



October 10, 2018

Rear Admiral Collin P. Green  
Commander, Special Warfare Command  
2000 Trident Way  
San Diego, CA 92155-5599

Re: The Charles Humphrey Keating IV Foundation (the “C4 Foundation”)  
Naval Special Warfare Program Proposal Letter

Dear Admiral Green:

The C4 Foundation is pleased to present to you and to Naval Special Warfare Command (“NSW”) this program proposal letter for consideration and comment by you and your staff, but not for endorsement by NSW.

The establishment of the C4 Foundation was inspired not only by Chuck’s passing in combat but also by his joy of “family”. To Chuck, “family” was the sum of blood relatives, The Brotherhood and a large, diverse and ever-evolving group of civilian “best friends”. To Chuck, “family” meant security, comfort, support and love and it was “family” that gave him the strength and peace of mind to return to the battlefield time after time after time.

The C4 Foundation was organized as a corporation in Chuck’s honor and spirit on June 26, 2017 and the Foundation received its Treasury Department/IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter on September 21, 2017. Copies of the Foundation’s organizational documents and the Determination Letter are enclosed with this letter and you may view our mission, our plan for the future, and our Board of Directors and Advisory Board Members by visiting the C4 Foundation website at [www.C4Foundation.org](http://www.C4Foundation.org).

The mission of the C4 Foundation is to provide support and resources to active duty Navy SEALs and their families by researching, developing and implementing evidenced based programs and approaches for the benefit of the whole SEAL family. Functionally, the mission will be accomplished by: (i) providing a special sanctuary for SEAL families where husbands, wives/significant others, and children can relax, decompress, re-charge, re-connect and

regenerate; and (ii) administering cutting-edge performance science-based programs that address and enhance mental, physical and marital relationship wellness all in a manner that is cognizant of and complimentary to the NSW “Preservation of the Force and Families” initiatives and programs.

The critical first step in fulfilling this mission was accomplished by the C4 Foundation on September 7, 2018 when it acquired a fully improved 560-acre ranch property in the Cuymaca Mountains (Ramona/Julian/Palomar) just 65 miles east of downtown San Diego. The property’s features and amenities include residences, a chapel, five fish-filled lakes, horse stables, two helicopter landing pads, triple redundant energy sources (electricity from the grid, solar and propane), mountain ranges and rock formations, chaparral, grazing pastures, woodlands and oak stands. The ranch will enable simultaneous individual and family recreational and bonding experiences including camping, hiking, mountain biking, moto-crossing and 3-wheeling, wood-working, auto-shopping, rock-climbing, archery and star-gazing.

The second step in fulfilling the C4 mission is the development and deployment of effective family strengthening programs and, in this regard, we have benefited greatly from the experience and effort of the Foundation’s Chief Science Officer, Dr. Glenn Fox. Dr. Fox is trained as a neuroscientist with an expertise in emotion regulation, gratitude and high performance, and has professional experience dealing with military and other elite populations.

For the past several months, Dr. Fox has visited with NSW Command and has had meetings with Dr. Gary Hoyt, Stephen Gilmore and others to discuss non-clinical, neuro-science based programs and approaches to be used at the retreat that would be complimentary to the psychiatric and non-psychiatric programs sponsored by NSW under the POTFF umbrella. We are most appreciative and thankful for the time that Dr. Hoyt, Mr. Gilmore and others have given to Dr. Fox and for the easy and generous exchange of information among all the professionals.

Based on Dr. Fox’s professional study and experience in the science of human peak performance, Dr. Fox has proposed the following programs and approaches that will be undertaken at the retreat for the benefit of the SEAL families:

### Background and Philosophy

The C4 Foundation serves Navy SEALs and their families to preserve relationships, enhance readiness for the challenges of service, and tighten critical social support networks. The Foundation-owned large ranch/retreat property east of San Diego will serve as the platform for delivering on our mission and goals through activities and programming designed to benefit all who visit and provide long lasting improvements in performance, relationship quality, and resilience. All activities performed at the ranch will be measured for effectiveness using pre- and post-surveys of the individual visitors, and long-term check-ins will take place at 3-, 6- and 12-month intervals post-visit.

