

# Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield

## Wendy Porter



Wendy Porter has a tender heart of compassion that seeks to bring value to every individual. An impassioned champion for persons who are marginalized and forgotten, Wendy zealously pursues means to activate hope, significance, and support in their lives.

Wendy loves our country and our veterans who make formidable sacrifices for our

freedom. The granddaughter of two WWII veterans and the daughter of a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran, Wendy founded the Wounded Heroes Fund in 2008 after experiencing the effect that war had on her father, and the ungrateful homecoming he received. Wendy wanted to ensure that this did not happen to others who are fighting for our country. With her intrepid spirit and indomitable heart for veterans, Wendy took action.

As executive director and founder of the Wounded Heroes Fund, Wendy advocates for Kern County veterans as they reintegrate into the community. Through the Wounded Heroes Fund, returning veterans receive financial assistance, including custom homes modified to their physical needs, personal and family assistance, ongoing support, relationship building, veteran networks, and mentoring. The nonprofit offers a broad spectrum of programs, free of cost to veterans and families. Veterans have access to date nights with childcare provided, outdoor adventures with their peers, couples retreats, financial seminars, and family building.

Wendy dedicates endless hours to respond to the emerging needs and concerns of veterans. More recently she has focused on suicide prevention—an alarming and critical issue among veterans. Wendy also assists and supports veterans as a founding member and active board member of the Kern County Veterans Collaborative. She serves as guardian on Honor Flight Kern County and set up a program that pairs a current conflict wounded veteran as a guardian to a WWII veteran. Additionally, Wendy collaborates with the California Veterans Assistance Foundation, Armed Forces Support Riders, and M.A.R.E., where she created a program to help wounded veterans and their families rebuild their family unit through therapy with horses.

Wendy's other paramount passion is children with special needs. She and her husband Mike have been blessed with a precious daughter. "We have learned so much from Chloe and her journey to find her way in this world. She is so beautiful inside and out. The love she has in her is amazing! It kills me when I see people giving her dirty looks." Always one to look at the bright side with relentless determination to facilitate improvement, Wendy seeks to make this world a better and kinder place for persons with special needs through education.

Born in Bakersfield and raised in Oakdale, Wendy returned to her hometown and earned a bachelor's degree in liberal studies, a teaching credential, and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from California State University, Bakersfield. She took great delight in teaching kindergarten for nine years in Delano before the birth of Chloe.

Wendy and Mike love cooking for large family gatherings with their children Laura, Bryan, Kristin, and Chloe, and grandchildren Porter and Easton. They enjoy traveling, particularly to Italy, and sharing their extensive wine collection with family and friends.

In her unwavering commitment to improve the well-being of veterans and children with special needs, Wendy's infectious vitality brings to life the best in people and the best in her community. Wesley Barrientos, Wounded Heroes Fund board member and a wounded veteran, deeply appreciates Wendy's positive outlook. "Wendy sees the positive in everything. When Wendy sees a wounded veteran, she doesn't see a person who is broken; she sees their potential. She always finds a way to help. Wendy genuinely cares!"