

## **ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE CENTER EXPANDS VETS' FITNESS OPERATION TO HELENA**

**BILLINGS, MONTANA**—Adaptive Performance Center is expanding its operations to Helena. The new center, modeled after APC's flagship location in Billings, will help veterans and active military personnel improve their mental health and overall wellness through physical fitness.

APC Helena will host a Community Open House on Monday, January 30, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Tuesday, January 31, noon to 7 p.m. Opening Day is slated for Wednesday, February 1, at 8 a.m. The facility is located at 2475 North Cook Street, Helena, one block east of Montana Avenue.

According to CEO and Cofounder Karen Pearson, Adaptive Performance Center is the first organization of its kind in the nation, exclusively serving veterans and active military. "Our goal is to reduce the veteran suicide rate through fitness. Physical activity is proven to enhance one's cognitive function and vitality and can reduce some of the effects of PTSD such as depression and anxiety."

A licensed clinical professional counselor, Pearson opened APC's Billings facility in March 2020 with Cofounder Mitch Crouse, quickly enrolling 620 members despite the Covid pandemic. The center offers classes in boxing, yoga, high intensity training, and kettlebell, along with weight, cardio, and personal training programs. "In addition to offering a great workout experience," Pearson says, "APC offers veterans and active service members a sense of community that you don't necessarily find elsewhere."

The nonprofit partners with veterans' groups, including the Montana Veteran's Affairs Division, Veterans Meat Locker, Impact Montana, the Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans Navigation Network, to provide information and programming to members. The Adaptive Performance Center also serves as a rehab facility for veterans with disabilities, Pearson says. "Helping them return to active, fulfilling lives is one of the most important and gratifying things we do," Pearson says. "Through improved physical health and well-being, people with disabilities can often maintain an independent lifestyle."

The new Helena facility includes a large weight machine room, motion cage, yoga room, separate cardio and free-weight rooms, and a lounge. The operation is supported through grants from the Harnish Foundation, Gianforte Family Foundation, Bentley Foundation, and Montana Community Foundation, and community sponsorships and fundraising events. A Staff Sargent Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant helps fund personal trainers, veteran liaisons, peer mentors, an occupational therapist, and contracted massage therapists and acupuncturists at both locations. APC is also staffed by volunteers committed to the APC motto, "Making the Impossible Possible."

Crouse says, "Move your body, heal your mind. We get to see life come back to their eyes." This idea is echoed by member Jon Cory, who credits APC for saving his life: "Without something and someone to look forward to each day, I would've had no purpose to continue on.... APC has covered every need for this broken stranger seeking belonging and camaraderie in a completely new city and state. Please know you've made all the difference in my life; my gratitude cannot be overstated."

For more information on Adaptive Performance Center, or to volunteer, visit <https://www.adaptiveperformancecenter.org/> or call the Billings facility at 406-281-3848.

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