



# CAPTAIN

## JOHN D. MASON

VETERAN PEER OUTREACH PROGRAM



The Captain John D. Mason Veteran Peer Outreach Program, on behalf of the  
Southeastern Wisconsin Suicide Prevention Taskforce present

**Live** Today – Put it Away!



*A Community Discussion Panel Regarding Safe Storage of Firearms.  
Introducing Wisconsin's Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program!*

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Bertrand D. Berger, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychiatry  
Medical College of Wisconsin  
Mental Health Division Manager  
Milwaukee VA Medical Center

## Agenda

- Welcome
- Suicide – the Statistics.
- Capt. John D. Mason Peer Outreach Project
- Panelist Introductions
- Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program
- Questions and discussions



# Welcome

A lethal Means Panel Discussion about bringing Wisconsin's  
**Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program** called  
**Live Today – Put it Away!** to our local firearm retailers,  
gun shops, and ranges, to help prevent suicides.



# September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Suicide in the United States has continued to rise over the past 20 years to the point that suicides are the 10<sup>th</sup> way in which people die in this country and more people die from suicide using a firearm than do from homicides. Additionally, we know that in the Veteran community 70% die from suicide by using a firearm versus 50% in the non-Veteran population.

# Statistics

- Over 50% of suicides are **NOT** due to a mental health disorder.
- It may be that someone is going through a **crisis**; like a divorce, missed promotion, job loss, or the feeling of hopelessness while experiencing a dire moment.



**CAPTAIN**

**JOHN D. MASON**

VETERAN PEER OUTREACH PROGRAM

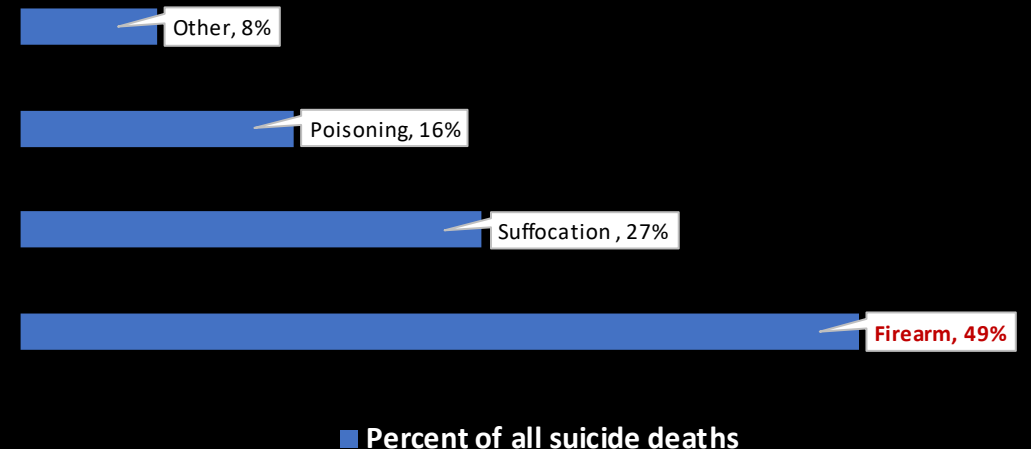


# Statistics

- Most Veterans own a firearm (7 on average)
- About 33% have one in their home that is loaded
- 70% of Veteran deaths by suicide are from using a firearm



In Wisconsin, a **Firearm** was the most commonly used method of suicide, 2013-2017, for ALL individuals in the State (49%).



Data Source: Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2013-2017.



