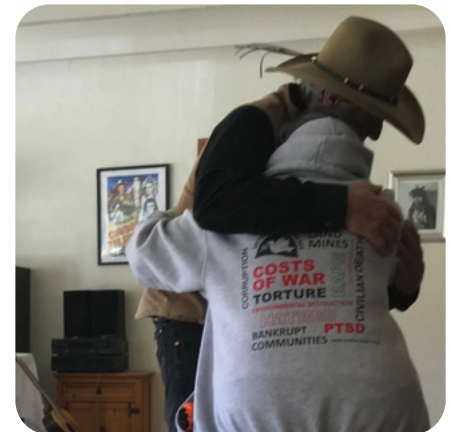
Research

WSI collaborates with leading medical and scientific institutions to advance trauma-informed care through rigorous research initiatives. This program strengthens the scientific foundation of WSI's interventions through partnerships with medical schools, research hospitals, and international academic institutions, ensuring evidence-based practices that can be replicated and scaled globally.

Lives Transformed

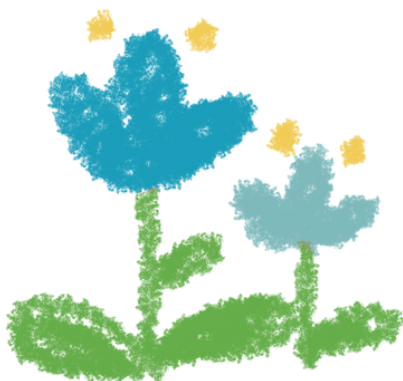
WSI recognizes that some of the most painful wounds of combat are invisible - particularly the moral injury carried by veterans who have taken human life in service to their country. Our programs provide a safe, non-judgmental space where veterans can begin to process the profound psychological and spiritual impact of killing in war.

WSI's programs are specifically designed to help victims of war trauma heal and rebuild their lives. We create environments where veterans can share their stories, process their pain, and begin the journey toward self-forgiveness and healing. Our mission is to help them find peace, reclaim their humanity, and rebuild meaningful lives beyond the battlefield.



*“It has helped me start the process of liking myself again. It has **helped me think of myself again as a human being, not a monster**” - Carlos, Vietnam veteran*

*“**It allows you to love again** - I can do that today and the same extends to my children and now my grandchildren. That has caused me to live a healthier life and to focus on staying healthy so that I can help others” - Jim, Vietnam veteran*



Our Impact in Numbers

64

Ukrainian refugees assessed in Poland

250+

Lives touched in Ukraine through screening

1,300%

Growth in donations from 2022-23 to 2024-25

32

Professionals trained in trauma treatment

10+

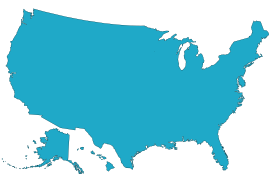
Pro-bono service hours to survivors from Azerbaijan

22

Languages available for the Refugee Health Screener-15



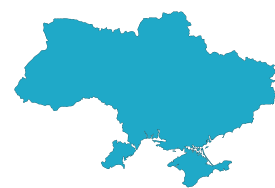
New partnerships in the USA, Germany and Ukraine



USA



Germany



Ukraine

Overcoming Challenges

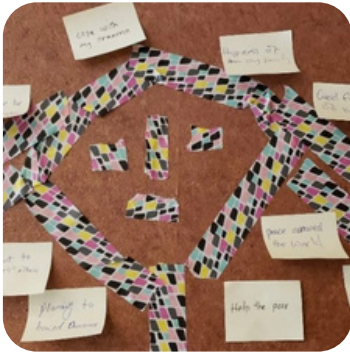
COVID-19 disrupted our ability to provide our trademarked Transformational Healing Experiences. In response, we pivoted to support Ukrainian refugees in Poland (2022) and established lasting partnerships in Ukraine (2024-2025).

Transformational Healing Experiences

2024

Louisville, KY, April 2024

WSI conducted a Transformational Healing Experience for 12 people who had been forced to leave Afghanistan. This experience was about “Body-Mind-Soul” and focused on 4 of WSI’s 12 principles using mindful practices, imagery, movement, nutrition learning, and ways to Grow Peace. The group closed with a Healing Circle and commitments to helping others in the Afghan community.



2025

Lviv, Ukraine. September 2025

Trauma Treatment Training. WSI conducted a two-day trauma treatment training for 12 practitioners in Lviv, Ukraine in collaboration with the Lviv-based NGO Re:Creators. This two-day intensive focused on the use of acupuncture, relaxation and movement therapies. We also engaged in training medical students in a family medicine training program in Uzhhorod, Ukraine.



Pro-bono service to survivors: WSI donated 10 hours of medical care to a war survivor from Azerbaijan

Response to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

2024



Screening-to-Healing

Lviv, 9/4 to 9/9 2024.

WSI established a partnership with the **Children of Heroes Charity Fund (COH)** to support a screening-to-healing program for children > 13 years of age and their caregivers. COH works with children who have lost at least one parent to war and supports them in many ways including the provision of psychological services.



