Wounded Warrior Project recieves university support

Furman University

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ON JULY 11, 2007, while on combat patrol in Baghdad, Capt. Wayne Walden ’04 was injured when an IED improvised explosive device attack the Humvee in which he was riding.

Walden, an Army Ranger and Vietnam veteran with the 3rd infantry, suffered a severe injury to his right leg, to the point that it had to be amputated just above the knee. He would go on to receive the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Because of his determination, positive attitude and hard work during and following his recovery, Walden is credited with being an inspiration to others undergoing rehabilitation for similar injuries at Walter Reed Hospital. He has also testified before Congress about meeting the needs and following his recovery, Walden is credited with being an inspiration.

ONCE retired from the military and associated with defense contractor General Dynamics in Fairfax, Va., Walden is a strong supporter of the Wounded Warrior Project. The nonprofit, founded in Roanoke, Va., is dedicated to helping those who have been wounded in the line of duty.

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During halftime, the two accepted a check for $1,925 raised by Furman students and friends to support the Wounded Warrior Project.

Visit www.secondearthsavetheozone.org to learn more.

2010 graduates head weatherization program through Furman, AmeriCorps

THANKS TO A THREE-YEAR, $286,000 federal grant from the South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service, two 2010 Furman graduates are working on campus this year as members of AmeriCorps.

Jennifer Guinter and Ricky Harris are working with Furman’s Community Conservation Corps (CCC), a group dedicated to energy conservation and financial stability for the Greenville community primarily through the weatherization of low-income homes.

The federal grant was awarded to CCC United, a partnership of United Way of Pickens County, Furman and several area non-profits.

Guinter and Harris led a CCC effort to weatherize 10 homes this fall, with plans to do the same for up to 50 additional homes by the end of July 2011. Weatherization involves such measures as weather stripping doors and windows, adding insulation, exchanging incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescents, installing vapor barriers in crawl spaces, and fitting foam pads behind outlet and switch plates, all in an effort to promote energy conservation and financial stability.

“You don’t really think about weatherizing as a way to boost financial stability,” Harris said. “But for the residents who pay up to one half of their fixed income to cover utility bills, these weatherization techniques help them save money, get out of debt or save for other essentials.”

Furman’s pilot weatherization project took place last April, when the CCC joined with Haller Service Corps and the city to weatherize five low-income homes and a community center. The CCC operates through the David E. Shi Center for Sustainability.

AmeriCorps programs engage approximately 85,000 people each year through more than 1,000 non-profits across the country. AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that involves five million Americans in service each year.

Schutz beats law of averages, lands job in NFL

FOR THE BETTER PART of her four years at Furman, Kelly Schutz prepared for her future on the National Football League by studying mathematical concepts like the cosine rule, which can be used to find the third side of a triangle when any two sides and the angle between them are known.

While Schutz, who graduated in 2010 with a degree in mathematics, has yet to use the law of cosine to her job as a public relations assistant for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, she is a good example of how a liberal arts education can push students along an entirely unexpected career path and prepare them for something they hardly quite imagined.

“When I came to Furman, I knew I wanted to major in math and become a teacher,” Schutz says. “So that’s the path I took.”

And that was the plan right up until she began looking for internship opportunities in the summer before her senior year. But when a math major to do? Well, it might seem unconventional, but if you were born and had lived until age 6 near Green Bay, Wis., and your family members were huge Packers fans who returned to Lambeau Field at least once every season, why not take a shot at interning for a National Football League team?

Even though she knew she would be buying against public relations and sports management majors for an internship, Schutz sent resumes to 30 of the 32 NFL teams. To gain experience, she got a job working in the press box with Furman’s sports information office during the Paladins’ 2009 football season.

“We had Kelly for only one season, but I knew right away she had more than a passing interest in learning about what happens in the press box,” says Hunter Read, assistant athletics director for sports information at Furman. “She was extremely bright and articulate, and she was one of the best student assistants we’ve ever had.”

Schutz actually was called to New York for an interview with the Jets and was “heartbroken” when it didn’t work out. But not long after, she heard from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. They interviewed her over the phone, then invited her to come for a second interview in Charlotte, N.C., where the Bucs were playing the Carolina Panthers. Shortly thereafter, the Bucs offered her the internship.

“I didn’t get too many resumes from math majors, but that didn’t bother me at all,” says Jeffrey Kumis, former director of public relations for the Bucs who now serves as executive vice president of business development for the FC Tampa Bay Rowdies soccer team. “I liked that Kelly had experience in the SID office at Furman, and I was impressed that she was willing to drive to Charlotte for an interview. That told me she was serious about the internship.”

Kelly Schutz says she is “partial” to such “gentle giants” as Bucs’ offensive lineman (75) and keydrick Vincent.

So, Schutz headed to Tampa in the spring of 2010 to fulfill her dream of working for an NFL team. She wrote press releases, proofed copy, helped produce the media guide — whatever needed to be done.

“We were wrapping up things at the end of the season and getting prepared for the next one, and we were a position down at the time,” Kumis says. “Kelly stepped into her role as well and did such a great job that she was much more than an intern. She was like a full-time member of the staff. When I left, I told them they would be making a big mistake not to hire her full time.”

After the internship ended, Schutz applied for the club’s open position, then packed up and headed back to Furman. Two days before graduation on May 8, she learned she had the job.

“When I began applying for internships, I never thought it could possibly lead to a career,” says Schutz. “But I loved working in the press box at Furman and in the Buccaneers’ public relations office, and it didn’t take long to know it was something I wanted to pursue seriously.”

So it’s public relations in the NFL for now, although Schutz won’t rule out working with the law of cosine again someday. “I might go back and teach math at some point,” she says. “I know it’s something I would love to do. And it’s comforting to know that possibility still exists for me.”

The author is director of news and media relations at Furman. Photo courtesy Kelly Schutz.