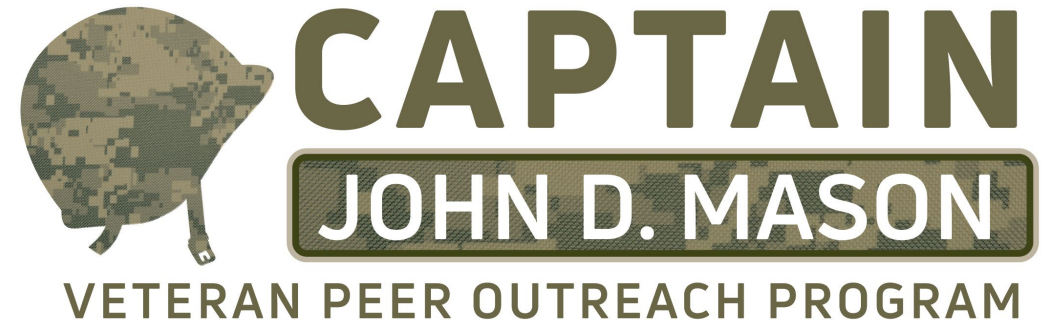
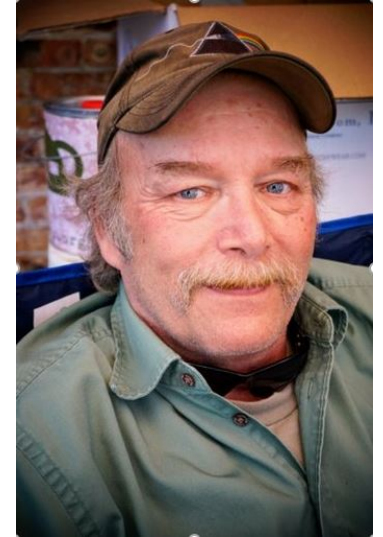
# MCW Veteran Peer Specialists

## Christopher Swift ~

- Decorated and retired US Army Combat Medic
- 20 years Military Medic and Emergency Department
- Experienced in policy development, staff management procedures, and operational improvements positively impacting overall morale and productivity
- My goal is to help other Veteran's with the tools and experience that I have developed over my many years of dedicated service.

## Mark Flower ~

- Retired US Army Veteran with 17-year career as Staff Sargent, 11B Infantry, 19E Armor and 91B Medic
- A Vet in recovery and an advocate for change.
- Community engagement consultant at MCW & Milwaukee VA
- Co-founder of Dryhootch of America and very involved with Milwaukee area Veterans working as the Veteran Peer Coordinator for Milwaukee County Veterans Court and the new state-wide Veterans Peer Respite.
- Involved with the (HSR&D) (VA), advocating for Veterans engagement as a partner in Research.
- Constantly advocating for the wellbeing of our Veterans in the community, and folks in general.





**Chuck Lovelace**

**Chuck Lovelace**  
**Veteran, Owner, Lead Gunsmith**  
**Essential Shooting Supplies, LLC**  
**Park Falls, Wisconsin**

Chuck is an 18-year Disabled Veteran with the Army, Army Reserve, and Wisconsin Army National Guard. He served in Afghanistan from 2009-2010 as the Senior Army Logistics NCO for Joint Task Force Med-E based out of Bagram, spending his deployment traveling all over the country to small trauma and medical facilities within the Eastern, Southern and Northern part of Afghanistan, ensuring proper flow of supplies and equipment to these essential lifesaving teams. While in Bagram he served as the Senior Armorer and Security Team Chief for the Craig Joint Theater Hospital as well.

Chuck has been married to his wife Jennifer for 22 years and they have 2 adult sons Nate and Charlie. He is a graduate of Colorado Tech with a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration (IT Management) and a Graduate of the Sonoran Desert Institute with an Associate Degree in Firearms Technology (CUM LAUDE).

In 2007 Chuck opened Warriors Academy of Martial Arts and ran the school for 12 years, retiring from active instruction when he sold the school in 2019. After his time in the Army, he opened Essential Shooting Supplies in 2013 in Mount Horeb WI, and in 2016 was proud to be the first Gun Shop in Wisconsin to participate in the Gun Shop Project. In 2017, with the help of Safe Communities and Jean Papalia, Chuck came up with the Safe Storage Initiative. He has since spoken multiple times to local and state level government to increase awareness and support for suicide prevention, as well as participating in the Spectrum News documentary Wisconsin, under the gun.

As a Veteran, Suicide prevention is very near and dear to his heart, having lost several comrades to the darkness as well as Family, Friends, and Customers over the years.