The programming approach of the C4 Foundation reflects (as much as possible) and complements (as much as possible) the strongest aspects of the SEAL culture: mission-focus, individual responsibility, and strategic optimism and clarity. We will focus on tangible

outcomes, clear and simple directives, and always readily improve approaches to provide the most inspiring, resolved, and uplifting experience available.

While we will serve Navy SEALs and their families, we will focus on individual development tailored to the precise moment and circumstances in which our approaches can have the strongest benefits across the entire family. We tailor the approach to the Workup-Deploy-Recover-Train cycle of training and deployment that SEALs and their families endure. As such, each activity and program can be specifically designated for the period of the cycle most pertinent for visitors. For instance, as we detail below, families preparing for deployment may benefit from communication strategies designed to focus on the best ways of communicating to loved ones while deployed, where we would have families continue projects that began during the workup, revisit sites on the property to write thank you notes to loved ones that remind them of their closeness, and connect with other spouses and families currently handling deployment. By contrast, families recovering from deployment may need approaches that allow them to unpack from the previous events, reestablish key bonds and finish creative projects and connect with their teams. Such an approach allows us to pay homage to the individual needs and developmental differences of our visitors.

We will emphasize the fact that the C4 Foundation ranch's own grounds, culture, and history will be built by the SEAL Families themselves. Our programs are not designed to be handed down from a position of authority and implemented from a top-down structure with lectures and keynotes. Rather, the programs and approaches will be built alongside the SEAL families to establish cultural ownership, enthusiastic buy-in, and long-lasting health and high performance. We hope to begin receiving SEAL families in early 2019 and commence the administration of the programmatic elements described in the following paragraphs. The programmatic elements designed by Dr. Fox are scalable and can be effectively employed regardless of the number of retreat attendees. Once the retreat is in full operation, we estimate that the retreat could facilitate as many as 750-1000 SEAL families per year for single day trips and overnite stays of one to three days maximum.

### Our Three Pillars

The pillars chosen are comprised of key findings from the science of high performance. To derive the pillars and the programs that comprise them, a review of the scientific literature of high performance was conducted, particularly in the domain of retreat spaces and community psychology. Our literature review confirmed the following: the number one predictor of mental health is social support<sup>1</sup>, and that focusing on key virtues and mindsets, such as creativity, optimism, gratitude, and awe, can produce strong benefits to well-being, and therefore subsequent health outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Green, S., Nurius, P. S., & Lester, P. (2013). Spouse psychological well-being: A keystone to military family health. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 23(6), 753-768.

<sup>2</sup> Howell, R. T., Kern, M. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). Health benefits: Meta-analytically determining the impact of well-being on objective health outcomes. *Health Psychology Review*, 1(1), 83-136.

We fully recognize the stresses and challenges and the long-term difficulties of military service, particularly for SOCOM warfighters. So, although the program is not providing adjuvant therapeutic services, the programs and the C4 Retreat center will have an associated program director with Marriage and Family Therapy credentials and a proven history working with military family populations including post-traumatic stress and other neurological challenges, in addition to implementing and measuring outcomes and continuously improving our tactics.

Our approach focuses on three overlapping arenas: 1) Motivation and Pro-Social Growth, 2) Creativity and Flow and 3) High Performance Communication. We describe the scientific evidence and approach to each, along with the proposed activities below. Note that each activity will be specifically tailored to the phase of deployment, as well as to the SEAL, spouse, and children respectively:

### 1. Motivation and Pro-Social Growth

Research has shown that happiness and positive experience predict success in whatever endeavors we choose<sup>3</sup>. Further, such experiences can be cultivated and practiced, leading to long term benefits to health and relationships<sup>4</sup>. For instance, optimism is associated with better outcomes in surgeries and lower risk of mortality in cancer patients<sup>5</sup>. Our approach to cultivating these positive states reflects the latest in research approaches to long term improvements in mental health and well-being, while taking into consideration treatable mental illness and other individual differences that need to be addressed.