The screening program utilized **the Refugee Health Screener – 15, which is used in over 40 countries around the world**, to begin to assess the benefit and need of the psychological support program.

2025

WSI completed a **6-month pilot program** with the Children of Heroes Charity Fund in Ukraine, screening children >13 years old who had lost at least one parent to war and their caregivers to help improve programming for the COH team. Early data analyses show a significant reduction in **RHS-15 scores from 24 to 20**, demonstrating benefit to COH psychological support programs. These effects are likely underestimated since our evaluation was on all persons in the COH programs and did not focus on those in specific help programs. We plan to do a more focused approach in 2026.

Professional Training



WSI was invited by **Dr. Celia Hildebrand** to collaborate as facilitator on a 3-day training for 32 professionals who provide integrative healing services to both **military and civilian survivors**.



This training focused on the use of acupuncture and also included relaxation, Imagery Rehearsal Therapy for nightmares, and progressive and applied muscle relaxation.

GROWING PEACE

Research, Education, Advocacy

Education

WSI and the **National Medical University in Lviv**, Ukraine established a Collaboration Agreement for WSI to develop a **Trauma Treatment Course** (highlighting the use of acupuncture and other novel therapies) for Medical Students at the Medical University, slated to begin in August, 2026. The President/CEO of WSI, Michael Hollifield, provided an education session for medical students and met to establish the agreement.



Global Impact

Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15)

The Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15) is an evidence-based health screening tool designed for healthcare settings. As a free, open-access resource, its true global impact remains unmeasured—by design. You can obtain the RHS-15 by going to this link: <https://warsurvivors.org/other-resources/>

42

COUNTRIES

22

LANGUAGES

364

REQUESTS

23%

U.S. AGENCIES



Major implementation countries

42 documented countries | Estimated 60+ countries worldwide

Research, Education, Advocacy

Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15)

WSI collaborated with **NET The Institute in Germany** to agree to terms for the RHS-15 to be part of a manuscript and training book in German and potentially in other languages. WSI also has an open collaboration with **Upstate Medical University in New York** to incorporate the RHS-15 into the electronic medical record for easier use and distribution.



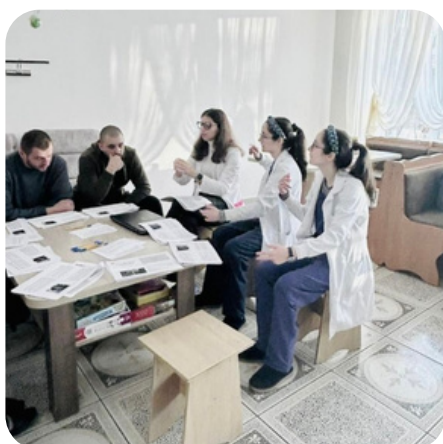
WSI also finished a 6-month pilot program with the **Children of Heroes Charity Fund** in Ukraine, screening children aged fourteen or older who had lost at least one parent to war and their caregivers to help improve programming for the COH team.

Research



Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT) and self-talk in active-duty soldiers in Ukraine

IRT is a brief intervention to reduce nightmares and improve symptoms of PTSD. IRT, coined by the President of WSI in his work with the research team of Barry Krakow MD, has nightmare sufferers learn to “re-script” and re-imagine nightmares and other intrusive images from traumatic experiences. IRT was first found highly effective in sexual assault survivors and has subsequently been used effectively in other populations. In 2024 and 2025, WSI with Belissa Fernandez and Jessica Fernandez, medical students at Ternopil Medical University in Ukraine, completed a study of imagery rehearsal and self-talk therapy in 50 active-duty soldiers who were on a 7 to 10-day respite. This was the first study in the world of IRT in active-duty military personnel, and we found improvements in sleep-quality, mood regulation, the ability to “Imagine” calmness, and impairment in daily life. These improvements were in spite of the fact that these soldiers were at great risk of harm and even death when they returned to the front lines. This treatment led them to address how feeling better in the moment was worth it, despite of their current risk status.



Research, Education, Advocacy

Education

WSI Fellowship Scholar Program

WSI announced its first research and education fellow scholars that begins on January 1, 2026. This is a \$5,000 scholarship to conduct research with WSI on a topic about **Healing Hearts or Growing Peace**.

The first annual fellowship was awarded to **Dr.'s Belissa and Jessica Fernandez** of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to be mentored by WSI President Michael Hollifield, M.D. They will continue their work on IRT and self-talk for PTSD in active-duty soldiers in Ukraine by disseminating the research findings in the literature and other media. They will also start a social media program for WSI research and education.

Dr. Jessica Fernandez has a Master's degree in Neuroscience in addition to her medical degree. In addition to presenting abstracts at international conferences including Oxford (UK), Lublin (Poland) and Ternopil (Ukraine), Jessica wants to use research as a tool to bring effective, compassionate care to people living and working under extreme and high-risk conditions.

