Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

[CONTACT NAME, CONTACT ORGANIZATION, PHONE, EMAIL]

3-D Virtual Humans Help [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] Members Learn to Support One Another in Civilian Life

Watch trailer here: http://youtu.be/SFqwquHoSb8

A new app has been released to help U.S. veterans and service members learn what to say and do when a peer is struggling with post-deployment stress and adjustment to civilian life. Through interactive role-plays with 3D virtual humans, the user prepares to have real-life conversations that will motivate a friend to access help if needed, build resilience, and lead a healthier life. Called *Together Strong,* the app is available for free online at JoinTogetherStrong.com and at iTunes and Google Play Store. The app is also available in Spanish at Jointogetherstrong.com/es

[INSERT QUOTE FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SPOKESPERSON ON WHY HE/SHE LIKES IT OR WANTS MEMBERS TO USE IT. WHY IT IS NEEDED]

Together Strong was developed by Kognito—a 10-year-old Manhattan-based company—in **collaboration with the Veterans Affairs NY/NJ Healthcare Network** and received extensive input from veterans and military personnel. **[Your ORGANIZATION]** is proud to join dozens of military, veterans, and nonprofit groups nationally that will be performing outreach through social media, local press, and Internet groups.

Together Strong addresses a range of challenges faced by those who have served. In addition to much-publicized high rates of PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and suicide, the post-deployment experience is often one of isolation, lack of purpose, stigma, difficulties relating to nonmilitary people, academic failure after years away from school, and problems with relationships and keeping a job.

According to the Pew Research Center, 61% of veterans report having difficulty with re-entry, and 48% said that their service had a negative impact on their marriage. One in five of Gulf War II-era veterans ages 18 to 24 were unemployed in 2012 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics); and only 23% to 40% of those who screened positive for a mental health disorder went on to receive professional help (*New England Journal of Medicine*).

This is the 25th simulation from Kognito, which creates immersive learning experiences that combine principles of neuroscience with gaming technologies to address a broad range of health, behavioral health, and social topics, from chronic disease and childhood obesity, to emotional wellbeing. Several empirical studies have shown that Kognito simulations achieve real and lasting changes in attitude, skills, and behaviors. The virtual humans in

Together Strong are coded to reflect individual personalities, memories, and emotions that make their responses highly realistic. This highly interactive simulation provides hands-on practice and personalized feedback; it's not a web page.

"Together Strong builds on Kognito's research-proven *Family of Heroes,* which was designed for military families," said Kognito co-founder and Director of Research Glenn Albright, Ph.D. "A randomized controlled study of *Family of Heroes* found a 46% increase in the number of military family members who spoke with their veterans about accessing help after they had completed the program. 22% of those approached, compared with 12% in the control group, actually sought professional help, showing a real and meaningful change in health behaviors resulting from this simulation."

***Together Strong* is available permanently in NY and NJ, courtesy of the Veterans Affairs NY/NJ Healthcare Network. One of three in-app conversations is available elsewhere nationwide, for free.**

Sample Story Angles:

- App Helps **[Your Organization's]** Vets Practice Effective Conversations When a Buddy Needs Help
- Video Gaming Technology Deployed for a Good Cause: Helping Military Personnel and Vets Talk to Each Other About Tough Issues
- Changing Health Behaviors Through Conversations

To learn more about *Together Strong*, visit:

Website: www.jointogetherstrong

On Twitter: #togstrong