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Training and
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Workouts & Next Events



WELCOME TO PUCHOG

What is PUCHOG?

Players Using Competition Helping Others Grow, Inc. (PUCHOG) is a non-profit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of wounded veterans and their supporters. We bring awareness to the challenges they face by organizing tournaments, skate events, and other community activities that raise funds for their continued support. Our organization is entirely volunteer-run, and all proceeds and donations from every event go directly to supporting our teams.

PUCHOG moves *beyond the ice* with a wide variety of events designed to connect, empower, and uplift our veterans, their families, and their supporters.

Welcome to Our Quarterly Newsletter We're thrilled to have you with us!

The goal of our newsletter is to:

- Highlight skate times and locations
- Share resources for disabled veterans, families, and supporters
- Provide updates on equipment needs
- Spotlight our PUCHOG members and volunteers
- Keep you informed about upcoming events and important announcements. In this edition, we showcase team highlights from our recent Family Skate event and introduce you to our **Player of the Quarter**. Stay in the know with our featured articles, updates, and everything coming up next — you won't want to miss it!

PUCHOG INC'S 11TH ANNUAL HOCKEY FOR HEROES

The 11th Hockey For Heroes Tournament powered across the ice May 17-18—brought athletes, veterans, families, and supporters together for a weekend of teamwork, camaraderie, and purpose. **Tournament Divisions: Upper Division** – High-intensity play from teams giving their all on every shift **Lower Division** – Competitive matchups built on heart, hustle, and unity **Draft Division*** – Where teamwork starts from the very first pick!



*In the Draft Division, players enter a draft-style selection where goalies choose their squad, building teams that reflect fairness, strategy, and the spirit of service. We work hard to keep skill balanced across every lineup. *If turnout is high, additional Draft Divisions may be created—though this hasn't happened in past years.

Game Format:
Every team is guaranteed **three games on Saturday and Sunday**, keeping the ice packed with energy, determination, and the spirit of giving back.



Hockey For Heroes Tournament 2025

Meet the Coach Thomas Kelly (TK)

This quarter, we're excited to shine the spotlight on PUCHOG's very own **Coach Thomas Kelly**, better known around the rink as **TK**.

Position: Most (if it needs doing, TK's probably already there)

Hometown: Hershey, PA

Joined the Military At: 22

MOS / Job Titles: 18Z / F / B – 91B

(Let's just say Coach's military experience covers more than a few lanes!)

Current Occupation: Heavy Equipment Operator

Years Playing Hockey: 60 years — and still lacing them up with the same passion

Why I Play Hockey:

"Good question!!"

We'll take that as code for *once hockey grabs you, it never lets go.*

What Drew Me to PUCHOG:

"The opportunity to work with veteran hockey players."

TK jumped in with both feet and has been supporting fellow vets on and off the ice ever since.

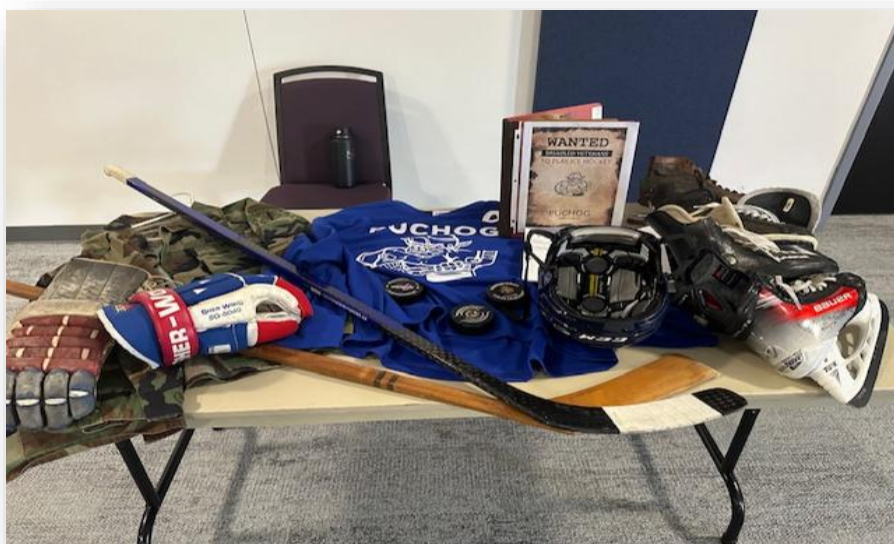
Something Interesting:

Coach has spent most of his life constantly on the move — rarely staying in one place for more than a few years. A life lived in motion builds resilience, perspective, and more stories than we could fit in one newsletter.

