

For Families of Active Military (FFAM) began in 2006 in response to an increasing awareness of the hardships that our military families experience and the desire to give back to those who sacrifice so much on our country's behalf. Over the course of 10 years the organization has grown from its two founders into a community-based organization that coordinates hundreds of volunteers to assist military families throughout our state.

The dream of The Re-Entry Lodge was born about 4 -5 years ago. The driving force behind this dream was the high percentage of alcohol, drug, spousal abuse and divorce rates, in our military families. But, more importantly, it was the high rate of suicides between Veterans and active duty – although the active duty are down to 1 or so a day, there were 8 per day back in 2008. We are not a clinic, but a place/a home where our military families may spend up to 1 week at no charge to re-acclimate with one another after deployment or training. You never know what or who will make a difference in a person's life.

We opened our pilot program for The Re-Entry Lodge in January 2016 in Lake Arrowhead and to date have received rave reviews from Command and our military families who have visited. Any active military family, from any place within the United States, may experience The Lodge, at no charge to them.

*“I have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan 2 times each, 3 deployments to Japan and 1 to Korea. My daughter almost died when she was 3 years old while I was deployed to Afghanistan. I don't sleep and my wife and I are trying to adjust to each other again. After each deployment it takes months to get in the groove”. Sgt. Smith*

After only three days at The Re-Entry Lodge, Sgt. Smith slept through the night for the first time in months and his family was able to spend quality time together.

The family has a private unit upstairs with a fully equipped kitchen, a small deck with table and chairs, washer & dryer, 2 bedrooms with 2 full bathrooms, living room, dining area and fireplace.

Currently, we (Eddie and myself) are the caretakers when a family is visiting. We are busy lining up additional caretakers, some of whom will come from our Advisory Board. We prepare a cooked breakfast each morning and spend time getting to know them. Sharing their stories with us seems to be therapeutic for them. The family is then on their own for the day and evening to spend as they wish. We give lots of ideas on what they might want to explore. We also have a membership to the Lake Arrowhead Resort gym they may utilize for any of the exercise classes offered, as well as the gym, pool and Jacuzzi.

It is our hope that we can buy a home (or that someone donates one) within the next 2 years. We're looking for a bigger place with a yard to allow a play area for children and to allow two families to visit at a time.