



*The following remarks were given by Ashley Murray, wife of Capt. James Murray, at the 4th Northwest Equine Fashion Show & Benefit Auction on April 28, 2018. The Murray family participated in the 2017 Warrior Family Retreat.*



It is an honor to stand before you and share how we have come full circle. In 2017 we had the opportunity to attend the retreat we didn't know we needed. It became the first step toward a breakthrough in our marriage. We signed up because we thought we could help others and because our daughter loves horses. We left feeling filled up and changed ourselves.

The staff and volunteers were amazing. As a chaplain family we provide religious support and encouragement to families. We connect them with resources and have been on a number of retreats and host Strong Bonds marriage retreats where Jim teaches. In over 17 years of

military ministry, I haven't seen or been provided with anything like the Warrior Family Retreat.

The location is disarming and relaxing, the staff engaging and compassionate, the volunteers poured out their service on us (wonderful food, friendly childcare, refreshing conversation).

The activities we went through and the sessions we experienced were a deeper level of awareness to needs. The competent counselors and therapists walked us through thoughts and feelings brought up in the incredible sessions with the horses.

In one particular couples session was the start of a breakthrough for us as husband and wife. We were given a halter to put on the horse and lead it through a series of obstacles we put together. I have a little experience with horses and so at first Jim and I struggled with tying the



lead rope on. Jim handed the lead to me and said you know what you are doing, go ahead. I was rusty but was able to be confident in knowing that my partner supported and trusted me. So, I thought back to how to tie the lead and put it on as correctly as I could. We were able to lead our horse through the obstacles we had, finishing with the obstacle we titled as "moving." That will literally take place this coming week with packers coming to our house.

We've been involved in countless retreats, and this experience you can't teach in a classroom. It's a sacred moment that is etched in our shared memories and has helped keep me going in this gauntlet of finishing this assignment well. Thank you for making this possible for our military families.

I asked to have the following Proverb in the slides for this evening "The generous will prosper, those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." Thank you for your role in refreshing us, my hope is that you will prosper and be refreshed as well.