Chuck and Jennifer moved their shop Essential Shooting Supplies to Park Falls, WI in January 2020 where they currently reside with their two dogs enjoying the slower pace of life in Northern WI.





**Steve D'orazio**

**Steve D'orazio**  
**Owner of Max Creek Outdoors**  
**Located in Oregon, Wisconsin**

Max Creek is a gun shop and indoor shooting range. I started Max Creek in 2011 but have been an avid hunter and outdoorsman my whole life. I love training my 2 dogs, Tate and Chance, and bird hunting all around Wisconsin, South Dakota, Iowa and Kansas.

As well as owning Max Creek I have been the club president at the Oregon Sportsman's Club for the past 15 years.



Bill Brassard, Jr.

**Bill Brassard Jr.**  
**Senior Director, Communications**  
**National Shooting Sports Foundation—the trade**  
**association for the firearms industry**

Bill is in his 23rd year with the National Shooting Sports Foundation, where he serves as senior communications director and media spokesman on issues such as firearm safety, suicide prevention, shooting sports participation and conservation. Prior to joining NSSF, Bill was as a newspaper journalist and editor for nearly two decades.

Bill oversees NSSF's firearm safety education programs, including Project ChildSafe, the nationwide firearm safety education program that has distributed 40 million firearm safety kits to gun owners nationwide and that recently concluded a program funded by a \$2.4 million federal grant. He is assistant treasurer of the Project ChildSafe Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. He oversees NSSF's ground-breaking partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and is part of a working group on suicide prevention with the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

At the NSSF-owned Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show (SHOT Show), Bill directs the show's press operations, which services more than 2,500 accredited members of the media. He is a longtime member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

# What is it?

The **Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program** is comprised of two parts:

- 1) The Gun Shop Project
- 2) The Safe Storage Program

# Gun Shop Project

- **The Gun Shop Project** is an educational piece where we provide gun shop owners and staff with materials on suicide prevention.
- This includes tips on how to identify warning signs and effectively handle situations where someone appears in distress and wants to purchase a firearm.
- As well as responsible firearm ownership materials & suicide prevention resources to provide customers.



# Safe Storage Program

- **The Safe Storage Program** is where the firearm retailer/gun shop/range provides voluntary, temporary, safe storage of a firearm for a Veteran or individual who is in a crisis.
- The goal is to provide people in crisis an option to have distance between themselves and their firearm, to decrease the impulse to use the firearm to kill themselves.

# SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

What to do with guns when a person may be in crisis.

**FACT:** Safe storage of a firearm for a loved one is a critical way to get them safely through a crisis period and is proven to save lives.

What to do when a person is in crisis? When there is an emotional crisis (like a break-up, job loss, legal trouble) or a major change in someone's behavior (like depression or anger, more drinking) that causes concern, storing guns outside the home until the situation improves may save a life.



*Thanks to Safe Communities Madison-Dane County*

## Questions for the Panelists

- Chuck, as originator with Jean Papalia from Safe Communities Madison-Dane County, tell us your story about why and how you became an advocate of this program?

# Questions for the Panelists

**Live Today – Put it Away!**



- Steve, why have you become an advocate of this program?

