



2010 Annual Report





Letter from the Chairman



Dear Friends,

2010 marked the first full year of Blue Star Families' non-profit operation. It followed a year of incredible dedication by a few handful of people who worked with extraordinary energy and dedication, without pay, to create this platform - BSF - where military family members and their supporters could work directly to address the challenges that face our community during this period of long war. 2010 was an exciting and hopeful year, where our core ideas took flight: that family members around the country could make a difference; and that when we reach out to the larger community, we can form powerful partnerships that make a difference. The highlights of these programs are detailed in the pages that follow. Key among them are our annual survey, launched in 2009, now in 2010 released in Congress for a second year, and our exciting and powerful partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the museum community, providing access and connection between the military and the arts and culture community. Also key is our Books on Bases program - also in its second year - reflecting the awareness that literacy enhances resiliency. These programs will bear further fruit, we know, in the years ahead.



Thank you for taking the time to look through this 2010 annual report of Blue Star Families. We believe that strong ties between the military community, military families, and the Americans we serve make us stronger and make the country stronger. To those who support us, and to all who serve, in all the ways there are to serve, we say thank you.

Kathy Roth-Douquet
Chairman of the Board





About Blue Star Families



[Photo courtesy of Casey Spurr.]

Our Story...Is Military Families Supporting Each Other

Blue Star Families was formed in December of 2008 by a group of military spouses to raise the awareness of the challenges of military family life within our civilian communities and leaders. BSF has grown to include spouses and families from all services and all walks of life, including National Guard and Reserve, as well as veterans and civilians who strongly support us.

There are currently millions of active duty, Reserve and National Guard service members serving our country. Each of them

leaves behind a family when they deploy – a family that participates in the service member's sacrifice but is often overlooked by government and civilian organizations. And because we in military service make up only one percent of the country's total population, most Americans do not have first-hand knowledge of the military experience.

Our Mission...Is to Support, Connect and Empower Military Families

Blue Star Families is a nonprofit organization passionately dedicated to helping military families across America. Our mission is simple: to support, empower and connect military families to each other, to their communities and to people in power. To do so, we work directly with the Department of Defense and senior members of our local, state and federal governments - including the Senate, Congress and the White House - to bring military families' most important issues to light. Blue Star Families also works with other nonprofits and community advocates to develop and offer programs that help military families; from children's literacy and entertainment initiatives to programs that help communicate the public's often-unexpressed appreciation for everything military families do every day.



[Photo courtesy of Stephanie Himel-Nelson.]



Our History

Blue Star Families was formed in 2008 by a group of military spouses eager not just to support others in the community, but to empower military families everywhere to speak. The organization struck a chord with military families, quickly growing to more than 15,000 members in less than two years. Blue Star Families also provides civilian and military leadership, as well as elected officials on a national and local level, with unfiltered feedback from military families. Through outreach among leading nonprofits, Blue Star Families has become the go-to service organization for national and local nonprofits seeking to connect the service they provide to military families.



[Photo above courtesy of Andrea Pearson. Photo below courtesy of Casey Spurr.]



Support.

Blue Star Families and our worldwide membership support military families of all branches, ranks and backgrounds through the unique challenges of military service. BSF and our local chapters also reach out to the larger civilian population to support military families.

Connect.

Through our local chapters and our online community, Blue Star Families connects military families locally and internationally. Our outreach into the civilian community also helps bridge the gap between military and civilian life and connect families together.

Empower.

With our wide array of resources, research into military family life and partner organizations, Blue Star Families empowers military families to create the best personal and family life possible.





