

A Letter from our founder, Joseph Bobrow, April 2009

A warm hello to veterans, family members, service providers and Coming Home Project friends. This is the first issue of electronic newsletter, a way to stay connected and share news and information about our programs.

It's been a busy first quarter as we've been planning a number of new programs. In 2009 we will host retreats for: women veterans, families with a deployed loved one, as well as service providers and veterans and family members. We also plan to offer live video teleconferences this year with top notch presenters on Spirituality, Substance Abuse, Children in Deploying Families, and Women Veterans. Check out details in Schedule of Events.

We're planning a train the trainers retreat for later this year that will enable Coming Home Project retreats to be offered regionally around California and in a couple of locations around the country in 2010. In the offing is also a pilot project in which our retreats would be the cornerstone of a wrap-around support program for families and their service members throughout the deployment cycle beginning with pre-deployment.

Joseph, Cont.

I'll share some news that gives a flavor for what we at Coming Home have been up to: In January I attended a joint DoD and VA conference in San Antonio, sponsored by the Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and TBI. It brought together survivors, veterans, and family members with a wide spectrum of service providers and researchers as we explored ways to respond to the increasing numbers of suicide. With numbers rising alarmingly, this was an important effort at collaboration. I presented on compassion fatigue and Coming Home's bio-psycho-social approach that includes the spiritual dimension, which can play a pivotal role in suicide. With Mary Dudum, our Marine mom volunteer, I traveled to Irvine in Southern California to present on Resilience at a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program weekend program. A recent visit to Washington DC provided the opportunity to meet with relevant Congressional staff and committee members, the Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and TBI, the Joint Staff Chaplain's office, Military Officers Association of America, and the Samuelli Institute. Closer to home, Advisory Board member Keith Armstrong, myself, and a Vet Center colleague provided support for a deeply moving two day event honoring and bringing together Gold Star Families, held at the Marine Memorial Hotel in San Francisco and organized and run by the Blue Star Mothers. The

Coming Home Project is also participating in efforts by the California Department of Veterans Affairs to rethink and reorganize veteran services in California.

Please join us for one of our programs or take a moment learn more about the Coming Home Project. And look for us too on Facebook, MySpace, MyVetwork, CommunityOfVeterans.org and, yes, Twitter too.

Finally, in this first issue, we are pleased to feature a piece of writing by Terri Jones, a participant in our retreats. Her theme, *Roses out of Ashes*, spoke to many at our last family retreat and became its informal theme.

Warm regards,

Joseph Bobrow

Founder and President

Coming Home Project