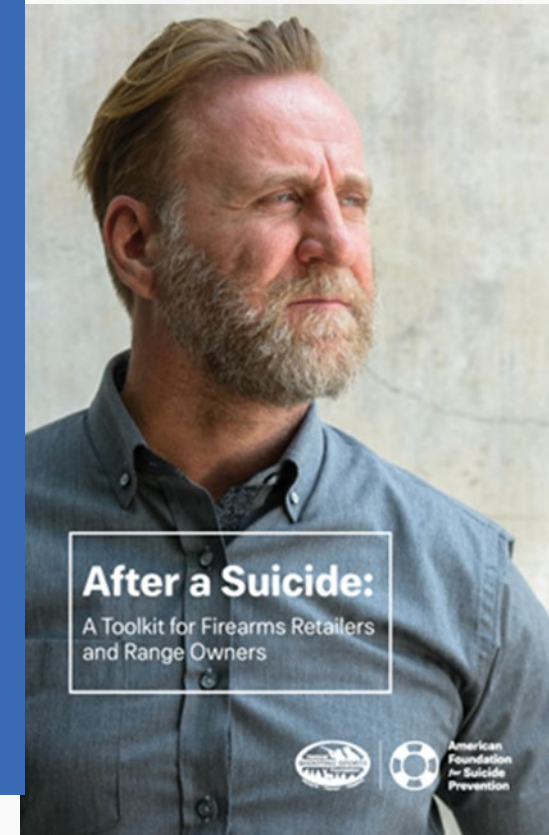
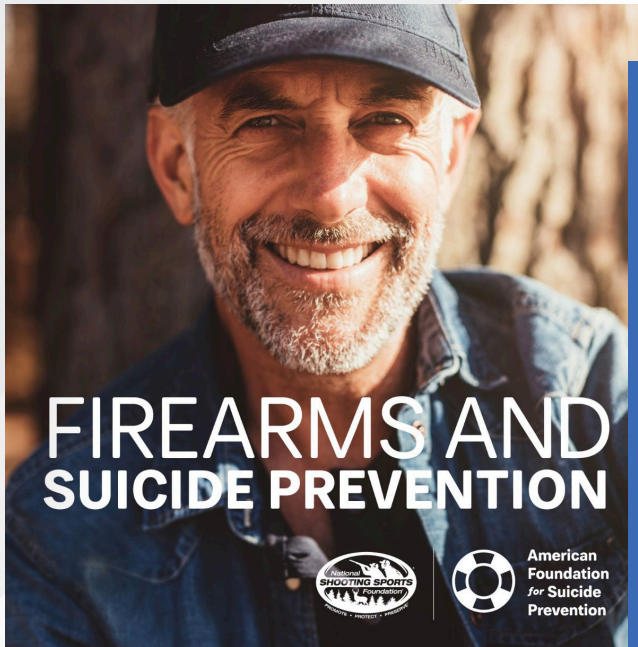
# Questions for the Panelists

- Bill, what prompted your NSSF organization to partner with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and how did this project get on your radar?
- As an organization, why did you feel it was important to get behind it?



# **NSSF<sup>®</sup>**

***The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association***



Visit: [Suicide Prevention Toolkit Items • NSSF](#)

RESOURCES ON

# SUICIDE PREVENTION AND FIREARM SAFETY

from NSSF in partnerships with VA and AFSP



American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention

**NSSF**  
The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

CLICK ON BOXES BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION

## VA COMMUNITY TOOLKIT



[NSSF.ORG/SAFETY/SUICIDE-PREVENTION](https://nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention)

## VA-NSSF-AFSP-USCCA WEBINAR



[YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=RP48PNL5FUA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=RP48PNL5FUA)

**Visit:** [Veterans Administration Partnership • NSSF](#)

**Visit:** [Protecting Mental Health and Preventing Suicide During COVID-19 - YouTube](#)



[PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG](http://PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG)

**NSSF**  
The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association



American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention

**TOOLKIT**

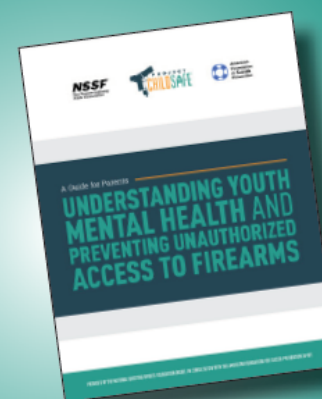
[NSSF.ORG/SAFETY/SUICIDE-PREVENTION](http://NSSF.ORG/SAFETY/SUICIDE-PREVENTION)

## PROJECT CHILDSAFE VETERAN RESOURCES



[PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG/VETERAN-FIREARM-SAFETY-RESOURCE/](http://PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG/VETERAN-FIREARM-SAFETY-RESOURCE/)

## PARENTS GUIDE



[PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG/PARENTS-RESOURCES](http://PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG/PARENTS-RESOURCES)

**Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?**  
**Call 1-800-273-8255 & Press 1 or Text 838255**





# OWN IT? Respect It. Secure It.®

**As a responsible firearm owner, you know safe handling and secure storage go hand in hand.**

Join Project ChildSafe® to help better educate more gun owners about safe and proper storage when firearms are not in use.

