A Letter from the CEO

Dear Blue Star Neighbors,

I always marvel at the resilience of our military families. From children who change schools and still attend the first day of school with enthusiasm to spouses who pack their worldly belongings while their other half is deployed a world away, the gumption our military families display is admirable. And there is no more inspiring group in our community than caregivers, wounded service members, and their families.

But it is also very true that no person or family is an island, and the healthiest and most resilient families have a support network, including Blue Star Neighbors, who offer a hand and kind word. This year, we honored former First Lady Rosalynn Carter with the Blue Star Neighbor Lifetime Achievement Award. Her organization, the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, works with Blue Star Families through Operation Family Caregiver and provides needed and necessary support and tools.

Time and time again--whether as peace-keeping forces in Africa or rescue teams in Houston--our service members are there on the front lines. There are many Americans who see the sacrifices of military families and want to make their lives easier and more bearable. It fills me with hope and gratitude to see that, even during divisive times, there is common ground on which we can all stand.

Here at Blue Star Families, the work we do reminds our country that the military community is not alone, not through the slog of almost two decades of war, not through the exhausting military moves and deployments, not through the frustrations of unemployment or changing schools. This past year was no different.

There is a wonderful, uplifting, and exciting story to tell about Blue Star Families and what we do as we work to bridge the gap between our civilian neighbors and our military families. Here’s just a snapshot of 2017’s accomplishments:

- In addition to Mrs. Carter, we honored Ken and Judy Osborne for their unconditional support and welcome of the Burnett family, an Army family, during our Blue Star Neighbors Celebration.
- More than 20,000 people have registered with us as Blue Star Neighbors, an increase of nearly 80 percent over the previous year.
- Our volunteers donated 10,783 hours to Blue Star Families, resulting in an equivalent of $255,000 in value to the military community.
- Our membership grew meteorically by 61 percent.
- Thanks to our partners, we were able to distribute 53,179 books to military children to encourage a lifelong love of learning and reading.
- The Blue Star Families annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey fielded and released its ninth report highlighting the trends and concerns within the military community.

If you have not yet joined us as a Blue Star Neighbor or Family, I personally extend to you the invitation to stand with us and be part of something greater than yourself. We are proud of what we have accomplished in the past, are continually improving what we do in the present, and look forward with great excitement to all that is to come.

However, we can’t serve our military families and nation alone. We need you.

Onward,

Kathy Roth-Douquet, CEO
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Who We Are

The families of our all-volunteer military make unprecedented sacrifices these days to serve our country. Blue Star Families was founded by military spouses in 2009 to empower these families to thrive as they serve. We’re committed to strengthening military families by connecting them with their neighbors – individuals and organizations – to create vibrant communities of mutual support. We believe we’re all stronger when we take care of one another.

Our groundbreaking research is raising the nation’s awareness of the unique challenges of military family life. With the help of neighbors across the country, Blue Star Families is overcoming the isolation and alienation of frequent moves, deployments, and reduced support from the government. Our innovative programs are solving specific challenges for military families, including fighting economic insecurity with resources that foster spouse career development, creating family strength with rich family programming, and providing critical peer support for caregivers, whose numbers are only increasing.

With more than 150,000 members in our network, including in chapters all over the world, Blue Star Families touches more than 1.5 million military family members every year. Through our research and program partnerships, Blue Star Families ensures that wherever American military families go, they can always feel connected, supported and empowered to thrive – in every community, across the nation and around the globe.

Visit bluestarfam.org for more information.
Blue Star Families conducted its 8th annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey from April 12-May 22, 2017. As in past years, we collaborated on this effort with Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF).

7,891 respondents

Opportunity costs that accompany service

- Sensitivity to lost opportunities due to military service
- Financial obstacles and military spouse unemployment
- Mental health and military sexual trauma

Civilian community integration

- Engagement and integration with civilian communities
- Improved opportunities to meet people
- Caregiver support

Diverse experiences of service

- Proclivity to recommend service
- Gender role expectations associated with military culture
- Transition experiences
How the Annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey Strengthens Military Families

Q1

The Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Personnel invited Blue Star Families to testify for the second consecutive year.

Presented results to Department of Defense leadership and the leadership of corporate, nonprofit and philanthropic stakeholders.

Published the Corporate Playbook 2017, a guide for corporations looking to support and get involved with the military family community through their corporate social responsibility efforts.

Q2

Informed the development of Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Tom Cotton’s Availability of Child Care for Every Service Member and Spouse (ACCESS) Act which was included in the passed version of the Senate’s FY18 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Q3

Informed and structured the Military Family Summit hosted by Congressman Sanford Bishop, Jr. and Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers.

Q4

Informed the inclusion of spouse employment provisions in the passed FY18 NDAA.

Presented the Senate Armed Services Committee with proposed 2018 federal legislative opportunities.