2010 Highlights



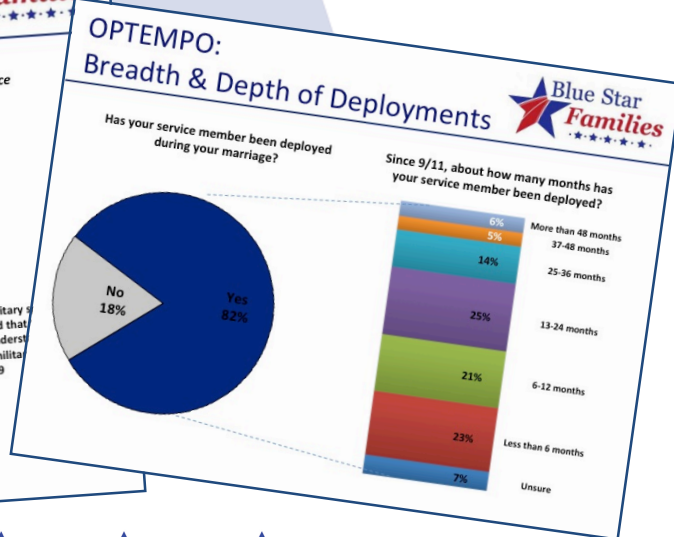
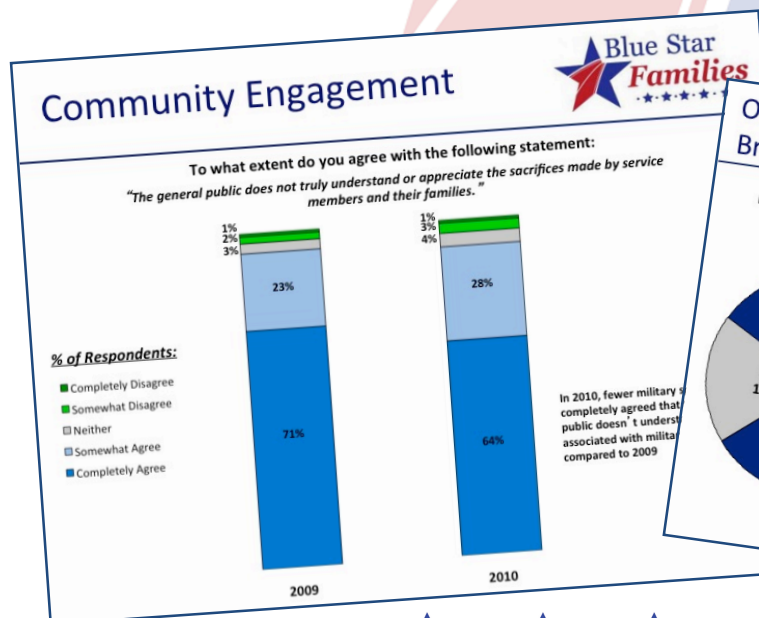
2010 Military Families Lifestyle Survey

In May 2010, Blue Star Families fielded an online survey of 3,634 military family members to determine the major issues facing them today, such as military family relationships, family life, careers, feelings of stress, and levels of communication and engagement. The key concerns identified by the responding military families were: pay and benefits, the current operational tempo, the effects of deployments on children, spouse employment and children's education.

The findings of the 2010 Military Lifestyle Survey have been used throughout our government to inform policies that affect military families. From the Obama administration and the First Lady to senators, and from policy hearings to national media, the survey findings fill an important need for information about the status of military family life after a decade of war.



[Photo courtesy of Stephanie Himel-Nelson.]

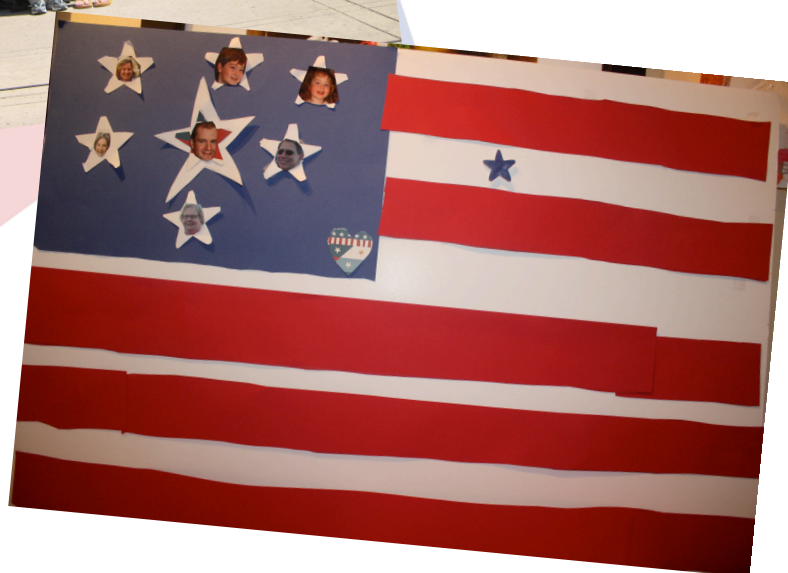


Blue Star Museums

In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Museums was launched in 2010. This national program garnered participation from nearly 1,000 museums, each offering free admission to military service members and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day. In all, nearly 300,000 military family members participated in the program.



The inaugural Blue Star Museums summer also featured an art contest for military children. Any military child who had visited a Blue Star Museum during the summer could enter by drawing a picture and writing a description of the visit. BSF awarded \$1600.00 in U.S. savings bonds to the MilKid winners.



[Top photo courtesy of Sandy Huffaker. Middle photo courtesy of Jennifer January. Artwork by Ethan Moran, age 7.]



