Dan Becker began volunteering at Wave Academy in 2011 and became president in 2015. In July 2019, Dan transitioned off as president and welcomed new board president, Maggie Hannegan. Dan shares his journey of support for Wave Academy.

In my nearly 10 years of being affiliated with the Wave Academy, I have had the pleasure of seeing this organization grow in the fulfillment of its vision. When I first joined the Board of Directors, the structure and vision of the organization was in place, along with money from a few angel investors, to provide us with the seed money to allow founder Dave Towe's dream become a reality. We worked hard to ensure that the proper non-profit structure was in place so that we could grow the unique, holistic healing program that supports those who could greatly benefit: veterans with post-traumatic stress and their caregivers. Wave Academy received its first major grant to fund the new program and which allowed us to put clients in the water.

What we offered was new, unknown and not scientifically tested. We were able to get one reluctant person to agree to be a part of our program. That reluctant client became our biggest champion. He told friends, family and other service providers about what we do, giving us access to other veterans who could benefit. Word of mouth became our primary way of finding clients who could use our services. To this day, personal testimonies help the majority of people decide to apply to our program. We knew we needed some research to back up the personal results that we were seeing. We funded a preliminary study with Johns Hopkins University, which helped quantify the work that we do, and allowed us to provide measurement outcomes to funders. We established a program of 8 or more sessions to hundreds of clients, and that number is continually growing.

As our program has grown, our operational staff needed to grow with it. It is always a challenge for a non-profit to balance how much of their budget should go directly to the program for helping our clients and how much should go towards administrative costs. With the hiring of Elizabeth Berg as our executive director, we challenged ourselves to see how we could fare without our founder at the helm. Elizabeth’s leadership and experience has created continuity, connections and additional respect within the local non-profit community. With her help, we committed to growing our administrative staff in a calculated way. Our program is now run by three staff members who are passionate about what we do, who care deeply about those we serve, and are motivated to make Wave Academy a better place each and every day.

This organization works hard to value each and every dollar donated, doing our best to ensure we are providing a quality program that impacts our clients’ lives, while allowing the organization to run efficiently. It is a difficult balancing act, but we are poised to see this organization move to the next level, expand our reach and serve more clients like never before.

Look out world, our Wave is only beginning!

RIDING THE WAVE
by Dan Becker, Immediate Past President

I was surprised on how I was able to tune into my body and notice how it was moving and how my body was so fluid.

Navy veteran of Desert Storm & Somalia
OUR MISSION

Wave Academy's mission is to help active-duty military and veterans heal from post-traumatic stress through our unique, research-based program of warm water therapy. Our service welcomes caregivers to support whole family wellness.

WAVE ACADEMY'S PURPOSE

Wave Academy was founded in 2011 in response to an epidemic of veteran suicides and the general lack of alternative post-traumatic stress therapies available at the time. Founder Dave Towe was inspired to create the organization after offering the aquatic bodywork therapy to a veteran who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and had suicidal ideations. He reported that the therapy had a profound impact and reversed his suicidal tendencies.

WAVE ACADEMY'S GOAL

Wave Academy's goal is to provide a high level healing modality of aquatic therapy that addresses PTSD challenges, such as: trusting others, letting go of stress, acceptance, and deep relaxation. San Diego has the third highest concentration of veterans in the nation and the rate of PTSD diagnosis for San Diego-based veterans is significantly higher than the national average. Through awareness of our program and its success, Wave Academy addresses a community challenge by providing this service where it is needed most.
**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018**

- Wave Academy served 127 men and women through our healing 8-week water therapy program.
- Utilizing the DoD's Post-Traumatic Stress Checklist for Military (PCL-M) as a pre- and post-program assessment, our 127 clients averaged a 20% decrease in PTS symptoms.
- Clients reported an 80% unemployment rate in 2018, reflecting Wave Academy's commitment to serving the homeless and transitioning veteran populations of San Diego.
- Among a highly transitional clientele base, our 8-week program achieved a 78% completion rate.
- Clients were 21% female in 2018, four percentage points higher than the proportion of females in the U.S. military.
- Wave Academy held several successful first-time events: the first annual Waves for the Brave 5K, an Open House event, and the Waves of Support Dinner, attracting new partners and sponsors, while simultaneously raising public awareness of our mission.

**PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL**

**WHAT PROBLEM DOES WAVE ACADEMY ADDRESS?**

San Diego has the third-highest concentration of veterans in the nation, the highest proportion of active-duty service members, and is the top destination for returning veterans in the country. While the veteran community currently suffers from an epidemic of suicides, there is also a lack of alternative therapies available to address this issue.

