

# **Building an Effective Chapter Veteran's Adaptive Cycle Program**

## **Contents**

**Page 2 - Overview**

**Page 4 - AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Program Guidelines**

**Page 6 - Brief Guide To Building Strong Relationships With Key VA Contacts**

**Page 7 - Checklist for Positive Relationship-Building**

**Page 8 - Chapter Veteran's Initiative Focus Form**

# Overview

AMBUCS is excited about the Veteran's Initiative – providing AmTryke Therapeutic Tricycles to our nation's veterans. The program was prompted by Bill Fulton, a Danville, IL member. He envisioned a program where injured and wounded veterans could benefit from the AmTryke program. Bill began the effort with a sizable gift, and labors nationwide as a volunteer to get the program established. The purpose of this paper is to provide a clear guide for chapters to begin and build their own Veteran's Adaptive AmTryke Program.

## **Steps to take... build fundraising capacity, find a veterans evaluation partner, schedule your first events.**

- 1) Study the official policy statement entitled AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Program. This is your guide to an effective program. This lays out how to choose eligible riders and establish funding priorities. We strongly urge your chapter to align with this policy.
- 2) Before you get started, address the need for resources. How will your chapter fund your program? Will you allocate some monies from an existing fundraiser for this purpose? Do you need to start a new fundraiser for your veteran's program? Decide on this first, and develop a budget and goal for the next three (3) years. You can expect the average veteran's AmTryke to cost about \$800. How many do you wish to provide every year?
- 3) You will need an appropriate evaluation partner. This could be your existing therapists who agree to help evaluate veterans – or you may need to seek new partners who work with the veteran's population. Do vets receive services somewhere near you? Is there a large Veterans Administration (VA) hospital near you? Keep in mind that not all veterans who receive services will make an effective candidate for your AmTryke program. With limited resources, you'll need a fair method for choosing who will best benefit from receiving a cycle. Remember you will need to provide the partner with evaluation equipment. This is usually one or two AmTrykes they can use to fit and evaluate veterans.
- 4) When approaching a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital:
  - a. FIRST – contact your region director or AMBUCS Resource Center to see if a relationship already exists. VA's serve larger geographical areas, and we want to avoid duplication and confusion. Once you have made sure there is not an existing relationship you can proceed with the contact.
  - b. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator to schedule a meeting. The VA requires that all volunteer programs be administered by this person.
  - c. At your meeting with the Volunteer Coordinator, explain your chapters program and commitment to the cycle program. Give them an idea of how many vets you intend to serve, immediately and into the future.
  - d. Present them with the policy statement. Use the veteran's Initiative brochures available from AMBUCS Resource Center.
  - e. Explain how their professional rehabilitation staff can recommend riders to receive their AmTrykes.
  - f. Provide the Volunteer coordinator with the list of VA references from our successful programs.
  - g. You will normally have to wait while the local VA reviews the program and decides whether to participate or not.

- 5) There are other partners you may wish to approach.
  - a. An active duty base near you that may have services for active duty personnel.
    - i. Follow the action plan listed above for the VA to contact them.
  - b. Veteran's groups – many of these groups have responded well to our AmTryke program. They may be able to identify local riders and help with funding too!
    - i. American Legion Post
    - ii. Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association
    - iii. VFW Post
    - iv. Marine Corps League
- 6) Fill out the Chapter's Veteran's Initiative Focus form and submit it to AMBUCS Resource Center. You must file this form to be included in the official AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Program. This makes you eligible for additional support from the fund. I.e. veteran's bike jerseys, etc.
- 7) New Chapter Veteran Initiative programs are offered a 5 for 5 matching AmTryke incentive to fundraise and donate bikes to veterans in their communities.
- 8) Please contact any of the following should you have questions or need some help: the AMBUCS Resource Center (800-838-1845), Bill Fulton [wefulton@bigbugs.com](mailto:wefulton@bigbugs.com) or Gordon Brigman [GBrig57080@aol.com](mailto:GBrig57080@aol.com)

# AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Program Guidelines

The **AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Program** was developed with the mission to insure that those who honorably served their country in the armed forces and who now face life changing disabilities have every opportunity to be engaged in the active lifestyle they had prior to their disability. We will accomplish a part of that mission each time a veteran with disabilities is provided an AmTryke therapeutic tricycle.

