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Honoring Military Veterans Continues After the Fireworks with Unique Hiring Opportunity

Working with NRPA, local parks and recreation will employ vets to lead communities in active lifestyles thanks to \$3M grant

ASHBURN, VA., July 10, 2013 – Military veterans ready to help their communities get boot-camp fit look no further than your local park and recreation department. Over the next three years, park and recreation departments in 12 communities will seek to hire nearly 200 veterans to teach fitness and nutrition classes and to help inspire healthier, active lifestyles among the public through the Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness program. The Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness expansion will be managed by the [National Recreation and Park Association \(NRPA\)](#) thanks to a \$3 million grant from [The Coca-Cola Foundation](#).

Often the hubs in communities for physical activity, local parks and recreation are the driving force in improving health and wellness outcomes among the public. [Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness grants](#) will help local park and recreation agencies create more opportunities for physical activity and wellness while also offering employment opportunities for our nation's veterans and their spouses.

“Our nation's military veterans have tremendous skills and training such as leadership and teamwork – as well as expertise in fitness and physical activity – which go hand in hand with parks and recreation,” said Barbara Tulipane, President and CEO of NRPA. “We are so pleased to work with The Coca-Cola Foundation and the Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness program because it is our hope that by hiring veterans to serve as role models and champions for healthy living, more people will be inspired to live healthy, active lifestyles through their local parks and recreation.”

In 2013, the Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness programs will kick-off throughout the summer months in four communities, including:

- Sacramento, CA
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- Atlanta, GA
- Newark, NJ

Additional communities will be added to the program in 2014 and 2015 with a goal of sustaining the programs and employment of veterans over the course of the three years and beyond.

“Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness brings together several passion points for our system – inspiring communities to get active, driving awareness of activities in our local parks and unwavering support of

our military and veterans,” said Lori George Billingsley, Vice President, Community Relations, Coca-Cola North America Group. “Its expansion through the National Recreation and Park Association will help encourage more communities to get active in their parks and give jobs to hundreds of veterans.”

As part of the Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness program, NRPA and Coca-Cola are also working with [Hire Heroes USA](#), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating job opportunities for U.S. military veterans and their spouses through personalized employment training and corporate engagement, at no cost to the veteran. Hire Heroes will help engage veterans in the Troops for Fitness employment opportunities.

The Coca-Cola Troops for Fitness program adds to the long-standing commitment local parks and recreation has to serving our nation’s military and veterans. Park and recreation agencies across the country offer specific programming for returning military veterans as well as adaptive and therapeutic recreation opportunities for injured service members and veterans. In addition, the military’s recreation programs, often referred to as Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) are a key component to fostering quality of life for service members and their families on military bases and installations globally.

For more information, please visit, www.nrpa.org/troopsforfitness/.

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of 30,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy lifestyles, recreation initiatives, and conservation of natural and cultural resources. For more information, visit www.NRPA.org. For digital access to NRPA’s flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.

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