

## Changing the Paradigm: The effects of nature and the healing of our veterans in the outdoors

### Moderator:

#### Kathleen Koch



After facing down presidents, snipers, hurricanes and her own teenaged daughters, award-winning journalist and best-selling author Kathleen Koch knows a few things about survival and resilience. Kathleen shares her knowledge, experience and compassion with audiences who want to succeed and thrive, even when the going gets tough.

Kathleen draws on her 18 years as a correspondent for CNN, where she not only covered the White House, Pentagon, Capital Hill and State Department, but aviation and just about every disaster imaginable. Her work covering Hurricane Katrina and her two documentaries on her hometown's recovery from the storm earned her a Peabody Award and a New York Festivals gold medal. Kathleen garnered another New York Festivals gold medal and a bronze award for investigative reporting from the New York Association of Black Journalists for a CNN report in which she revealed the apparent murder of a young African American inmate by guards at a Mississippi jail.

Kathleen shares insights she developed while writing her book, *Rising from Katrina: How My Mississippi Hometown Lost It All and Found What Mattered*. The poignant story of loss, transformation and recovery made both the Amazon and Southern Indie Bestseller lists. It also won the gold award for Best Nonfiction in the Southeast Region from Independent Publishers and an honorable mention for Book of the Year in the regional category from ForeWord Reviews.

Kathleen has volunteered personally doing Hurricane Sandy relief and has started a project linking mayors from the Gulf Coast with mayors in the Sandy-impacted area to share lessons learned and speed recovery.

### Speakers:



#### Tim Brown, Project Rebirth Senior Volunteer



Tim Brown is a retired, decorated 20-year FDNY firefighter, and a survivor of the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, a first responder to the 1993 terrorist attack on the WTC and a veteran of the New York Urban Search & Rescue Task Force team that responded to the 1995 terrorist attack on the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City. Tim lost 93 of his friends on Sept. 11th, including his two best friends.

His last assignment in the FDNY was Rescue Co. 3. He served several years in Mayor Giuliani's Office of Emergency Management. Tim spent two years on special detail to the federal government, serving as a special assistant to the Secretary of Health and Human Services during the Anthrax terrorist attacks in 2001-2002, earning his Top Secret government clearance while helping to build command and control into the Department. He

also responded to the Station Nightclub fire in Rhode Island which killed 100 people. Tim helped the Governor manage the aftermath and stayed on to recommend changes to their emergency management system.

Tim has been a leader in defending the memory of those lost on 9/11 at Ground Zero. He has become a media commentator on the subject and has appeared on all major news channels including FOX News, CNN, MSNBC, CNBC and dozens of local news programs. Tim is a sought-after voice on the subject and has appeared in many documentaries. He co-founded theBravest.com, Inc. and EmergencyStream.com with his brother, Providence, RI firefighter Chris Brown.

One of the documentaries Tim participated in is “Rebirth,” a difficult and honest feature-length film that follows 5 people for over 7 years and documents their journeys through grief, resilience and hope. Tim has worked with the non-profit organization that owns the film, Project Rebirth, to develop programs that target different groups that deal with an inordinate amount of loss, including the military, first responders and the funeral home industry. In fact, the film was designated important enough on the subject of grief that it was shown at the White House at the request of Vice President Biden who suffered great personal loss earlier in his life. Tim also volunteers with two outdoor veteran organizations, Ride2Recovery and Carry the Load.



### **Stacy Bare, Director of Sierra Club Outdoors**



Stacy Bare is a climber, mountaineer, and skier. Climbing helped Stacy recover from PTS and readjustment issues from a year in Baghdad as a Civil Affairs Team Leader in the Army. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star for merit and a combat action badge in Baghdad as well as being named one of National Geographic’s Adventurers of the Year for 2014.

### **Joshua Brandon, Military Organizer, Sierra Club Outdoors**



Joshua Brandon is currently the Military Organizer for Sierra Club Outdoors where he pursues his passion of leading the military community in the outdoors in a variety of roles ranging from mountaineering and therapy to conservation and advocacy. Originally from Cleveland Ohio, Joshua is a graduate of The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina. He served as an Army Infantry Officer from 2002 to 2012, to include three combat tours in Iraq where he was awarded the Silver Star and two Bronze Stars with Valor Device, and he is a distinguished member of the 506th Infantry Regiment "Currahee."

In 2007, Joshua was diagnosed with PTSD resulting from his combat experiences, and he has since battled with the effects of PTSD and TBI through his life long journey in the outdoors.

In 2010 he founded the Hound Summit Team, a veteran and combat wounded mountaineering team, and in 2013 he joined Veterans Expeditions as a board of director. He also serves as the American Alpine Club's Cascade Section Policy and Conservation Advisor.



### **Chad Spangler, National Director, Outward Bound for Veterans**



Outward Bound for Veterans helps returning service members and recent veterans readjust to life at home through powerful wilderness courses that draw on the healing benefit of teamwork and challenge through use of the natural world.

Servicemen and veterans take part in wilderness expeditions that are physically, mentally and emotionally challenging in order to build the self-confidence, pride, trust and communication skills necessary to successfully return to their families, employers and communities following wartime service. These expeditions purposefully scaffold wartime experiences (carrying heavy packs, sore shoulders, rubbery legs, sleeping out, strange noises, sweat, dirt, frustration and anger) with authentic achievements to create positive emotional and mental outcomes.

Wilderness activities are used as metaphors for daily life experiences in the pursuit of individual and group excellence, illuminating how the support and collaboration needed to meet Outward Bound goals can positively impact participants' interactions with others at home. Many veterans experienced courage, brotherhood and a real sense of power and competence while in combat. Outward Bound gives Veterans and service members the opportunity to re-experience these strengths in themselves in a different context, thus helping them to transition back to civilian life.