



*Dignity U Wear strives to create real change in the lives of children and adults in need; change that restores broken spirits and restores hope, dignity and self-esteem.*



## Wounded Warriors attack new challenges in new suits

**Transitioning from military life to civilian is a challenge for any soldier, but more so if you are not the same person you once were. If you've been injured, physically or mentally. If you've been told you are no longer fit to serve.**

The 9/11 terror attacks motivated Andrew Coughlan's decision to join the Army. He deployed to Iraq in 2003 and returned home one year later after suffering the horrors of war in an area known as the "Triangle of Death." He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for valor and heroism for his efforts during the enemy attack, but the loss of so many comrades took a heavy toll. Andrew was given a medical discharge for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sent home.

"I had survivor's guilt, anger, and nightmares," Coughlan said. "Every night I'd wake up with my head pounding, ears ringing and a nasty taste in my mouth." Trying to reenter civilian life over

the next four years was nearly impossible. Lack of concentration and flashbacks cost him two jobs. The anger and stress cost him his marriage. He spent months in and out of VA hospitals seeking help, but nothing worked.

Andrew finally found help in a program offered by the Wounded Warrior Project. In this 12 month program, wounded soldiers receive rehabilitative care for the mind, body and spirit and are aided in a successful transition from military service. The culmination of the program is an internship with a local Jacksonville employer.

To help them excel in this last phase of their healing, Dignity U Wear provides each participant with a brand new suit. Students are fitted with business suits provided by Men's Wearhouse and funded by donors to Dignity U Wear. "We feel that the Wounded Warrior Project is a perfect match for our mission of restoring hope, dignity and self-esteem," said Bob Bryan, executive director for Dignity U Wear. "We are proud to be supporting this important effort that is helping the men and women who protect our country."



"This is the first suit I have ever owned," Coughlan said. He wore his new suit on an internship interview with the Jacksonville Jaguars. "It gave me a powerful

feeling," he said. "I knew that I looked good and would perform well on the interview."

In December, Andrew will head home where he and his wife plan to remarry. "We know now that our divorce was a mistake," he said. "We didn't understand the symptoms of PTSD."

To support Suits for Soldiers, please contact Genelle Thomas at **904-636-9455** or **gthomas@dignityuwear.org**.

## Message from Bob Bryan

### Executive Director

Most of us have many fond memories that revolve around clothes. Remember shopping for new school clothes when you were a kid? Or the prom dress that your Mom made for you? The first suit for a new job out of college; a new outfit after losing 20 pounds or your daughter standing before you in her wedding dress?

In this newsletter you will read about a soldier being fitted for the first suit he has ever owned as he fights his way back to a normal life after being wounded in Iraq.

You will learn about the hope that new clothes gave to a woman who left an abusive relationship to start a new, safe life for her child.

And you will discover how a new suit of clothes can pull a homeless man up after he has been pushed down for a long time.

Dignity U Wear played a part in all of these stories and in so many thousands more every day. Few people I meet have a good understanding of the breadth of our work and how we can reach so many people to bring them new hope, and restore their dignity and self-esteem. When you see just how important brand new clothes can be through the stories of people whose lives are changed, you will know how a new outfit can make a real difference.



It all happens through our network of over 300 agencies across all 50 states that deliver clothes to people in need in their local communities.

Agencies that serve children, the elderly, the homeless, battered women and wounded soldiers. We provide these agencies with brand new clothes so they can provide their clients with new hope at the start of a brand new life.

It's a simple thing, really. But our work is critical to those we serve. If you are interested in learning more about how you can personally get involved, go to [www.dignityuwear.org](http://www.dignityuwear.org) or call me at **904-636-9455**.



## Suited for Success

**A suit may not make the man, but it does make a difference when he's looking for a job.**

Jackie Carter is confident that his new suit will help him move up and out of homelessness. "I am a bright guy and ready to work. I know how to network and conduct a job search," Carter

said. "Having a nice looking, new suit, shirt and tie lets me project the image of who I know I am, not the image that people associate with homelessness."

Carter quit his job to start a home renovation and repair business just before the housing market crashed. "I couldn't have picked a worse time," he said. "As time went on, I lost my car and had to

sell all of my tools to try to make ends meet." Eventually, he was evicted from his apartment and turned to City Rescue Mission for shelter.

Carter learned about Suited for Success, an agency that provides interview-appropriate suits and accessories to disadvantaged men seeking employment. Dignity U Wear provides the agency with brand new suits, shirts, ties and other accessories.

"Dignity U Wear has been an absolute blessing to help me meet the growing demand," said Shara Mondy, the president and founder of Suited for Success. "I'm servicing up to 20 new clients per day."

Mondy's clients come to her through referrals from many

agencies like City Rescue Mission. "I fit suits for men who are completing job readiness programs and are ready to begin interviewing for jobs," she explained. "The new suits are a critical tool they need to start the process."

