



The Resiliency Project

Nick Wilson, Founder
www.theresiliencyproject.info
Non-Profit Tax ID# 95-2021700

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and volunteers, I am honored to submit this brief letter of inquiry introducing The Resiliency Project. We are a non-profit organization with a passionate mission to end the silent suffering of our nation's first responders by providing peer support and funding for treatment, recovery and psychological services in an effort to treat post-traumatic stress, build resilience and end suicide.

Our organization was founded by Nick Wilson. Nick was a police officer who medically retired after 13 years of service. Over the course of his career, Nick served as a Senior Detective, SWAT Team Operator and a member of a Department of Homeland Security task force that investigated terrorism during the San Bernardino, California terrorist attacks in 2015. Nick planned, led and conducted hundreds of law enforcement investigations, undercover operations, homicides, wiretapping investigations and transnational and multi-jurisdictional crimes. One major investigation resulted in successful prosecutions and convictions of notorious white supremacy gang leaders.

Nick Wilson was involved in numerous critical incidents, sustained physical injuries and was targeted to be murdered by gang members when a "green-light" on his life was sanctioned by a white supremacy organization. His career ultimately led to a PTSI diagnosis. His journey to recovery included self-medicating to sleep which led to prescription drug dependence, a DUI, and rehabilitation. His story of resiliency and the fight for his life is both heartbreaking and inspirational. In response to the adversities Nick faced in his personal life and career as a police officer, Nick created The Resiliency Project and has dedicated this next chapter in his life to breaking stigmas so that other officers won't suffer in silence. Nick currently speaks at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino Sheriff's Department (CIT), and frequently speaks at police departments throughout California.

The Resiliency Project is an advocate for first responder mental health and raises awareness to the unique stress, trauma and invisible wounds only understood by first responders who protect and serve our communities through chaos and critical incidents. In 2019, 228 police officer suicides were reported in the United States, a staggering number that is tragically higher than all other line-of-duty deaths combined. The 2019 suicide statistic is higher than any other year so far documented in the history of law enforcement. Police suicide rates have increased each year since 2016. More police officers died by suicide than in the line of duty in 2019, as was the case the previous three years.

A study commissioned by the Ruderman Family Foundation found that firefighters are also more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. That does not even amount to the total of unreported suicides of both police officers and firefighters. According to Dr. John Violanti, PhD,

"Policing involves a continual barrage of boredom interspersed with acts of violence, deceit, and human misery. Many officers are exposed to a subculture of violence in which they encounter death almost daily. The average citizen generally does not witness in a lifetime the amount of death and violence a police officer experience in one month. As a result of this exposure, posttraumatic stress

syndrome may lead to a breakdown of normal coping processes. Because the effects of stress are believed to be cumulative, officers exposed to many stressors may reach a breaking point leading to suicide.” (*Understanding Police Suicide – John M. Violanti, PhD*).

The need for peer support amongst all agencies is urgent. The Resiliency Project has been providing peer support on a 24/7 basis for first responders in crisis who have contacted The Resiliency Project from across the United States, including Canada. The need to expand our team of culturally competent professionals and maintain this support is an urgent necessity. The Resiliency Project has developed a network of vetted service providers who treat first responders with various clinically competent treatment modalities, such as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), Neurofeedback, EMDR, psychological services and treatment and recovery rehabilitation to name a few.

Most importantly, if we can reach our fundraising objectives, The Resiliency Project plans to develop a highly innovative, multipurpose campus specifically designed to treat first responders. It will include detoxification, residential inpatient and intensive outpatient programs as well as trauma retreat services. The severity and scope of a first responder’s chemical dependence and their corresponding levels of trauma endured must be treated with the highest levels of care, using evidence-based treatment modalities specific to first responders. Our program will be the gold standard of treatment for our first responders and the campus will be a first of its kind facility in the country.

Multiple factors contribute to the hesitation of first responders to seek help, including: lack of training and education on the impact and symptoms that stem from trauma, stigma, worker’s comp denials/complications, insurance claims/costs and potential departmental retaliation. For instance, it costs approximately \$30k for 30 days of treatment and rehabilitation for one person. The Resiliency Project raises funds to redistribute to first responders in need of any services or treatments, preventative or remedial, at no cost to them or their family and without worker’s comp approval.

With your help and support, The Resiliency Project can continue to protect the mental health of our first responders to ultimately end silent suffering and prevent suicide by continuing to provide these services at no cost to our first responders.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter of inquiry. We would love the opportunity to meet with you in person about The Resiliency Project. Please don’t hesitate to contact Nick Wilson, Founder and CEO of The Resiliency Project and/or Administrator, Ashley Ethridge.

Sincerely,

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*Please visit our website to make a donation.

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