Diveheart is a not-for-profit organization that provides scuba diving instruction, opportunities and adventures to children, adults and veterans with disabilities.

“Every time I dive with Diveheart, I find another piece of myself.”

-Greg Rodriguez

Marine veteran who sustained a traumatic brain injury
The Diveheart story:

“When I scuba dive, I feel freed from the body in which I otherwise feel trapped.”

-Ashley Hoffman
22-year old diver who is legally blind and has cerebral palsy

Diveheart, a non-profit 510 (c) 3 organization, was founded in 2001. The vision was to build confidence and independence and self esteem in children, adults and veterans with disabilities through scuba diving. Thanks to the wonder of the water column, the oceans and lakes of the world become the forgiving weightless environment of inner space. This offers perfect buoyancy and balance to any individual who might struggle on land in the hope of providing physical and psychological therapeutic value. It is a can-do spirit that Diveheart seeks to instill in our participants.

Since its inception Diveheart has trained thousands of volunteers in order to be able to carry on our mission throughout the world. We have worked with individuals across the U.S. and in Mexico, Israel, Australia, China, the Caribbean and more.

Diveheart’s dream is to have a site where we can serve children, adults and veterans with disabilities through scuba therapy, and where we can address research, rehabilitation, education, and vocational training. Furthermore, we envision that our facility will allow us to train individuals from around the world to scuba dive with individuals with disabilities. These divers can in turn, return to their homes and train even more people. The potential impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities around the world is enormous.
“If I can Scuba dive, I can do anything…”

-Vietnam veteran Darrell Young who is paraplegic from a spinal cord injury

The mission of Diveheart Military Wounded (DMW) is to invigorate the spirit and the imagination of our veterans with disabilities by using scuba diving as a tool to:

- Build confidence and independence
- Offer a sense of freedom and high adventure
- Empower individuals to set goals and believe in reaching them.

We all need to be valued and have a purpose. DMW’s mission based diving philosophy gives our veteran participants that purpose again, helping them cope with their “New Normal” so they can focus on what they CAN DO instead of what they can’t do. Click here to find out more about our DMW programs and check our calendar for event dates.

Illinois State Representative Tammy Duckworth was severely injured in 2004 while she was the pilot of a Blackhawk in Iraq. Click here to view her unedited interview about scuba diving with Diveheart during her recovery.

Marine veteran Terry Thomas was injured in Iraq eight years ago. He escaped the confines of his wheelchair and stood for his first time since his injury, while scuba diving with Diveheart. Click here to learn more.

Vietnam War veteran Darrell Young is paraplegic as the result of a spinal cord injury. Click here to read his testimony about how scuba diving has helped with his mobility, independence and self-confidence.

Korean War veteran Gabe Spataro was responsible for bringing the Christ of the Abyss statue to the U.S. more than 50 years ago. Gabe who is now blind, visited the statue for the first time, with Diveheart. Click here to read more.

Air force veteran Joseph Deslauriers finds freedom and purpose in zero gravity during his first coral reef restoration experience with Diveheart, Nova University & Divebar. Click here to view his incredible story.

Alex Calvo is an Army veteran who is quadriplegic as the result of an accident. Alex finds that scuba diving gives him great mobility as well as freedom from pain. Click here to read about Alex in California Diver. Click here to watch the video about Alex called “Free Fall” narrated by Hollywood star Lauren Hutton.
ABC 7 Disability Report
Hosea Sanders reports on the therapeutic benefits for people with disabilities.

WGN Medical Watch: Autism
WGN Medical Watch reports on the positive impact of scuba diving on individuals with autism.

WGN Medical Watch: TBI
WGN Medical Watch reports on the positive impact of scuba diving on individuals with traumatic brain injury.

Scuba & Pain Management
Air force veteran Ian Brown is quadriplegic as the result of a spinal cord injury. View Ian’s interview as he talks about being pain free for the first time since his accident, as the result of scuba diving with Diveheart.
What does Diveheart do?

Diveheart provides scuba diving instruction, opportunities and adventures to children, adults and veterans with disabilities.

