

Wounded Warriors Fund Donates Van to Disabled Marine, Seeks Help for Navy Medic

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The Ocean Reef Foundation Wounded Warriors Fund recently donated a handicap accessible van to a second disabled veteran, 25 year old retired Marine John "J.T." Doody of Tampa, through their partnership with the Operation Support Our Troops Wheels for Warriors program.

"I can't even begin to tell you how much the van means to us," says Doody's mother, Christine Ott, who has moved with her husband to Tampa to care for her son fulltime. "It's freedom, literally."

Ott speaks on her son's behalf because the extensive injuries he sustained in a sniper attack in Fallujah left him permanently blind and suffering from apraxia, a condition where he is fully conscious but unable to move.

Unfortunately, the family's story is one Al Mast and Leonard Wood, co-founders of the Wounded Warriors Fund, are becoming all too familiar with as they work to fulfill the fund mission "to provide support for the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families with an emphasis on those who have been injured in the line of duty."

Mast and Wood call on the community to join in their continuing effort to donate more "wheels for warriors." After giving vans to disabled Army and Marine veterans, the pair is now seeking donations to provide a third van to a disabled Navy medic, PO2 Anthony Thompson, who suffered traumatic brain and



Al Mast, co-founder of the WWF, with LCPL John Doody (USMC Ret.) and Mary Kay Salomone, founder of the nonprofit Operation Support Our Troops, at the recent presentation in Tampa of a custom handicap accessible van donated through the fund.

spinal cord injuries in a suicide bombing in Iraq.

At present Anthony, his wife Ivonne and their toddler A.J. are waiting for the van that, in her words, will "allow our family to become more independent." Once they get the van, Ivonne continues, "We will be able to go places as a family and we will be free to start living our new normal life."

Contributions can be made through the Ocean Reef Foundation and must be specifically designated to benefit the Wounded Warriors Fund. For more information, please call the Foundation at 367-4707.