Many men and women have bravely served their country and some have experienced life changing events in the form of physical or cognitive disabilities. As with the AmTryke Program, we will work diligently to fulfill all the requests for Veteran Cycles. To help provide direction in this mission, we have developed general guidelines to help those involved in the selection process for Veteran Cycles. These are guidelines and not “set in stone” rules but are meant to assist our chapter members and partners, such as Veteran Hospitals and veteran service organizations. The guidelines will help determine Veteran Cycle eligibility for active duty or honorable discharged military personnel.

## **Eligibility Guidelines:**

1. A person receiving an AmTryke under the AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Program must be either active duty personnel, an honorable retired or honorably discharged veteran with a disability.
2. The veteran must fill out the AMBUCS Veteran Adaptive Cycle Request Form.
3. A therapist, medical professional or other person qualified to properly evaluate a veteran must complete the Veteran Adaptive Cycle Assessment Form.
4. The veteran must demonstrate a commitment to a recreation riding program.
5. The evaluation therapist should evaluate the best option or resource for meeting the veteran’s need through VA resources.
6. National Policy ranks Veteran Cycle requests using the following priority system:
  - a. VetService connected disability.
  - b. VetFrom other activity (i.e: accident) while on active duty.
7. Our local chapters have the option to use the following priority system to rank cycle requests:
  - a. Service connected disability.
  - b. From other activity (i.e: accident) while on active duty.
  - c. Non service connected chronic health condition (e.g. obesity, arthritis, mobility limitations) for which they need an adaptive bike for physical activity.

## **Funding Guidelines:**

1. AMBUCS will work to establish local grass roots chapters and volunteers to fundraise and provide the AmTrykes. The chapter building efforts will be focused around evaluation partners who wish to participate in the program and benefit their veterans.
  - a. Stationary trainer through the Bill Fulton AMBUCS Veteran’s Fund.
  - b. Evaluation partners are requested to submit recommendations for placements. Each evaluation partner will be given annual allotments, based on local chapter capacity for fundraising. This should help manage the Wish List and shorten waiting times.
2. The Veterans Wish List will be administered much the same as AMBUCS’ lists for other riders.

- a. Local chapters and funding sources can make placements as they deem appropriate; maintaining their own records and administering their local list.
- b. Veterans without local support will be placed on the National AMBUCS Veteran's Wish List and receive AmTrykes as funding becomes available. Note: Many donors are geographically restricted, so care will be taken to adhere to donor wishes with respect to placements.

### **Participation Guidelines:**

1. AMBUCS wants to build an effective and long term program. We envision affecting fitness and health by encouraging participation and active use of the AmTryke cycles.
2. Our evaluation partners can help with this by screening for potential riders who will commit to a consistent riding goal.
3. Veterans will be eligible to join the AmTryke Rider's Club at no cost, funded by the Bill Fulton AMBUCS Veteran's Fund.
  - a. *The AmTryke Rider's Club is an online database built to foster participation.* (Beta testing is expected in the winter of 2012-13 with implementation in spring of 2013.) Riders can login and create their own private profile page, which can be shared with family and friends or kept private.
  - b. *Riders set their own riding goals.* They can enter their individual rides and work towards their riding goal, while tracking their progress.
  - c. *Riders will receive recognition as they reach mileage levels.* Riders will also receive premiums or recognition gifts to encourage participation.
  - d. *AMBUCS will provide Rider's Club members with a welcome package.* This package will include an odometer calibrated to their cycle, along with a safety flag, rear view mirrors, and water bottle.
4. Local chapters are encouraged to build several group riding events throughout the year. These are envisioned as community or regional events that foster riding groups and clubs as well as build participation.

**For further guidance please call the AMBUCS Resource Center at (800) 838-1845.**

# Brief Guide To Building Strong Relationships With Key VA Contacts

So here is a very quick guide on building a relationship with a top VA contact or team member.