"For a man who's been through a rough period, a new suit comes with a new attitude," Mondy said. "As we start shopping and I'm trying things on them, they just start standing up tall, and after a while, the head they've been holding down, it comes up."

"There's a stigma attached to the word homeless," Carter said. "People think all homeless people are drug addicts or mentally ill. But there are good people out there that just need help from those who can."



## New Hope through New Clothes

It was the love of her child that finally gave Loraine\* the courage to leave the abusive relationship she had been living

in for seven years. One evening her husband called to tell her he had just lost his job. "He was furious and I knew that when he got home he would find a reason to take his anger out on me," she said. Suddenly, she knew she could not subject herself and her child to his abuse anymore. Without stopping to pack a suitcase, she swept up her son and left before he could get home.

They spent that night in her car. The next day, with nothing but the clothes on their backs, she and her son entered a battered women's shelter where she began to build a new life for them. "I had left everything behind and I felt overwhelmed," Loraine said. "I will never forget how relieved I was when the woman at the shelter led me to a clothing closet where I could pick out new clothes for myself and my son."

Harbor House of Central Florida provides temporary safe shelter, counseling, and supportive direction for individuals who are experiencing abuse in their intimate relationships. "Clothing is an enormous tool on the road to recovery and building self-esteem for our clients," said Jessie Motley, developmental officer at Harbor House. "Many of our residents enter shelter with nothing but the clothes on their backs or worse yet, come directly from the hospital and have nothing but a paper gown."

Helping families get back on their feet and regain their independence often requires helping them find work, which requires professional clothing. As one resident stated, "I came to the shelter with nothing, but Harbor House was able to give me clothes, food and everything I needed to get back on my feet. Having appropriate clothes to wear during my job hunt was a big part of being able to move on and move up."

"Our partnership with Dignity U Wear enables us to provide clients with new clothing instead of donated used garments," Motley said. "The new clothes feel less like a handout and more like a gift."

\* *fictitious name*



### Fast Facts

- Dignity U Wear Foundation, Inc. was founded in April 2000 by philanthropist and Holocaust survivor, Henri Landwirth. "I know what it means not to have clothes – to be stripped of dignity and to give up all hope," says Henri. Henri founded

Dignity U Wear to create real change in the lives of children and adults in need - change that restores hope and self-esteem. That is why only brand new clothes are distributed. And at no cost to the recipients.

- Brand new clothing is donated to us by manufacturers, distributors and retailers on a regular

basis. Many of the largest apparel industry partners including Phillips Van Heusen, Fishman & Tobin, Cato, Children's Apparel Network and Stein Mart donate excess inventory, cancellations and seasonal merchandise. In 2009, 301 companies donated \$10,691,726 worth of brand new clothing to people in need through Dignity U Wear.

- Dignity U Wear provides clothes to individuals

through a network of 300+ nonprofit social service agencies in all 50 states.

- Thanks to our cost-effective business model and great industry partners, Dignity U Wear maintains a fundraising and management cost ratio below 3%!



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Dignity U Wear • Brand New Clothes for a Brand New Life

## Organize a Mini Event to raise money for Dignity U Wear!

**Small deeds can make a BIG difference!**

It doesn't require a lot of time or money to make a huge difference in the lives of children and adults who are dealing with some of life's biggest challenges. As they struggle to deal with critical health issues, loss of a job, starting over after a

devastating fire, or escaping domestic violence, receiving brand new clothes may be just that one thing that creates a bright spot in their day.

You have the power to make that happen and have some fun at the same time.

Dignity U Wear has a vast and strong network of suppliers who are willing to donate clothes and local agencies with clients who need them. We need your help to provide the funding to get the clothes from the manufacturers and to the agencies!

We have created the opportunity for individuals and local groups to organize mini-events to raise money for this work. You can have fun and help us get clothes to people who need them at the same time! Consider one of these ideas:

- **Coordinate a neighborhood garage sale.**  
Clean out the closets and turn the proceeds into a tax-deductible donation.
- **Invite friends to a clothes-raising party!**  
Ask for donations as a cover charge. Have your own silent auction or raffle prizes.
- **Raise the stakes in your own weekend golf game.**  
Give your friends an excuse to play for a good cause!
- **Host a neighborhood or organizational car wash.**  
Get your children and their friends involved in philanthropy.
- **Involve your colleagues at work or school**  
Ask friends to give up one to-go coffee and provide a new coat for a child instead.
- **Create a Campaign for Dignity**  
Choose a local organization that needs clothes and coordinate your campaign for local impact.

Any amount raised will make a BIG difference and help us change lives. So round up your friends and work colleagues and let the good deeds roll! Go to [www.dignityuwear.org](http://www.dignityuwear.org) or call **904-636-9455** to find out how to start your own campaign.

