

## **LifeWaters 2019 FACT Sheet:**

- LifeWaters is a nonprofit, 501.c.3
- LifeWaters specializes in SCUBA diving training for disabled individuals (veterans, civilians, first responders). Any individual with a VA disability or civilian diagnosed with: Spinal Cord Injuries, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, Amputees, Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, and Multiple Traumas and other disabilities may be involved in our scuba training program. The Scuba diving skills are adapted for each disabled diver
- We rely on donations and grants to fund our program
- Our Board members and dive staff are all Volunteers, we occasionally have grant funding to pay the dive instructors, otherwise all of their time and resources are volunteered
- Our program outreach is nationwide and we are a community partner with the Veterans Administration (VA) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)
- Our main office is in St. Louis, MO. We have affiliated dive training centers and Instructors in: Mesa, AZ; Houston, TX; Denver, CO; Dallas, TX; Jupiter Beach, FL; Mermet Springs, IL; and White Bear Lake, MN. We are working on increasing this to more states during 2019-20
- One of the major assets that LifeWaters provides that other adaptive dive agencies do not is the number of LifeWaters volunteers, including Instructors, who are medical professionals and/or First Responders. Dive trips often include physical and occupational therapists, nurses and physicians who volunteer their time to monitor any health concerns which may arise.
- LifeWaters is a Scuba Diving International (SDI) Training Agency offering SDI Scubility Open Water Diver and SDI Scubility Dive Buddy and SDI Scubility Open Water Dive Instructor Training.
- Every course begins with a SDI Discover Scuba Diving Experience
- The Course includes: Academic preparation and review; Confined Water Skill Development and Open Water Certification Dives (locally if possible)
- Dive training is “free” to any disabled divers depending on our grant funding availability and/or donations. However, students may be required to purchase personal diving equipment such as a mask, snorkel and dive booties. There is a \$50 refundable deposit required following your Discover Scuba Experience prior to beginning the online learning course. Should you complete the online learning but drop out of the program in any of the next course requirements the deposit becomes non-refundable so that we can replace the code for the online learning for another person.

- We understand that “life can get in the way”. You have one year less one day to complete your training and certification.
- Friends and Family may also be trained (as they will be diving with their friends or family) at a reasonable cost. This may vary depending on location.
- We accept nearly 100% of applicants who request training. All applicants must have a current physician’s release allowing them to SCUBA dive.
- SDI Scubility Dive Certifications are good for life, however, a refresher course before any dive trip is highly recommended and LifeWaters reserves the right to re-evaluate any divers DB (Dive Buddy) Level at any time and change it should their health status change. If an individual has not been scuba diving in the past year, a refresher course with one of our staff is mandatory
- Scuba Diving is therapeutic and fun! The benefits of scuba include: relaxation, improved mental health, diminished pain, improved mood and less depression, reduced anxiety, increased strength and range of motion, and improved social engagement and support network
- LifeWaters does not pay for any subsequent diving which an individual may want to participate in following their dive instruction and certification
- Travel funding is not included unless there is grant funding from another agency such as Paralyzed Veterans of America, etc...(this is only occasionally). Individuals are encouraged to reach out to other organizations who may assist with their involvement in this program
- We are expanding and gaining instructors regularly and the outpouring of volunteers from the recent article on LifeWaters that the VA sent out in Aug, 2019 will result in an additional 20-30 instructors nationwide allowing us to train more individuals more effectively
- We participate in dive trips to the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta on a regular basis
- We participate in dive trips to Cozumel, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Florida, Roatan and other warm water dive destinations
- Dive trips are never funded by LifeWaters, each diver and volunteer uses their personal resources to join on any trips. For the volunteers, this may be a tax deduction. Please check with your accountant
- SDI Certified Scubility Dive Buddy Volunteers are the core and heart of our program as all of our disabled divers require 1-3 buddies in order to be able to dive. These volunteers donate their vacation time, trip and diving expenses and expertise to take our divers underwater! For instance, a dive trip with 15 disabled divers may require another 45 in support staff and dive buddies!

- LifeWaters always needs additional qualified and certified SDI Scubility Dive Buddies. Each of our disabled divers requires from 1-3 certified dive buddies to go underwater with them for safety reasons. LifeWaters will usually provide this training for you.
- Qualifications to become a SDI Scubility Dive Buddy are:
  - Advanced Diver Certification and 40 dives
  - **OR** Rescue Diver Certification
  - First Aid, CPR, AED training
- Applications and additional paperwork may be obtained by emailing Jill Campbell at [icampbell@lifewaters.org](mailto:icampbell@lifewaters.org)
- Follow us on FaceBook
- LifeWaters intends to begin a program for disabled children ages 10 and above in 2020 providing funding and locations issues can be solved.