- 1) **Identify who you want to build a relationship with.** Why this person? Judging by their past contributions to the organization, what do you and they have to gain through a relationship? Your time is limited, so you need to decide who to build a relationship with. Will it be the most prominent? Most active? Most knowledgeable? Most experienced? Newest? Why?
- 2) **Review their contributions to the VA.** Learn a little about them. Where are they from? What are their interests outside of the VA? What contributions to the community have they made in the past? What image of themselves are they trying to construct?
- 3) **Question, compliment, or comment.** Ask a relevant question, give them a compliment or make a statement you believe they will have a strong opinion on. All these will be based upon your research.
- 4) **Continue the discussion.** Ask more questions based upon their responses. Identify a topic of mutual interest. Look for ways you can help them. Endeavour to talk on the phone or participate in something together – like an AmTryke giveaway. Disclose more information about yourself (thoughts, feelings, experiences).
- 5) **Sustain the relationship.** Maintain contact. Don't make a connection solely when you need something. Schedule it in your calendar if you like. Find a time every month or every other month to continue the relationship.
- 6) **Only ask for something when you have completed the steps above.** By far the biggest mistake is approaching someone too early. Wait until you have developed a strong relationship. It's best if you've already helped them do something first.

This works for any type of relationship you want to build in almost any situation.

Remember you should only ask the member to do something that benefits you after you have built a relationship. The benefit is the final step. Too frequently we treat it as the first step.

Don't be reactive to relationship development. Proactively cultivate positive relationships with several members of the facility.

# Checklist for Positive Relationship-Building

- Be respectful**
  - A successful working relationship will be based on a solid foundation of respect. This means taking time to learn about the facility, their values, perspectives and community.
- Communicate openly**
  - The best way to get to know your facility contact is to have regular face-to-face meetings where open and respectful communication is encouraged. Partnership agreements cannot be negotiated by correspondence; the issues are too complex for such an approach. Open, in-person discussions will help avoid misunderstandings.
- Create value for both parties**
  - Creating mutual goals and keeping your eye on the big picture will help relationships move forward and help everyone strive to overcome obstacles.
- Have realistic expectations**
  - Although it may be obvious, it is worth stating that the issues to be addressed in a partnership agreement cannot be resolved in only one meeting. The goal of the first meeting between the facility and your chapter should simply be for each party to gain a better understanding of the other's organizational background and structure.
- Practice integrity**
  - Practicing integrity means working honestly and openly and following through on promises and obligations. It is closely linked with being trustworthy and being able to trust others, all of which are important to keep in mind while building relationships.
- Be flexible**
  - While working in large groups and dealing with complex issues, it is easy to become frustrated and overwhelmed and to experience delays. By being flexible, you are being responsive to change and reducing stress and disappointment if things do not go exactly as planned.
- Practice equality**
  - Make sure that everyone in the relationship feels like they are being treated fairly. If equality is not possible, ensure that there is a well-understood reason for any difference in treatment.
- Think long-term**
  - Plan for the long term and establish where you would like to see the partnership in 5-10 years. You will then be better able to establish your priorities today and identify possibilities for collaboration in the future.
- Clarify decision-making processes and responsibilities**
  - To make your partnership most effective, it is important that both parties clarify decision-making processes and that parties understand their responsibilities to attend meetings, participate in decisions and use dispute resolution techniques when necessary. It is important for everyone to understand exactly what the various group members can offer and what they cannot. By being open, it is easier to establish each person's role in achieving shared objectives.
- Establish systems for dispute resolution**
  - In cases where there are disagreements among parties, an established dispute-resolution system can help parties resolve conflict before relationships are negatively affected.

# Chapter Veteran's Initiative Focus Form

List Your Targeted Facilities:

---

---

---

---

---

Describe Chapter Vet Initiative Goals:

---

---

---

---

---

Chapter Vet Initiative Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Board Approved: Yes / No      Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Vet Initiative Funds Resources: Fundraiser (new/existing) / Existing Funds Available / Other  
If "Other," please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Chapter Funds Allocated for Vet Initiative: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(note: average adult AmTryke for veteran's is around \$800)*

Chapter AmTryke Placement Goals for Vet Initiative:

1<sup>st</sup> Year: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this Focus Form to the AMBUCS Resource Center  
AMBUCS, PO Box 5127, High Point, NC 27262  
Fax: 336.852.6830