

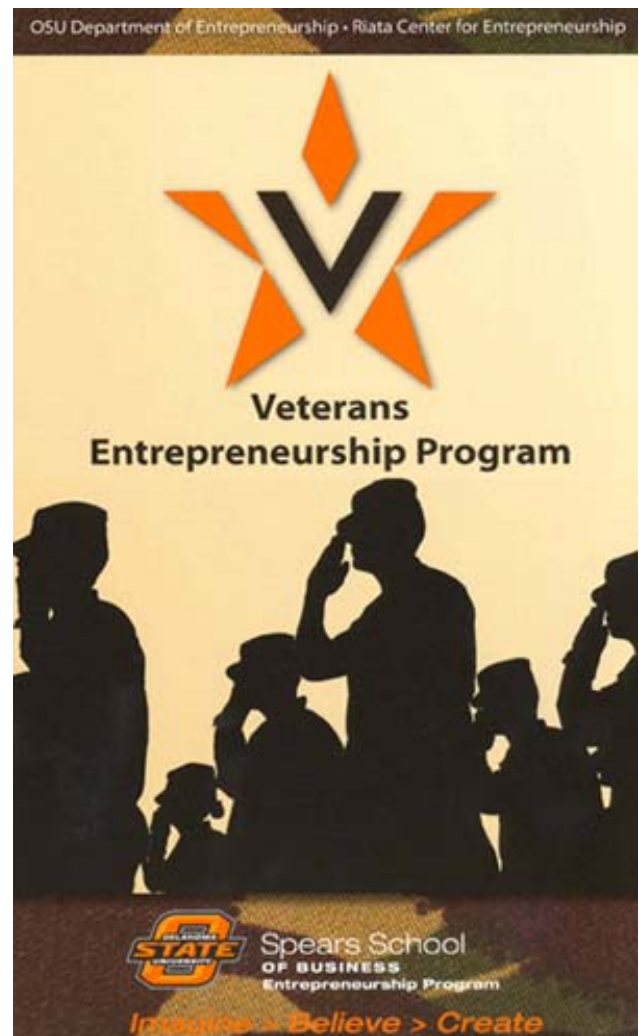
## Volunteer Mentors Needed to Support the Veterans with Disabilities Entrepreneurship Program

By LORI ROBERTS, *GasserOnline Correspondent*

*Service Above Self.* As Rotarians, it is our motto. It is our goal. It is the ideal. We have pins, cards, and posters to remind us. We are justifiably proud of the service we can provide to our Club and local and international communities. There are others, however, who also epitomize the creed. Think, if you will, of American Veterans. Although not their motto *per se*, they have in fact lived the motto. And, for many who became disabled while in service to our Country, they do not need external reminders. They carry their reminders as part of their very being every day.

On January 6, 2010, Steve Wood announced that the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Tulsa approved the Oklahoma State University's *Veterans with Disabilities Entrepreneurship Program* as a Club Project. This program is specifically for American Veterans with a service connected disability resulting from participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom and/or Operation Enduring Freedom. Applicants were required to demonstrate a strong interest in entrepreneurship and the desire and commitment to start a business. The application process was open to Veterans across the country and dozens of applications were received. Thirty-six deserving Veterans have been selected to participate in the eight-day residency in Stillwater, Oklahoma from January 30-February 6, 2010. During this time, the Veterans will receive intense training in the "nuts and bolts" of business ownership through workshops and lessons. In addition, before coming to Stillwater, the Participants will undergo approximately seven weeks of self-study facilitated by online discussion. After they leave Stillwater, they will participate in a twelve month ongoing mentorship from O.S.U. entrepreneurship experts.

Rotary Club of Tulsa seeks additional Volunteer Mentors to associate with these Veterans. The Rotary Mentors will personally meet the Veterans during their residency period and provide ten months of ongoing mentorship through convenient methods such as e-mail and telephone communications. The Rotary Mentors will provide advice and guidance from their own experiences, but will also provide the Veterans with access and connection to other individuals within Rotary with specialized experiences. In addition, the Rotary Mentors will assist the Veterans in making a connection with a home club Rotary Mentor. This outreach effort provides our Club with an opportunity to support and connect with Veterans from all branches of the service. In addition, we will be able to assist O.S.U.'s efforts to take this program to other universities and Rotary Clubs around the country and serve as a national catalyst for leading edge American Veterans programs.



A "kick-off" meeting will be held on **Monday, January 25, 2010, at 5:30 p.m.**, at the **O.S.U. Tulsa Campus, North Classroom Building #227**, to introduce the Veterans Entrepreneurship Program team from O.S.U., discuss the Mentor's role, and answer questions from those interested in serving as Mentors. If you or someone you know might be interested in serving as a Mentor, please attend this meeting or visit [www.entrepreneurship.okstate.edu/vep](http://www.entrepreneurship.okstate.edu/vep) for more information. For questions, contact Steve Wood at [steve.wood@okstate.edu](mailto:steve.wood@okstate.edu), 688-6176; Eric Culver at [culaw@hotmail.com](mailto:culaw@hotmail.com), 625-2832; or John Stava at [john@stava.com](mailto:john@stava.com), 260-7221.

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