“Being a WSI Fellow means having the opportunity to combine science, creativity, and healing. I deeply believe in the mission of the War Survivors Institute and the power of healing through knowledge.”



**Jessica
Scherer Fernandez,**
M.D, MS.,
Research Fellow

Dr. Belissa Fernandez also has a Master's degree in Neuroscience along with a Doctorate of Medicine. She is interested in how the human brain and behavior are shaped in demanding environments and has presented abstracts at conferences in Oxford (UK), Lublin (Poland), and Ternopil (Ukraine).

“As a medical doctor, this work matters to me because it connects clinical science with real stories of loss, survival, and strength, and I see this as my calling.”



**Belissa
Scherer Fernandez,**
M.D, MS.,
Research Fellow

2024-2025 Finances

Revenue Sources

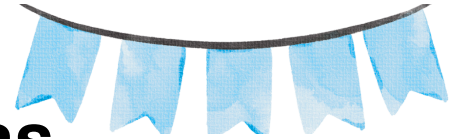
Revenue Source	Amount	%
Individual Donations & Business	\$68,219.19	100%

Expense Distribution

Expense Category	Amount	%
Program Services	\$4,765.75	32.3%
Charitable Contributions	\$3,100.00	21%
Administrative	\$800.67	5.4%
Fundraising	\$6,106.44	41.3%
Total Expenses	\$14,772.86	

*Financial information is preliminary. Final audited statements will be available at www.warsurvivors.org

Financial Health: From 2024 to 2025, donations surged 303% (from \$13,571 to \$54,648), building on **1,300%** cumulative growth since 2022. The organization achieved a remarkable financial turnaround, transforming a \$31,732 loss in 2024 into a \$37,486 surplus in 2025 - a \$69,218 positive swing. Total assets nearly doubled to \$77,259, providing strong operational capacity. WSI maintains lean operations with only 5% administrative costs and a highly efficient **9:1 fundraising return ratio** (\$6,106 invested generated \$54,648). This combination of explosive growth, operational efficiency, and financial sustainability reflects surging community trust and positions WSI to significantly expand its Transformational Healing Experiences and Growing Peace.



Fundraising and Public Relations

Presence at Thunder over Louisville 2024

WSI was present with a booth in the military section of “Thunder,” one of the most attended events in the Midwest U.S., which is the kick-off for the Kentucky Derby Festival. We were able to share our mission with over 500 people, 150 of whom signed up to receive our newsletter.



Inaugural Fall Dinner Fundraise Event 2024

A great dinner at L’Opera Northern Italian Restaurant in Long Beach, CA coupled with a silent auction and a program to include the film “Under the Shadow of the Blade” and a preview of a WSI documentary from Ukraine made this a special evening.

Inaugural Spring Dinner Event 2025

This “fun cousin” to our fall dinner event, ‘Whisky Makes the Story Easier’ was held at Angel’s Share Whiskey Bar, Long Beach CA, April 2025. Our partner owner Jack Walls served wonderful food and had a plethora of whiskeys from around the world. In addition to a fun raffle for bottles of whiskey, WSI shared more information about our



work in Ukraine and provided details about our screening program in collaboration with Children of Heroes Charity Fund. We had fun while raising funds for our mission.

2nd Annual Fall Dinner Event: “An Evening at L’Opera Northern Italian Restaurant” was held January 1, 2025, with great food, connection,



and a successful silent auction. WSI productions aired the premier



of the documentary, “My Voice Will Not Be Taken” with a response by Olena and Hurka Semchenko

from Ukraine and discussion about survivors needs.



2026 Initiatives



U.S. Transformational Healing Events

Veteran Events: Four 1-day Transformational Healing Events for U.S. Veteran War Survivors.

Civilian Programs: One 1-day event for Civilian War Survivors, followed by a 3-day intensive event.

Ukraine Initiatives

Medical Education: Development of Trauma Treatment Course for Medical Students at National Medical University in Lviv

Professional Training: Continued training for practitioners in Lviv

Transformation Healing: Participation at camp for children who lost parents to war

Rehabilitation Facility: Negotiations to collaborate on development of rehabilitation facility in Ukraine

Organizational Development

Leadership Expansion: Onboarding of Development Director for Eastern Europe and new advisory board member

Documentary Release: Airing the documentary at significant film festivals

Donor opportunities

Provide funding for WSI's Transformational Healing Events

- 1 One, 1-day U.S. Veteran Survivors,
15 participants: \$2,000
- 2 One, 1-day Civilian Survivors,
15 participants: \$2,000
- 3 One, 3-day Veteran Retreat,
15 participants: \$18,000

Screening Program

Provide \$600 in monthly funding to continue preventative screening services for children.



🎓 Enhance the Fellowship Scholar Fund

This fund is currently funded for \$5,000 per year for 5 years. Our goal is to endow this fund with \$500,000 to provide \$20,000 per year income.



Thank You

War Survivors Institute

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