Over the past decade, Project ChildSafe has distributed more than **40 million safety kits** with gun locks to help decrease firearm accidents and save lives.

Visit **ProjectChildSafe.org** to learn more about secure storage options, take the firearms safety pledge, and download tools to help you educate others about firearm safety and security.

Brought to you by the firearms industry

**NSSF**  
The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association



# GUN STORAGE FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

As a gun owner, you can choose from multiple options for safely storing and protecting your firearms when they're not in use.

Use this guide to determine which mechanism best suits your lifestyle, priorities and environment.

## A RANGE OF OPTIONS



### CABLE LOCK

Price Range: \$10–\$50

A cable lock can be used on most firearms, allows for quick access in an emergency and offers security from theft. The cable runs through the barrel or action of a firearm to prevent it from being accidentally fired, requiring either a key or combination to unlock it.

- 💰 AFFORDABLE
- ✅ ACCESSIBLE
- 🔒 THEFT DETERRENT



### GUN CASE

Price Range: \$10–\$150

For those looking to conceal, protect or legally transport a registered firearm, a gun case is an affordable solution available in a variety of materials including plastic, fabric or metal. Be sure to lock it with an external device for added security.

- 💰 AFFORDABLE
- 👜 PORTABLE
- ⚠️ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE



### LOCK BOX

Price Range: \$25–\$350

With integrated locks, storage boxes provide reliable protection for firearms, and allow gun owners to legally transport them outside of their home.

- 👜 PORTABLE
- ✅ ACCESSIBLE
- ⚠️ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE



### ELECTRONIC LOCK BOX

Price Range: \$50–\$350

Electronic lock boxes are an effective way to store or legally transport firearms, and they also prevent theft since only the person with the code can access the contents. Some electronic lock boxes are specially designed for quick access to stored firearms.

- 👜 PORTABLE
- 🔒 THEFT DETERRENT
- ⚠️ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE

PLEASE  
HELP  
PREVENT  
ACCIDENTS.  
STORE  
FIREARMS  
RESPONSIBLY.

These are just a few of the storage options available to firearms owners. For the greatest level of security, consider using a combination of safety mechanisms and educate family members about handling firearms properly.

To learn more about  
firearms safety,  
visit [ProjectChildSafe.org](https://ProjectChildSafe.org)



## FULL SIZE AND BIOMETRIC GUN SAFES

Price Range: \$200–\$2,500

A gun safe protects its contents from the elements and allows owners to safely store multiple firearms in one place. Gun safes of all sizes are now available with biometric options to ensure only certain people have access.



THEFT  
DETERRENT



PROTECTS  
FROM DAMAGE

## VEHICLE STORAGE



### CONSOLE STORAGE

Price Range: \$250 - \$300

A solution for those who need a truly secure place to store their firearm in a vehicle. These custom-fitted devices provide concealment to deter prying eyes and would-be thieves. Various access options are available, including biometric.



THEFT  
DETERRENT



ACCESSIBLE



PROTECTS  
FROM DAMAGE



### CARGO AREA STORAGE

Price Range: \$500 - \$1,500

Effective for transporting firearms to the range or field, cargo area storage models are available for sedans, SUVs and trucks. These devices allow for locked storage, concealment and protection from bumps and jostling.



THEFT  
DETERRENT



ACCESSIBLE



PROTECTS  
FROM DAMAGE

## SECURE STORAGE ACCESSORIES



### WIRELESS GUN SAFE MONITOR

Price Range: \$150 - \$200

An electronic monitor can provide awareness and alert you if anyone is accessing your storage device or handling your firearm without your authorization. Some sound an audible alarm, others can be connected to your smartphone.