Favorite Quote:

"Can't fix stupid."

(According to TK, there's a long list... we didn't ask for names. 😊)



Pennsylvania's New Veteran-Employment Investments (2024–2025)

These initiatives were created specifically to support veterans and military spouses facing job loss, career transitions, or underemployment.

● 1. The \$400,000 Veteran Employment Initiative (2025)

Purpose: Connect PA veterans and spouses to competitive, stable careers.

What it funds:

Job matching with veteran-friendly employers

Resume and skills-translation support (military → civilian)

Training program referrals

Direct assistance with employment barriers (transportation, certifications, etc.)

Who it helps:

Veterans, active-duty transitioning service members, National Guard/Reserves, and spouses.

Where to access:

➔ Pennsylvania CareerLink Veterans Services

You can visit in person or connect online:

<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov>

Ask for a DVOP (Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist) — they handle veteran job support directly.

● 2. \$600,000 in Grants for Veteran Workforce Training (Late 2024)

Purpose: Help veterans transition from military/federal service into civilian careers—especially after layoffs or changes at the VA.

Programs funded include:

IT and cyber certifications

Heavy equipment operator training

CDL and transportation jobs

Advanced manufacturing

Skilled trades (electrical, HVAC, carpentry)

Many programs cover tuition 100% for eligible veterans.

Where to access:

These grants were awarded to workforce-development organizations across PA.

Veterans can access the funded training through:

➔ Workforce Development Boards

➔ Local CareerLink training programs

➔ Nonprofits such as OVR, GI Bill alternative programs, and veteran job-transition groups.

I can look up the closest funded programs near Camp Hill / Cumberland County if you want.

● 3. PA Offices That Provide Priority Veteran Employment Support

★ DVOP Specialists

One-on-one help for job seekers

Resume building

Interview prep

Skills translation (MOS → civilian jobs)

Referral to education or medical benefits

★ LVER Representatives (Local Veteran Employment Representatives)

They work not with you, but with businesses to create veteran-friendly job openings.

Together, DVOP + LVER = faster pathways to job placement.

You can access both through:

[→ PA CareerLink](#) (in every county)

● 4. PA Increased Hiring Preference for Former Federal Employees

If a veteran lost a federal job (IRS, VA, DOD, etc.), PA now gives:

Hiring preference in state government roles

Bonus points on civil service scoring

Faster interview scheduling

This is especially relevant with the VA's 30,000-position national reduction.

● 5. Statewide Support for Military Spouses

Spouses often face job disruption from frequent moves.

New support includes:

Employment coaching

License transfer assistance

Re-credentialing support

Below is a comprehensive list of all the free organizations available to help. I have broken this down into education, certifications and training and resume assistance available Free to veterans.

Common Education Programs

Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33): For veterans who have served after September 10, 2001, this program helps with tuition and fees, housing, and books at public and private institutions. It can also be transferred to family members.

Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB): This benefit is available to active-duty and some reservists and requires a contribution from the service member's pay. It provides a monthly education benefit for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA): This program provides monthly payments to help eligible dependents of veterans pursue education or training.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E): Also known as Chapter 31, this program provides job training, education, and employment services for veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship: This scholarship can be used to supplement the Post-9/11 GI Bill for programs in science, technology, engineering, and math.

VA Chapter 36 (Personalized Career Planning and Guidance): Offers free educational and career guidance for eligible veterans and their dependents.

Onward to Opportunity (O2O): A career training program from the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families that includes certification and job support services at no cost.

Veterans Transition Support (VTS): Provides one year of free access to Coursera.org, which includes a vast library of courses and specializations.

Technology and Certifications:

NPower: Provides free tech training, professional development, and job placement assistance for veterans and their spouses.

Microsoft Software and Systems Academy (MSSA): Offers free training for the military and veteran community in in-demand technology roles.

Cloud Veterans: A non-profit that offers free cloud training, certification preparation, and job placement services for honorably discharged veterans.

Cisco Networking Academy: Provides free access to networking and cyber training.

Microsoft Learn for Veterans: Offers free entry-level cloud and IT training.

IBM SkillsBuild: Provides free access to cybersecurity, data science, and professional development tools.

Specialized and other programs

Federal Virtual Training Environment (Fedvte): Offers free online courses.

FEMA Independent Study Program (FEMA ISP): Provides over 200 free, self-paced courses, with some leading to FEMA professional certification.