Where is Diveheart located?

Diveheart’s headquarters are in Downers Grove, Illinois near Chicago. Our first international chapter has been launched in the U.K. and we have chapters across the United States. Diveheart works with individuals, clubs, recreation groups, hospitals, and veteran organizations throughout the U.S. as well as in Mexico, Israel, Australia, the Caribbean, China, South America and more.

Diveheart’s mailing address is: 900 Ogden Avenue #274, Downers Grove, IL 60515
Diveheart’s office is located at 5100 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Where do you dive?

Many of our diving adventures take place in the lakes and oceans of the world, but our diving instruction and many programs happen in community pools including those in recreation or rehab centers, high schools, hotels, hospitals and more.

With what types of disabilities do you work?

We can work with virtually any type of disability. Our participants include individuals who have paraplegia, quadriplegia, amputation(s), vision and/or hearing impairment, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and many other types of physical and cognitive disabilities.

Our dive instructors and buddies have undergone rigorous adaptive diving instruction in order to be able to dive with and assist individuals with disabilities.

How is Diveheart operated and funded?

Diveheart is volunteer-driven. With the exception of some part-time staff, everyone including the founder/president of Diveheart is a volunteer. What this means is that the vast majority of the funding we receive through grants and from our generous sponsors and donors, focuses on our programs.

Who can dive, and how long does it take?

Only moments compared to other activities. The learning curve for scuba diving alongside our specially trained instructors and dive buddies is almost immediate. Our divers don’t even have to know how to swim in order to enjoy scuba diving.

How do I learn more?

Visit www.diveheart.org
Diveheart Honors and Recognition
Click on the specific logo or picture to learn more
In 2011, a PBS affiliate of BYU TV featured Diveheart in their amazing series called Turning Point. The segment followed three Diveheart participants as they talked about the impact that Diveheart has had on their lives. The producers also traveled with Diveheart for a life-changing scuba diving trip to Cozumel.

At the conclusion of what was a multi-month process, we turned the cameras and interviewed filmmaker Greg Kiefer to learn how this project had in turn impacted his life.

Click here to watch Turning Point

Click here to watch the interview of filmmaker Greg Kiefer
Diveheart at TEDxNaperville

TED is an international not-for-profit devoted to ideas worth spreading.

TED conferences bring together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers who are challenged to give the talk of their lives. Jim Elliott, president/founder of Diveheart was featured at the TEDxNaperville in 2013. Please take a few moments to watch as Jim Elliott helps you …

*Imagine the possibilities!*

Click [here](https://www.ted.com/talks/jim_elliott_diveheart_at_tedxnaperville) to watch Jim Elliott’s TED Talk

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Diveheart Revolutionizes Adaptive Scuba

Diveheart is proud to offer the Diveheart Adaptive Training program for instructors, advanced buddies, buddies and adaptive divers. Diveheart introduces the latest innovations and best practices in adaptive scuba training techniques, and thinking. This program revolutionizes adaptive scuba training for instructors, dive buddies and adaptive divers of all abilities around the world.


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Diveheart in the spotlight:
Click on the photo/logo to see us on the news

**NBC News**
Chicago news anchor Art Norman reports on Diveheart’s work with kids with disabilities.

**CNN Heroes with Heart**
Diveheart founder/ president Jim Elliott is featured as a CNN Hero with Heart.

**HLN Salute to the Troops**
Robin Meade’s Stories of Courage featured veterans with disabilities as they went scuba diving with Gold Star families.

**NBC Nightly News**
The NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams segment Taking the Plunge followed children from the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) as they traveled on a life-changing scuba diving trip to the Florida Keys.

**NCTV-17 Spotlight**
Diveheart Executive Director, Tinamarie Hernandez and Board Member, Bill Bogdan, were interviewed by Jane Wernette for the Naperville Community TV show Spotlight.

