

For Immediate Release

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At Ease

For active military, veterans
and their loved ones

 **Lutheran Family Services**
of Nebraska, Inc.

Free screening of 'Project 22,' a film created to help veterans heal from trauma

BELLEVUE, NEB. – October 15, 2015 – On Thursday, October 22 at 7 p.m., Bellevue University's Military-Veteran Services Center, in partnership with Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, will host a free screening of the film "Project 22" at the university's Criss Auditorium.

The film's name "Project 22" comes from a 2012 study released by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The study reported that an average of 22 veterans die by suicide per day, approximately 8,000 each year.

Created by two combat-wounded veterans, the film documents their journey on a 6,500 mile cross-country motorcycle mission to raise awareness for military veteran suicide and promote holistic mental and physical health. Along the way, they interviewed leading researchers, mental health clinicians and educators who specialize in Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress. They also spoke with veterans, many of whom either contemplated or attempted suicide and were able to share the life-saving alternative sources of hope.

The local showing is being coordinated by 1st Sgt. Neil Wattier, an Air Force reservist, who heard about the documentary and wanted to see it locally. This led him to reach out to Bellevue University and Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) to use the film as a platform to create public awareness about veteran suicide.

"Veteran suicide awareness is not more important than other awareness programs, but it is different," said Wattier. "Veterans often don't want to reach out for help because they believe it's a sign of weakness, contrary to the warrior mentality. Veterans and the public understand asking for help is not weakness; it's closure from traumatic events."

Prior to the film screening, community partners and businesses will be available to provide information and answer questions about referral services for veterans and military families.

Veterans are used to the small community they served with and respond better to support from their peers, says Wattier. "Veterans need to know where they can go to ask for help."

At Ease, a LFS program, providing peer support and counseling to veterans and military families will be spotlighted as an organization providing services to the veteran community.

After the film, a panel of professionals from the veteran community will be available to answer questions about the veterans' issues.

Marine veteran Sharon Robin-West, program manager for At Ease and a panelist, believes the movie will help spark conversation among people who need to be aware of the trauma veteran's experience.

"This movie is very informative, not just for veterans, but for law enforcement, educators, family members, social workers or anyone who shares their lives with someone who has served," said Robino-West. "Everyone needs to see this movie."

A theatrical trailer for "Project 22" can be viewed at www.medicinalmissions.com.

Event Details

Film Title: Project 22
Location: Bellevue University - Criss Auditorium, 1000 Galvin Road South, Bellevue, Neb.
Date: October 22, 2015
Cost: Free and open to the public
Schedule: 6:00 -7:00 p.m. Community partners available to discuss veterans' issues
6:45 -7:00 p.m. Theater seating
7:00 - 8:45 p.m. Film showing
8:45 - 9:45 p.m. Panel discussion

For more information about the film screening, please contact Neil Wattier at (402) 980-3373

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About Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska – At Ease

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) is a 123-year old statewide human care organization with locations across Nebraska and in Council Bluffs, Iowa and Wichita, Kansas.

Since 2009, LFS has offered the At Ease program throughout Nebraska with office locations in Bellevue, Lincoln, Grand Island and North Platte. The program, funded by At Ease USA, provides confidential, individualized counseling services for active military personnel, veterans and their loved ones. Counselors are specially trained in treatment practices known to be effective in addressing post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma-related disorders.

To learn more about At Ease, visit www.lfsatease.org.

About Bellevue University – Military-Veteran Services Center

Bellevue University is a private, non-profit, accredited university. Career-relevant bachelors, masters, Ph.D. degree programs are offered online & on-campus.

Established in 2013, the Military-Veteran Services Center (MVSC) at Bellevue University offers a welcoming central location with services and support to military and veteran students. Fully staffed by veterans with experience in both in the field and in the classroom, the Center offers military and veteran support groups, career services and Student Veterans Association.

To learn more about Bellevue University, visit www.bellevue.edu.