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'THE JOY FACTOR'

New York's Your Trike Spirit shop gives veterans a way to get fit and stay active

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ

If you haven't ridden a tricycle since you were four years old, you may not know what you're missing. A New York businessman is hoping to bring back some of the fun of those carefree times for today's wounded veterans.

"Recumbent trikes are not only a great way to have fun and stay active, but for those without a lot of options to keep moving and participating in an active lifestyle, they could be essential," explains Gregory Davis, owner and operator of Your Trike Spirit, a recumbent trike shop in Deer Park, N.Y. "One such

group is our wounded veterans. We are very dedicated to helping these men and women to get fit and stay active, and find enjoyment in life with recumbent trikes."

Davis has been working with veterans since he founded Your Trike Spirit three years ago, and this year he hopes to give away 10 trikes to wounded veterans through a grant from the Thanks Troops Foundation, a charitable organization that provides grants for recreational equipment or services to both active duty personnel and veterans who have been injured in combat.



Gregory Davis

"A veteran came to me in the first year with a grant, we helped him get a trike," Davis recalls. "Later, I connected with Thanks Troops, and last year we received a grant to give away five trikes. This year, we have been the recipient of a grant to give away 10 trikes, allowing us to help many more of our returning soldiers enjoy the benefits of a recumbent trike."

Davis has experienced firsthand the health benefits and rehabilitative power of recumbent trikes, having retired with a disability after a long career in retail sales and

Recumbent trikes can aid those unable to ride traditional upright bicycles.

management. "Being a person with 'mobility issues' myself—although I'm not a veteran—I have a heart for what recumbent trikes can do for wounded veterans, some with wounds you cannot see," he notes. "In addition to providing much needed—and wanted—mobility, they also give a great feeling of joy and hope. I call it 'the joy factor' because it greatly enhances a feeling of well-being."

Davis has been working with the U.S. Veterans Affairs' Northport Medical Center on Long Island to identify veterans who both need and want the trikes, with an emphasis on "need."

"Essentially, any wounded veteran from any branch of service who can demonstrate a need based on certain criteria is eligible," he explains. "We want to make sure the trike is not just a 'recreational vehicle,' but that it is used as a wanted and needed method of rehabilitation."

Davis says recumbent trikes can have tremendous benefits, helping users both physically and mentally. "Recumbent trikes are for everyone!" he asserts. "They are fun, comfortable, and easy to ride. They can be great alternatives for folks who can no longer ride traditional 'upright' bicycles, for a variety of reasons, to have fun, get active, and get mobile again. And especially for those dealing with a variety of illnesses, they can provide great hope and a sense of wellbeing, which can aid in a healing journey. This is especially true for our wounded veterans who very often have extremely limited options. For them, recumbent trikes can be life-saving. We at Your Trike Spirit are very excited to play a small role in helping that to happen." 🏠

For more information, visit yourtrikespirit.com, or, to apply for the program, email trikesforvets@gmail.com.