#### Activities:

- Mindful Hiking and Outdoor Exploration
  - In Japan, referred to as “forest bathing,” this activity involves meditative, non-strenuous hiking through natural areas while working to immerse oneself in every sensation of being in nature<sup>6</sup>. We will have guided hikes, sign-posts, and prescribed trails for individuals, spouses, and families to hike, rest, and meditate on the trail or on the water. Specific activities:
    - Guided and self-paced meditative nature hikes
    - Canoe floats and meditative rowing
    - Raft-building (using pre-arranged materials)
- Meditation and Yoga in Nature and around the Campfire

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<sup>3</sup> Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological bulletin*, 131(6), 803.

<sup>4</sup> Diener, E., & Chan, M. Y. (2011). Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 3(1), 1-43.

<sup>5</sup> Allison, P. J., Guichard, C., Fung, K., & Gilain, L. (2003). Dispositional optimism predicts survival status 1 year after diagnosis in head and neck cancer patients. *Journal of clinical oncology*, 21(3), 543-548.

<sup>6</sup> Park, B. J., Tsunetsugu, Y., Kasetani, T., Kagawa, T., & Miyazaki, Y. (2010). The physiological effects of Shinrin-yoku (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing): evidence from field experiments in 24 forests across Japan. *Environmental health and preventive medicine*, 15(1), 18.

- Meditation and mindful practice have been shown to be effective for helping military populations<sup>7</sup> and their families<sup>8</sup>. Specific Activities:
  - Daily guided mental skills training (mindfulness-based stress reduction, etc).
  - Evening campfire meditations
  - Forest yoga
  - Standup paddle board yoga
  - Nightly campfire reflections, children’s performance, and personal sharing.
  - Zen archery and Tai-Chi<sup>9</sup>
- Positive Emotion Enhancement
  - These activities will be group and individual based and will be part of the toolkit given to visitors as a result of their time. They will learn the specific and most effective ways to make gratitude and optimism journals, both of which are associated with key benefits to health and well-being. Specific activities:
    - Gratitude and optimism workshops, mindfulness and journaling

## 2. Creativity and Flow

The retreat activities will also include active, physical and creative activities for families and SEALs to share and collaborate on a range of activities that they can maintain and work on throughout the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment cycle.

Activities that leverage creativity, flow, and focus are associated with benefits to well-being and recovery from mental health events<sup>10,11</sup>. Note that C4 will not likely have a certified art therapist on staff, but a resident MFT should be able to modify the activities to help them be part of a guided and healing experience where needed.

Activities:

- Outdoor Activities:
  - Scavenger hunts and orienteering
  - Off-road geo-tag and wilderness way-finding. Gives the families, and especially the children, a taste of the SEALs’ job and allows them to bond together through shared goals that leverage cooperation and competition.

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<sup>7</sup> Stanley, E. A., Schaldach, J. M., Kiyonaga, A., & Jha, A. P. (2011). Mindfulness-based mind fitness training: A case study of a high-stress predeployment military cohort. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 18*(4), 566-576.

<sup>8</sup> Gewirtz, A. H., Pinna, K. L., Hanson, S. K., & Brockberg, D. (2014). Promoting parenting to support reintegrating military families: After deployment, adaptive parenting tools. *Psychological services, 11*(1), 31.

<sup>9</sup> Sandlund, E. S., & Norlander, T. (2000). The effects of Tai Chi Chuan relaxation and exercise on stress responses and well-being: an overview of research. *International Journal of Stress Management, 7*(2), 139-149.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, J. P., Walker, M. S., Drass, J. M., & Kaimal, G. (2018). Art therapy interventions for active duty military service members with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. *International Journal of Art Therapy, 23*(2), 70-85.

<sup>11</sup> Stickley, T., Wright, N., & Slade, M. (2018). The art of recovery: outcomes from participatory arts activities for people using mental health services. *Journal of Mental Health, 1-7*.

- Rock climbing (top-rope only) and rappelling.
- Mountain biking, hiking and backpacking along prescribed routes with emphasis on environmental awareness and wildlife tracking and photography.
- Creativity and expression:
  - Creativity Studio for woodworking, painting, photography, sculpture, scent-making, quilting and sewing, etc. These projects will be designed to be carried out and shared with the entire family, and the families can continue them while the SEAL family member is deployed. In addition, by sharing in the creative process and building tables, benches, and retreat spaces on the property, the SEAL families will have the experience of building the retreat space for themselves and imbue it with their community and culture. Such shared community creativity spaces have been shown to elicit key benefits in social support and mental health<sup>12</sup>.
- Outdoor gym and fitness
  - Recreation area for more traditional sports and exercise activities, given that physical activity is key for mental health in military populations<sup>13</sup>.