**HOW DO WE ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM?**

To address these issues, Wave Academy offers an effective, proven, alternative PTSD therapy, to veterans, military, and caregivers at low-cost or no-cost. The healing warm-water therapy program includes 8 one-hour sessions of no-talk, drug-free, hands-on movement, massage, and stretching in non-chlorinated pools heated to 96 degrees. The temperature, stimulation, and closeness to the practitioner combine to induce a vulnerable yet optimistic state where PTSD sufferers are able to constructively and logically confront and address the underlying trauma that is the catalyst for their PTSD.

**WHAT IS THE RESULT?**

All of this action is done in support of Wave Academy's goal of reducing the impact of PTSD in the San Diego community, promoting the reintegration of veterans into civic engagement, promote the adoption of healthier lifestyle choices, and ultimately reduce the veteran suicide rate in San Diego county to zero.

**WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?**

Clients experience a statistically significant drop in PTS symptoms between their pre-and post-assessments. Annually, the average change in PTSD symptoms among all clients is a 20-27% decrease. Clients also describe feelings of peace, release of physical and mental tensions, and increased coping skills. We also measure success through client advocacy, client referrals and success in corresponding programs, such as VVSD and Veterans Treatment Court.

**HOW DO WE MEASURE IMPACT?**

Wave Academy provides its high quality program to 120+ clients annually. Wave Academy is a partner with numerous community organizations and is recognized by the City of San Diego as a LIVE WELL partner. Psychologists have noted that clients who they refer to our program, while they are in traditional therapy, accelerate their path of wellness as a result of the co-therapy modalities.
Of the clients who disclosed their race, Wave Academy served 44% collective minority clients (23.4% is the collective minority national average.)

**WAVES FOR THE BRAVE 5K**
To expand the collective impact, community outreach, and to promote health and wellness in our community, Wave Academy hosted its first annual Waves for the Brave 5K in 2018. This race was held in Lake Poway on Sunday May 27th, and in addition to the trail run and hike, we hosted community and nonprofit partners as resource booths to further promote awareness for both the military community and overall well-being.

**WAVE ACADEMY OPEN HOUSE**
Our Open House event was an opportunity for interested individuals and organizations to come and receive an in-depth education about the Wave Academy program and organizational structure. Float demonstrations, client testimonials, and a staff presentation educated prospective clients and community members.

**WAVES OF SUPPORT DINNER**
Our Waves of Support Dinner presented our community with an evening of engaging conversations, fine dining and stunning views across the harbor. Held at the Coronado Club Room, the event included client testimonials, words from our founder, and recognition for donors, supporters, as well as our government and community partners.
Wave Academy is supported by a talented team of Aquatic Practitioners. A certified Wave Academy practitioner must first complete 500 hours of training to become a certified massage or physical therapist, followed by an additional 500 hours of aquatic training to be licensed as a Watsu® Practitioner. Classes require an intensive, in-depth education into how a body may be manipulated in the water to release tension and instill a symbiotic relationship that fosters relaxation and feelings of peace. Most of our practitioners are multi-disciplinary, and take additional classes to both expand their aquatic therapy skills and better understand clients who have experienced trauma.

In December of 2018 I was presented with the opportunity to apply for a position at Wave Academy, and I jumped at the chance. As a graduate of the program, I felt I was mostly familiar with it. When I was told that I could become a “Veteran’s Liaison” of sorts for Wave Academy, I found it somewhat comical since I was already acting as an unofficial advocate for the program in my spare time. From the very beginning it was exactly what I had hoped - the Executive Director and I acted as a team, utilizing and building upon each others’ knowledge to best expand our reach, in the hopes of benefiting the largest number of men and women who have served our country when it needed them. Our reach and capability have only increased with the addition of our Administrative Manager, and our team’s optimism and desire to address the PTSD and suicide epidemic is without equal.

Sean McGinty, Outreach & Communications Coordinator

"I was able to get through something I've been working on for a long time, being able to trust Marcia also teaches me how to trust myself."  Female Navy veteran
# Financial Highlights, FY 2018

## Total Revenue: $350,884

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>DEC 2018</th>
<th>DEC 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash &amp; Equivalents</td>
<td>$286,906</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution &amp; grant receivables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets (Net of accumulated depreciation)</td>
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<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
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<td>$276,918</td>
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## Financial Position

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<th>LIABILITIES</th>
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<th>DEC 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Current Liabilities</td>
<td>$7,637</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES</td>
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## Net Assets

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<th>Net Assets</th>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
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## Total Liabilities and Net Assets

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<th>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
<th>DEC 2018</th>
<th>DEC 2017</th>
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<td>$304,708</td>
<td>$276,918</td>
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## Support & Revenue

