Our Mission

Bastion provides a supportive living environment for injured veterans and families within our intentionally designed neighborhood by augmenting their care with neighbors, volunteers, and specialists for a holistic approach to community integration.

Our Community and Service are Growing

Bastion is America’s first intentional community for returning warriors and families that addresses a critical gap in the continuum of care for the veteran community. Now that we’ve established our residential housing with person-centered services, it’s time to bring our expertise and partnerships to aid the larger New Orleans community.
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Letter from the Executive Director

Defenders of the Bastion,
In a snapshot, here's what you need to know about Bastion and COVID-19:

• Despite a few close calls, everyone survived who lives in our community.
• Our team launched a telehealth program that delivered 106 therapeutic services to 219 individuals resulting in improvements in mental health and wellbeing.
• We expanded Headway, our signature brain injury program, and deployed over 300 therapeutic services across the metro area.
• The pandemic exacerbated issues related to food insecurity, which we are addressing today in a pilot program driven by our residents.

At every turn in this journey, we have consistently risen to the challenge together. From warrior reintegration to mental health to food security, we adapted our work to meet the need.

When we conceived our model almost a decade ago, it was built on the notion that community plays a vital role in the health and healing of our warriors and families. Bastion became the stronghold, warriors came and banded together, and now 99% of our survey respondents are reporting positive growth. We are beginning to see the power of community, how living in community makes us resilient.

As I reflect on our work last year, I am not surprised by what we achieved. Anything is possible when we work together, observe our Bastion community. Our strength and resilience begins right here, in community, when we decide to support and love one another no matter what.

DYLAN TÊTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, our home city New Orleans became one of the world’s first hotspots with the city instituting a mandatory lockdown. Recognizing how this isolation could affect veterans and their families, Bastion conducted an operational pivot to deliver telehealth services to the greater community including non-military clients.

Our virtual wellness center offered talk therapy, health coaching, mind-body skills groups, trauma releasing exercises, and when necessary, warm handoffs to the National Crisis Hotline. With our partners at LSU Allied Health, we also trained participants in stress reduction, pain management, sleep improvement, and more.

Over the course of six months, Bastion delivered 106 telehealth services to 219 unique clients across four countries.

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<th>SELF-REPORTED INDIVIDUAL INCREASES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>64%</strong> HOPE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>52%</strong> CONNECTEDNESS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>68%</strong> KNOWLEDGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>60%</strong> WELLNESS</td>
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<td><strong>56%</strong> MENTAL HEALTH</td>
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“I had reached the end of my rope and was enrolled in a VA rehab program for addiction when I first heard of Bastion. On top of that, I had suffered two strokes, was diagnosed with a brain injury, and had spent almost a year recovering in the hospital. I paid a visit to Bastion, got on their waiting list, and within a few months I was living there.

I thank God for the many relationships and friendships I’ve developed here. I participate in the Headway program for veterans living with brain injuries, and I know I can always count on my neighbors and staff. Recently, Headway designed a coffee cart and vocational training program, and I’m loving my new gig as a barista.

This community is really important to me. I’m sober and in recovery. I might not be there yet, but I’m on the right path.”

Resident Spotlight: Dennis Delhom, US Navy Veteran

“I love Bastion, everyone in the community is extremely supportive and caring.”

Residents

Bastion uses a multigenerational approach pioneered by Generations of Hope to facilitate active engagement and incubate meaningful relationships that endure for a lifetime.

Resident Spotlight: Marvin Belisle, US Army Veteran

“I’m an original resident at Bastion and I served in the US Army. Like every community, we have our ups and downs and the pandemic was a challenge.

I caught COVID in March 2020 before anyone really knew what it was. My immunity levels were low because I was ripping and running: taking care of my kids, working, being a Mardi Gras Indian, and volunteering as a band director. After being misdiagnosed three times, they put me in the hospital and not long afterwards, I was on a ventilator and in an induced coma. I was there for seven weeks and luckily I survived.

Returning to Bastion, people were cautious, but they still checked in on me. It’s a loving community of veterans that is family oriented. I don’t know where I’d be without Bastion.”

Resident Spotlight: Dennis Delhom, US Navy Veteran

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Headway

100 PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS ACHIEVED INCREASES IN THEIR INDEPENDENCE INDEX SCORE IN THE PROGRAM’S FIRST IMPLEMENTATION YEAR.