THEFT  
DETERRENT



REMOTE MONITORING



### ELECTRONIC HOLSTERS

Price Range: \$200 - \$300

Electronic holsters are a new type of secure storage device that enable fast access along with security to prevent unauthorized access. Holsters can be mounted or used independent of a mounting system and feature a programmable finger or thumbprint scan.



PORTABLE



ACCESSIBLE



THEFT  
DETERRENT



Project ChildSafe  
is a program of the  
National Shooting  
Sports Foundation®

**NSSF**  
The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association



American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention

# Questions for the Panelists



- Dr. Berger, on the clinical side, why do you and other clinicians feel this is a very important project?



# Questions for the Panelists



- Chuck & Steve, have either of you had anyone contact you to utilize this service?



# Questions for the Panelists



- What have been the positive outcomes?

# Questions for the Panelists



- Have you noticed any barriers to the program that could be addressed, so those barriers can be eliminated?

# Questions for the Panelists

- What is the best way we can approach fellow gun shops and ranges in the state to sign up to the Live Today – Put it Away! program?

# Questions for the Panelists



- As many of you know there is a bill (SB200) currently in legislation that if passed would provide the opportunity for our program, and similar, to receive a grant to provide firearm retailers with some extra resources (for example, a gun safe) – do you feel this would be an incentive for gun shops & ranges to participate in the program?

[2021 Senate Bill 200 \(wisconsin.gov\)](https://legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/bills/senate/200)

# Questions for the Panelists

- Share your final thoughts that have come to you during the conversation that you would like to express before we go to questions.



# Q&A



- Questions and discussions
- How was the discussion?
- Please complete our [feedback form](https://mcwisc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0SUV8uWwhwlmaJE):  
[https://mcwisc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0SUV8uWwhwlmaJE](https://mcwisc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0SUV8uWwhwlmaJE)

# For More Information

## Three ways to learn about this program:

1) Visit [www.BeThereWis.com](http://www.BeThereWis.com)



2) View the attached [Gun Shop Project Introduction PDF](#)

3) Contact us

Visit

[www.BeThereWis.com](http://www.BeThereWis.com)



*Live Today – Put It Away!*

## *Wisconsin's Gun Shop Project And Safe Storage Program To Prevent Suicides*

### *Gun Shop Project And Safe Storage Program*

The Program is designed to assist gun shops in working with the gun owner community to provide 2 levels of support to help address firearm suicides:

1) **Firearm suicide prevention safety information:** Gun shops are providing materials to their customers and staff about Suicide Prevention and responsible firearm ownership developed by national organizations (National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), American Foundation on Suicide Prevention, and the VA). Contact us at [CaptainJohnDMasonProgram@mcw.edu](mailto:CaptainJohnDMasonProgram@mcw.edu) if you would like a packet of free materials from the NSSF.

2) **Firearm storage outside of the home:** *Live today – Put it Away!* The gun shops on the map provide customers firearm storage for a low fee. This service has been developed to assist individuals that are in a crisis to voluntarily store their firearms outside of the home.

**Message to Gun Shops:** We need your help! Please sign up, so your establishment can be placed on the map so that individuals, mental health providers, family, and friends will see that you are part of a suicide prevention solution. Once you **sign the agreement** someone will contact you within 48 hours to place your establishment on the map.

### *Information For Gun Shops About The Gun Storage Program*

Download Our Gun Shop Project Introduction Packet *Here Or Each Document Below*

- Firearms Dealer Introduction Letter
- Tips for WI Firearm Retailers and Range Owners 3.4.21
- Safe Storage Pamphlet 8.5×5.5
- Gun Safety the 11th Commandment
- Gun Shop Project Inception and Q&A
- Contract to Hold Firearm 3.5.21
- R.A.C.E. Suicide Prevention Brochure Veteran

Participate in the Program by:

1. Signing up: On-line
2. or Print this form and mail it to us: Gun Shop Agreement

### *The Gun Shop Project*

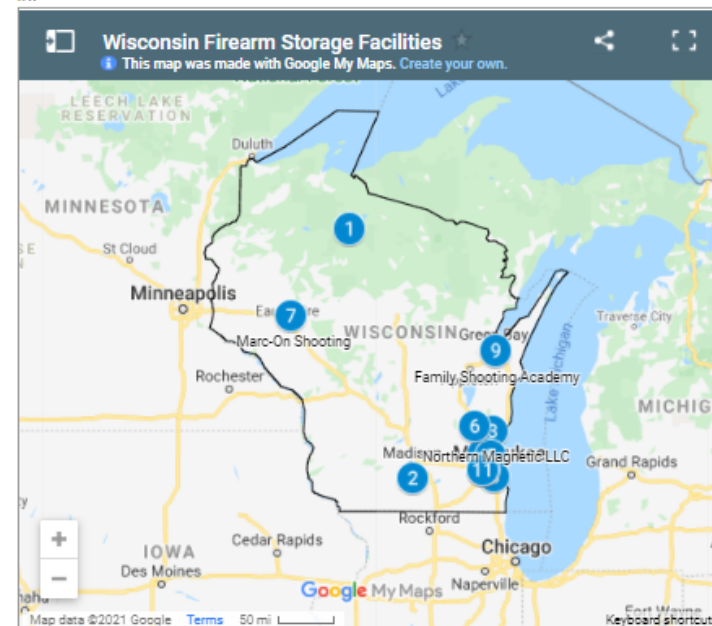
A brief look at the origins of the gun shop project: [Check out the CNN story or the story below.](#)

### *Wisconsin Firearm Safe Storage Facilities*

The locations in [blue](#) on the map are currently providing firearm storage. Call them in advance for costs, restrictions, or any other information before going in-person to the store.

**Instructions for anyone using the storage map:**

The firearm facilities noted on the map are voluntarily providing this service and can refuse to provide storage for anyone. Please call and check whether the facility is providing the gun storage service prior to referring someone in crisis to a firearm store. Be sure that you have the firearm(s) unloaded, when you take them in.



This program is in the beginning stages of development as a State-wide endeavor. Firearm Facilities, please sign up: [HERE](#).

Please email us at [CaptainJohnDMasonProgram@mcw.edu](mailto:CaptainJohnDMasonProgram@mcw.edu) for suggestions or if you have a firearm facility that would like to participate. Let us know how we are doing and what else we can do to help you provide this service!

[Take our Satisfaction Survey.](#)

*The information contained here is not intended to be nor is it a substitute for professional medical or legal advice. The contents of this website should not be*

# How to Participate

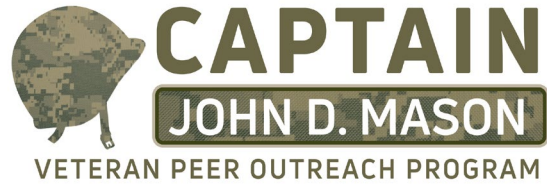
## How can I sign up?

1) Complete the online form: [Gun Shop Project Online Sign-Up](#)

2) Print the Gun Shop Agreement and mail to us:

<https://www.betherewis.com/Gun-Shop-Agreement.pdf>

3) Contact us



# WE HAVE YOUR SIX!

## Contact Information:

- Mark Flower, Veteran Peer Specialist [mflower@mcw.edu](mailto:mflower@mcw.edu) / (414) 238-1798 cell
- Chris Swift, Veteran Peer Specialist [cjswift@mcw.edu](mailto:cjswift@mcw.edu) / (262) 227-2050 cell
- Susan Smykal, Coordinator [ssmykal@mcw.edu](mailto:ssmykal@mcw.edu) / (414) 955-8914 office
- Dr. Bertrand Berger, VA Mental Health Division & Program Director [bert.berger@va.gov](mailto:bert.berger@va.gov)
  
- Program email: [captainjohndmasonprogram@mcw.edu](mailto:captainjohndmasonprogram@mcw.edu)
- Website: [www.VeteranPeerOutreach.org](http://www.VeteranPeerOutreach.org)
- Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/CaptainJohnDMasonProgram>