Books on Bases



Launched in 2009, Blue Star Families' Books on Bases program works with sponsors to bring the healing power of books to military children and their schools, positively impacting their lives through reading. With the generosity of partners such as K.I.D.S. and BAE Systems, Blue Star Families donates books to military children, base libraries, Department of Defense schools and military-impacted public schools.

In 2010, the program expanded to 31,000 book donations at forty-two events nationwide. Books on Bases also received several high profile donations, including \$15,000 worth of Barnes & Noble Nooks offered by Ellen DeGeneres on the Veterans Day episode of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.



Care Package Events

In 2010, Blue Star Families teamed up with Service Nation: Mission Serve and Senator Mark Warner of Virginia for a care package event on Veterans Day featuring Operation Appreciation. The event was a great success, with hundreds of military families, service members, and students from Old Dominion University volunteering. More than 1,000 care packages and Operation Appreciation letters were created for military families. The packages were later distributed to families with deployed service members at holiday events.



[Photos courtesy of Stephanie Himel-Nelson.]



Operation Appreciation



[Photo courtesy of Stephanie Himel-Nelson.]

Operation Appreciation (OpApp) is a program that aims straight for the hearts and minds of our troops and their families, allowing volunteers to make a personal connection with those who sacrifice so much for our country. OpApp supports Blue Star Families' goal to connect the military and civilian communities and to offer ways for civilians to show their support for military families.

current service and veterans. The writer can choose to write a card to the parent, spouse or child of a military member or to a veteran of the armed services. OpApp effectively bridges the gap between the civilian and military communities that otherwise leaves families feeling isolated. By offering direct communication of individual's feelings and gratitude, OpApp does not just support, it uplifts.

In 2010, OpApp distributed 5,000 cards to service members, veterans and military family members. Organizations across the United States hosted letter writing events, including schools, churches and volunteers organizations.

Reintegration and PSAs

In 2010, Blue Star Families also worked to create wellness and suicide prevention programs. BSF worked with the Defense Centers of Excellence (DoDCE) to create Family Reintegration Tool-Kits, which were distributed to military families and support organizations across the country. Additional partners for the Tool-Kits were This Emotional Life, PBS, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Vulcan Productions, WGBH, the University of Phoenix and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Blue Star Families also teamed up with The Creative Coalition to create a series of suicide prevention Public Service Announcements targeting military families and veterans. The PSA series featuring well-known entertainers will premier in Spring 2011.





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2010 Top Donors



It's a well known fact that a fulfilling military family lifestyle is not possible without the encouragement, support and resources provided by both other military families and the many organizations devoted to helping us. The same can be said for the success of Blue Star Families. BSF is proud to be partnered with great organizations united to support military families, and is appreciative of the resources the following companies, foundations, organizations and individuals bring to military families.



[Photo courtesy of Jenny January.]

AG Foundation
American Freedom Foundation
BAE Systems
Be the Change, Inc.
Blue Shield of California Foundation
CJM Foundation

George Link Foundation
Health Net
Jo Carole Lauder
Kids in Distressed Situations, Inc.
Leichtag Family Foundation
Newman's Own
Robert K. Utley III Investments
Mr. Scott Allen
United Concordia



[Photo courtesy of Carmen Blackmore.]





2010 Statement of Financial Position



Assets

Current assets

Cash and cash equivalent	\$ 152,199
Accounts receivable	98
Undistributed books	53,274
Prepaid expenses	<u>50,000</u>
	\$ 255,571

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 12,828
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Net assets

Unrestricted	30,311
Temporarily restricted	<u>212,432</u>

Total net assets

<u>242,743</u>
\$ 255,571



[Photos courtesy of Stephanie Himel-Nelson.]





Support Blue Star Families



Blue Star Families has been extremely successful in its start-up period, with limited funding. During this early phase, BSF has relied on a vast talent pool of military family members working virtually from bases around the country and has routinely worked miracles by relying on countless volunteer hours and a “can-do” attitude. Although that moxie will ensure BSF’s continued success, we also rely on the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporate partnerships to effect real change for military families.



[Photo courtesy of Stephanie Himel-Nelson.]



[Photo courtesy of Amy Cunningham.]

With your help, BSF can embark on an aggressive plan to grow our membership around the country. We also see the great need for planning events and programs that support our National Guard and Reserve families. These families are spread across the nation sometimes away from bases, so including them in Blue Star Families is both critical and challenging. All of our programs are also meant to empower our members to help create solutions to the needs they see in their own communities. We feel it is mission-critical to continue to partner with other non-profits that are already doing excellent work for military families and help them stay in tune and in touch with the people they serve.

Contact Blue Star Families

BlueStarFam.org

202.630.2583

P.O. Box 322

Falls Church, VA 22040