Headway is Bastion’s signature brain injury program. It was created in collaboration with Spero Rehab with seed funding from the Bob Woodruff foundation and is powered by Wounded Warrior Project. The program provides a holistic and goal-oriented approach to community reintegration for warriors with moderate to severe brain injuries or other neurological conditions who live in southeast Louisiana.

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<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>95%</th>
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<tr>
<td>warriors enrolled so far</td>
<td>family support members</td>
<td>satisfaction rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual goals accomplished</td>
<td>therapeutic services delivered</td>
<td>recurring social connections</td>
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You could say that I recognized Bastion’s power long before I actually heard of Bastion. Let me explain. I’m a New Orleans native and I graduated from Tulane University with a master’s degree in social work. A few years later, I married my husband, Melvin Jones, and because Melvin was on active duty with the US Air Force, we moved to a base in Stuttgart, Germany. It’s there that I began working with service members as a licensed clinical social worker and learning the unique challenges that confront our military families.

What really introduced me to the military lifestyle, however, was living on the base. It was a close knit community, which became especially evident when I gave birth to our first child. With my family unable to be physically present, my neighbors stepped right in! The community took care of me by bringing me food, babysitting when I was exhausted, and just being there when I needed them the most. So yes, I know the value of an intentional military community. Through collective power, the community can strengthen individuals experiencing significant stress. That same power dynamic has been recreated at Bastion.

When Melvin left the Air Force we wanted to give back to our native city and Bastion allowed us to do that. Melvin joined the board a little more than a year ago and he mentioned how I was a social worker who had worked with veterans transitioning from active duty to the civilian sector. When Bastion needed an interim residential program manager, I filled that role with much joy. After we found someone to replace me, I told Dylan, “You can’t get rid of me!” I was being playful but also very straightforward. Like I said earlier, I personally know the value of an intentional community, and when I saw it in action at Bastion, I realized this was something I needed to support. Thankfully, Dylan replied that he would never get rid of me, and that’s how I ended up on the board.

Melvin and I are very grateful to be part of this growing Bastion community. What has been created here reveals something fundamental to the human experience-- we all need a supportive community to thrive, especially those making the transition from military to civilian life. And as a board member, I want to help spread that model and message to other cities throughout the country.
“At the height of the pandemic, we knew in our hearts that we had to shift our operation no matter the cost because our city needed us. We created the telehealth program so that we could continue serving our veteran community while providing the same resources to non-military households.”

**Impact**

99 PERCENT OF BASTION RESIDENTS WHO COMPLETED OUR SURVEY REPORT EXPERIENCING POSITIVE GROWTH SINCE MOVING INTO THE COMMUNITY.

**Financials**

2020 TOTAL PROGRAM SPEND: **$603,049**
2020 REVENUE: **$807,347**

- **Program 83%**
  - Residential 28%
  - Expansion 15%
  - Headway 38%
  - Telehealth 19%
- **Fundraising 6%**
- **Management and General 11%**
Message from Board Chair

Dear friends and supporters,

What is critical to the Bastion approach for reintegration is improving and maintaining a close network of social connections that are meaningful to veterans. That was definitely a challenge in 2020, and as the pandemic spread the greatest risk factor to reintegration, social isolation, became more of a threat. I’m proud to say that our residents, clients, and staff rose to the challenge along with some terrific support from our partners.

Thanks to the hard work and persistence of our staff, we were able to adjust and continue to provide a continuum of care that our residents and clients depend on and grow from. With the generous support of the Bob Woodruff Foundation we expanded our outreach and support for military-connected households and civilians alike through the telehealth program. Wounded Warrior Project powered our ability to deploy brain injury services into the homes of warriors across the metro area during a time when the hospital system was overwhelmed. We even doubled our enrollment in Headway!

From that initial spark of inspiration to the thriving community it is today, Bastion has benefitted from an extensive community of supporters like you. Your generosity and initiative is what fuels our growth and catalyzes hope, healing, and yes, resilience. Let’s continue to grow stronger together!

Thank you,

PEYTON BUSH
BOARD CHAIR, BASTION
Bastion is America’s first intentional community for returning warriors and families that addresses a critical gap in the continuum of care.