### 3. High Performance Communication

Strategic marriage counseling has been shown to have significant, though modest, effects across military communities<sup>14</sup>. Couples and families will receive help and guidance for communication in every relationship combination between SEALs, spouses, and children, with emphasis on providing social support and communication strategies between peer groups, (i.e. SEAL to SEAL and spouse to spouse communication during deployment). Further, best practices for communication will be practiced and role playing can be available to help prepare for the different demands of communication during deployment. Qualitative reports have provided some guidance for the stages of deployment and the specific challenges faced during each stage<sup>15</sup>. Specific activities:

- Communication workshops, focusing on each stage of the deployment cycle, with planning and strategizing for best practices for handling upcoming challenges.
- Improvisation and musical performance, children can put on mini plays and puppet shows.
- Couples date night and/or father-son/daughter date night while the spouse gets a night off at a local spa.

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<sup>12</sup> Morgan, M., Hayes, R., Williamson, M., & Ford, C. (2007). Men's sheds: A community approach to promoting mental health and well-being. *International journal of mental health promotion*, 9(3), 48-52.

<sup>13</sup> Caddick, N., & Smith, B. (2018). Exercise is medicine for mental health in military veterans: a qualitative commentary. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 10(4), 429-440.

<sup>14</sup> Blanchard, V. L., Hawkins, A. J., Baldwin, S. A., & Fawcett, E. B. (2009). Investigating the effects of marriage and relationship education on couples' communication skills: A meta-analytic study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(2), 203.

<sup>15</sup> Pincus, S. H., House, R., Christenson, J., & Adler, L. E. (2001). The emotional cycle of deployment: A military family perspective. *US Army Medical Department Journal*, 4(5), 6.

- Non-denominational church. Many SEALs and their families practice religious faith, bible study and spiritual-based support groups can have time set aside for Sunday services upon request.
- Library for books, writing and reflection. One space shall be set aside for reading, writing and reflecting.
- Modified Warrior PATHH programming borrowed from the Boulder Crest Retreat programming approach, i.e. post-traumatic growth and systematic group therapy sessions.

The following “ground rules” will apply to ranch visits. No visitor will be paid to visit the ranch and travel expenses to and from the ranch (which is an hour east by car from downtown San Diego) shall be paid by the visitor. Once at the ranch, there will be no charge to visitors for food costs and lodging. The ranch will be a drug free environment but will allow the responsible consumption of alcohol.

Each visitor to the ranch will be required to sign for themselves and their minor children a broad form waiver and release agreement pursuant to which the visitor acknowledges the many risks inherent in visiting and enjoying an expansive ranch property, assumes all such risks and waives and releases from any liability the C4 Foundation and each and all of its directors, officers, employees, contractors and agents. Upon your request, we would be pleased to provide you with a copy of the broad form assumption of liability/waiver and release form. We also are keenly aware of NSW Command’s sensitivity to publicity and all fund-raising, SEAL-directed ranch information and other similar materials shall be provided to the JAG for review and approval prior to dissemination.

Participant surveys and other data collected relating to the ranch and records of visits and talks with event staff will be collected in paper form only, and any other personal and potentially sensitive data will be de-identified in any electronic form and reports on the ranch’s effectiveness will never reveal visitor personal information.

While initially the retreat will be open to and operated for the benefit of active duty SEAL families, we would expand the visitor universe to include active duty SWCCS and, ultimately, to all of active duty NSW subject to meeting to-be-determined thresholds such as years of service, number of deployments to combat theaters and combat experience.

The C4 Foundation staff, the Board of Directors and Advisory teams are in place and well positioned to move quickly on making this vision a reality. We benefit from holding an incredibly unique and well-located property as well as a talented team of experts who will help solidify C4 Foundation as an effective contributor to the wellness programs operated under the PTOFF umbrella. Our future is bright and we are unwavering in our commitment to the SEAL families who have made such sacrifice for us and our country.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Humphrey Keating IV Foundation

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charlie Keating, Co-Chairperson

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
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