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<th>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</th>
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<th>DEC 2017</th>
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<td>Grants &amp; Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Revenue (Earned Income)</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</td>
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## Expenses

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<th>DEC 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Management &amp; General</td>
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## Change in Net Assets

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<td>$37,046</td>
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## Total Assets and Net Assets

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<th>TOTAL ASSETS</th>
<th>BEGINNING OF YEAR</th>
<th>END OF YEAR</th>
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<tr>
<td>$304,708</td>
<td>$228,225</td>
<td>$265,271</td>
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## DONORS

### Platinum Circle
- Michelle Stanley
- Simon Family
- Philanthropic Foundation
- Charles Liams
- Bret Gerber

### Gold Circle
- Yontz Valor Foundation
- Dick Waltman
- Elsie and Dick Myers
- City of San Diego
- Walton Family Foundation

### Bronze Circle
- $500+
  - Meghan & Jared Despain
  - Philip Russ
  - Deborah Marroquin
  - Gates Ingram
  - Pamela Vilkin
  - Sycuan Casino
  - David E Rowland
  - Poway Veterans Organization
  - Navy Federal Credit Union
  - George Lanz
  - Marcia La Monte
  - Esther Fischer
  - Ellie & Jeff Byrd
  - Casa Palmera

### Silver Circle
- $1,000+
  - Frances Mortenson
  - David C Kennedy
  - Jim and Maike O’Rourke
  - California Resources Corporation
  - Dan Becker
  - Elizabeth W Ratigan
  - Maggie Hannegan
  - Eric Forbes
  - Mike and Nancy DeFay
  - Leslie Zann
  - Dave Towe

### Friends of Wave Academy
- DJ Skelton
- Leo Casiple

### Friends of Casa Palmera
- Greg Darling
- Claire Donahue
- Illiana Van Meeteren
- Elizabeth Berg
- Catharine Brown
- Stephanie Brennan
- Elbert C Bade
- Cheryl & George Zolla
- Alison Tummond
- Teague Insurance
- Swallow's Inn Foundation Inc
- Kimberly Amaya
- zzyzx Controls
- Sherman Tam
- AnneMary Schram
- Simon Sandoval
- Timothy Klauber
- Carrie Downey
- Merrily Beck
- Gary Adams
- Nick Seidel
- Veterans United Home
- Loans of San Diego
- Andrea Muir
- Stephanie Marroquin
- Rod Kessler

### Friends of California Resources
- Emily Holmes
- Susan Hayes
- Hamburger Factory
- Elizabeth Goodman
- Marcus Gilliland
- Dorian Edge-Martin
- Copy Cove
- Deb and Rhyne Brown
- Carolyn Balkwell
- Renee McMahon
- Amy Yee
- Catherine E Williams
- Gillian Stern
- Marilyn Sobel
- Roderick Venzell Murriel
- Robert Mison
- Megan Bade
- Marie Naslednikov
- Laurel Costello
- Susan Gedestad
- Peter Andrew
- Travis and Vicki Williams
- Karen E Rogers-Cook
- Gina Pasquinelli Borelli
- Zachary Akey
- Taylor Edwards
PARTNERSHIPS

In 2018 Wave Academy established a variety of new relationships with like-minded organizations in order to further our collective impact in both the greater San Diego area and within the military, veteran, and caregiver communities.

NONPROFIT ACCELERATOR PROGRAM AT USD AND CDBG AWARDEE

Wave Academy was an awardee of the City of San Diego’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which provided both funding and participation in the new Nonprofit Accelerator Program. This 6-month educational program, taught by faculty of the Nonprofit Institute within the School of Leadership and Educational Sciences at the University of San Diego, was designed to help build a small-size nonprofit’s organizational capacity. This resulted in focusing our strategy, growing our board of directors, and carefully building a staff with the an understanding of what skills were most needed.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

Wave Academy’s healing program of therapy is a key treatment option utilized by the San Diego County Superior Court’s Veterans Treatment Court. Veterans Treatment Court provides both legal relief and treatment plans for veterans convicted of a crime that can be traced to service-related psychological issues. Due to our program’s success in lowering PTS symptoms of its clients, Wave Academy is a highly referred therapy option among the treatment plans issued by the Superior Court.

OTHER 2018 PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE: Veteran’s Village of San Diego, the Veteran’s Affairs ASPIRE Center, San Diego Veteran’s Coalition, and the San Diego Military Family Collaborative.

I felt weightless and in a never-ending ocean. The soundless experience was blissful and helped me lose all stressful thoughts which lowered my anxiety.

USMC veteran of Operation Inherent Resolve