Warrior Rising: Offers a free online course for service-disabled veteran entrepreneurs, sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

VA Health Professional Education (VHA TRAIN): A no-cost, accredited training resource for community providers, available 24/7.

Fortinet Veterans Program: Offers training and certification opportunities.

Oracle Cloud: Offers free training through its veteran initiative.

Career Recon: <https://careerrecon.com/career-help-free-courses-veterans-military-spouses/>

Salesforce Military gives veterans and spouses free training, exams, certifications, AI upskilling and 1:1 career coaching for those high-paying tech jobs. No coding or tech experience necessary.

Government and public resources

USAJobs.gov: The primary site for searching and applying for federal government jobs, with specific information on how to use your military experience and claim veterans' preference.

U.S. Department of Labor (VETS): <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets> Provides comprehensive career information, resources for finding a job, and information on programs like Skill Bridge, which allows active-duty service members to gain civilian work experience.

My Next Move for Veterans: <https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/> An interactive tool from the Department of Labor that helps veterans explore civilian career options based on their military experience.

CareerOne Stop: <https://www.careeronestop.org/> A U.S. Department of Labor website that offers resources for veterans, including a Veteran and Military Transition Center.

Feds Hire Vets: <https://www.opm.gov/fedshirevets/> A site from the Office of Personnel Management specifically designed to help veterans navigate the federal hiring process.

Non-Profit and Private Organizations

Hire Heroes USA: A non-profit that provides career coaching, resume assistance, and job search support to veterans and their families. Hiring Our Heroes: <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/> (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation): A nationwide initiative that holds hiring events and provides digital tools to connect veterans with employers

Recruit Military: <https://recruitmilitary.com/> A firm that connects veterans, service members, and their spouses with employers, offering job search tools and career resources.

HireVeterans:<https://hireveterans.com/> Connects servicemembers directly with employers through its website.

VetJobs: <https://vetjobs.org/>: Offers career training and job placement services for veterans and military members.

Military.com: <https://www.military.com/> As one of the largest military and veteran membership organizations, it provides a career center with job search tools, resume posting, and networking tips.

FourBlock Connect; FourBlock is a nonprofit that prepares veterans and military spouses for civilian careers through in-person and online programs <https://connect.fourblock.org/>

Paralyzed Veterans of America's Veterans Career Program (VCP): Offers job-seeking assistance and resources for veterans with spinal-cord injuries, including help with workplace accommodations.<https://pva.org/find-support/veterans-career-program/>

LinkedIn for veterans: <https://socialimpact.linkedin.com/programs/veterans> The professional networking site has dedicated programs and resources for veterans to help with networking and job searches

Wounded Warrior Project Wounded Warrior Project – Warriors to Work

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs> Program Purpose:

Warriors to Work is a career counseling and job placement program run by the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). It helps veterans and service members who were wounded, ill, or injured during military service transition successfully into civilian careers.

Supporting Veterans in the Workforce and Beyond



NON-Scale Victories (NSV)

NSV's: Tracking non-scale victories Some examples of non-scale victories include:

- Drink 8 glasses of water a day.
- Saved money by cooking at home instead of ordering takeout.
- Increased energy or better mood.
- The clothes fit better.
- Walking instead of watching TV or scrolling on your phone.
- Added veggies to dinner every night.
- Can walk further or faster than when you started.

The benefits of strength training

Many people assume the main reason to incorporate strength training into their routine is to tone the body. While strength training increases muscle mass and can lead to tighter, toned muscles, it's far from the only benefit.

Strength-training exercises improve bone density and increase flexibility in the joints. Building strength in your muscles also helps improve balance, speed up the metabolism, and burn calories. Muscle mass decreases naturally with age, so as you get older incorporating strength-training workouts into your regimen becomes even more important. Strength training has also been largely associated with preventing injury.

For other awesome free workout weightloss and health and wellness programs, and articles Free Workouts & Advice and free workout routines checkout <https://www.muscledstrength.com/workout-routines> Choose a workout Category that meets your needs



Workouts For Men



Workouts For Women



Muscle Building



Fat Loss



Increase Strength



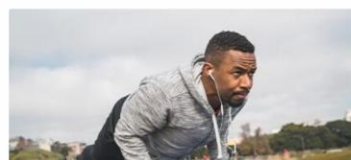
Ab Workouts



Full Body



Sports Performance



Upcoming PUCHOG Events:

Military Family Ice Skate
Sat Dec 27 2025 1700 (5:00 p.m.)

Gun Raffle January 10-19 Tickets \$30 per person or 4 for \$100