**ABC News 7**
Diveheart is featured by ABC News disabilities issue reporter Hosea Sanders.
Diveheart in the spotlight:
Click on the photo/logo to see us on the news

ABC 7 News
KABC in Los Angeles reports on the healing powers of Diveheart’s work surrounding Scuba Therapy.

ABC News Miami
ABC TV in Miami showcases the power of a Diveheart Scuba Experience program.

11 Atlanta - Alive
11 Alive interviews a 13-year old Atlanta resident who raised money to support Diveheart for his bar mitzvah project.

CNN ESPAÑOL – EN EL FONDO DEL MAR SOMOS TODOS IGUALES
La discapacidad no es impedimento para que los jóvenes y veteranos buceen como cualquier otro ser humano …. Watch video at CNN Español (Spanish)

MALAYSIA: KIDS SCUBA WITH DIVEHEART
Diveheart featured on Malaysia TV1, Morning Talk show Selamat Pagi Malaysia.
Moving Picture: Ex-exec gives freedom of scuba diving to disabled- in Daily Herald

Stephen Hawking has nothing on Ryan O'Toole. They both speak with a keyboard, but Ryan can FLY... after this “Inner Space” experience with Diveheart.

Click here to read the entire story in Daily Herald.

80% Pay Cut But it Was Worth It - in Money Magazine

Watching his legally blind daughter ski for the first time back in 1989, Jim Elliott was inspired. "She glowed with confidence," he recalls. It motivated the proud dad -- then an ad exec for the Tribune Co. -- to consider a career change.

Click here to read the entire story in CNN Money Magazine.

Illinois Based Diveheart Helps Defy Gravity Under Water - in Huffington Post

Jim Elliott first saw the transformation in his daughter, who was born blind. Frustrated, and teased by other kids at her mainstream school, she threw down her cane, and refused to learn braille, insisting that she could see.

Click here to read the entire story in Huffington Post.

Just Add Water – in Success Magazine

Scuba Therapy has just begun to change lives, rehabilitation and therapy as we know it. Diveheart is in the forefront as a facilitator of Scuba Therapy Research while empowering the body, mind and spirit of those with disabilities.

Click here to read the entire story in Success Magazine.

Born Without Arms, Woman Drives, Types and Scuba Dives - in The Daily Herald

Jessica Cox likes to say there aren’t things she can’t do, only things she hasn’t figure out how to do. Yet. It’s not a long list. “I haven’t figured out how to put my hair into a ponytail,” she says. “And how to rock climb.” Cox, 26, was born without arms.

Click here to read the entire story in The Daily Herald.
Key Speakers and Leadership

Jim Elliott, Founder & President of Diveheart.

Jim Elliott left a successful media career to founded Diveheart in 2001. As president, he does not draw a salary and as an instructor trainer he has helped facilitate adaptive scuba programs around the world. He is co-author of the Diveheart Adaptive Scuba Training program and is a leader on forwarding Scuba Therapy research around the world.

As a Rotarian, he lives by the motto of “Service Above Self” and works with Rotarians and other service organizations worldwide to grow adaptive scuba programs that serve children, adults and veterans with disabilities in the communities where they live.

Contact Jim at jim.elliott@diveheart.org

Tinamarie Hernandez, Executive Director

Tinamarie began her assignment as Diveheart executive director in February of 2013. She is deeply committed to Diveheart’s mission and vision and has already implemented many changes that have allowed Diveheart to grow. She is specifically skilled in working to build alliances and partnerships with mission and results driven outcomes in mind.

When asked what drew her to Diveheart, Tinamarie responded: “I grew up with a cousin who lived his life with both physical and conative challenges. Joey didn't let much hold him back and I just know he would have loved scuba, had he known about Diveheart. I work to make sure others with disabilities will not miss out on the wonderful experience and benefits that scuba and Diveheart can bring them.”

Tinamarie works for the international consulting firm, Accenture for 19 years. Her specialty is in continuous improvement and project/program management. Tinamarie earned BAs in English and Political Science from Northern Illinois University and completed MA course work in International Relations, Diplomacy at the University of Denver.

Contact Tinamarie at tinamarie.hernandez@diveheart.org

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