Presented results at the National Conference of State Legislatures.
"White Oak" is the informal name used to denote a series of conferences titled "America Joins Forces for Military Families", which encourage creative thinking and collaboration in support of the veteran and military community among major military related nonprofits, government leadership, and other major public and private contributors.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Development of federally supported initiatives to facilitate military spouse employment continuity and/or establishment of business incentives, specific to military spouse hiring.

2. Improve military family strength through positive messaging of military lifestyle by increasing visibility of successful military-affiliated individuals; reduce civil-military social distance through celebrations of community partners who enhance the lives of military members, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

3. Map organization's/potential partners across the country and intensify linkages between the DoD, the Veterans' Administration, and state government offices to facilitate knowledge of transition assistance coverage and gaps.
Blue Star Families is establishing and fostering engagement and partnerships to create recognizable, consistent communities that support health and resilience military families need to succeed. We engage military families and community members by delivering solutions to the challenges faced by military families within our local communities. Military families count on these vital connections as they move from one location to another.

| **51%** | **900** |
| INCREASED ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBERS BY CHAPTER DIRECTORS, REGIONAL DIRECTORS, AND STAFF | EVENTS HELD IN CONUS AND OCONUS LOCATIONS |
| **10,783** | **$255K** |
| HOURS DONATED BY VOLUNTEERS TO BSF | VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS |
New Initiatives in 2017

We Began to Study the Impact of Connected Communities

Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation

We launched a collaborative project to measure the mental health and economic impact of Blue Star Connected Communities on military families. The Connected Communities Pilot will leverage the collective impact of military family support programming to create a consistent and reliable community environment for military families. The effectiveness of this programming will be measured through the newly created Community Impact Study. Through this three-year initiative, we will be measuring and quantifying the outcomes and impacts of the Blue Star Connected Communities by tracking movement in military spouses’ career outlook, military family social isolation, and overall reported well-being.

We Expanded Blue Star Books

The National Endowment for the Humanities

We announced a three-year partnership to expand Blue Star Books through the project, Serving, Thriving, And Reading Together (START). START will foster connectivity between military and civilian families by creating meaningful dialogues around literature. Civilian families will benefit and learn from the military members whose networks are built over years of traveling the country and the world and the resiliency skills continually honed during each move. Military families in turn will learn “smart connectivity” to the wider civilian world, by instigating and strengthening relationships with their civilian neighbors through shared family and community experiences.
What We Delivered in 2017

Since the start of the Employment Networks Support Initiative, Blue Star Families has

**INCREASED MILITARY SPOUSE CAREER REVENUE BY $5.2 MILLION.**\(^1\)

- Placed 198 military spouses in jobs.
- Equipped military spouses with an average salary of $44,803.79.
- Referred 916 spouses to training opportunities that further their career goals.
- Blue Star Families’ Salesforce Administrator training for military spouses wrapped up the final of the five sessions in October 2017 with a 100% completion rate for Cohort 5.
- We provided a career-enhancing webinar series for military spouses. The series garnered 56,857 views, doubling our anticipated impact for 2017, with 71% of respondents feeling more connected to opportunities available to them because of the program.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Through BSF placements based on position description and location

\(^2\)BSF 2017 Networks Live On Demand Survey
**BLUE STAR PARKS**

60% of military family respondents were encouraged to obtain the America the Beautiful Annual Pass.

“Every time we move across the country (about every 3 years) we try to visit as many National Parks as we can along our way. It is a wonderful opportunity to teach our children about geography, culture, and preserving and appreciating natural resources, as well as a great bonding experience.”

- Military Family

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**BLUE STAR MUSEUMS**

803K military family members visited a participating Blue Star Museum.

90% of respondents believe their service was honored by the community through museum participation.

86% agreed museums provided an outlet for the stress of military family life.

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**BLUE STAR CAREGIVERS**

Provided forward-facing technology to engage rural and remote caregivers.

“What I got was more than I could have imagined. I went to my first BSF Caregivers Event and met some amazing women with stories that were similar to mine, which immediately put me at ease. Meeting people who had gone through a similar experience and made it out on the other side gave me hope for the future.”

- Military Family

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²BSF 2017 Summer Lifestyle Programming Survey

³BSF 2017 Blue Star Museums Impact Survey

⁴BSF 2017 Blue Star Museums Impact Survey
“Thank you so much for putting together this event for our kids. They really appreciated it and haven’t put the books down since we got home! Thank you for taking their mind off their Daddy being deployed for a few moments.”

- Military Family
Key Influencers

**EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**KATHY ROTH-DOUQUET**  
CEO, Blue Star Families

**NOELEEN TILLMAN**  
COO, Blue Star Families

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**SHEILA CASEY**  
Chairman, Board of Directors

**WHIT COBB**

**CHARLES EGGLESTON**

**TODD FINGER**

**MARK HENRY**

**KOBY J. LANGLEY**

**MARY MURPHY**

**CRAIG NEWMARK**

**JENNIFER M. O'CONNOR**

**DIANE LINEN POWELL**

**NADA STIRRATT**

**BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS**

**CONSTANCE J. MILSTEIN**  
Founding Blue Star Families  
Board Member Emeritus

**LES BROWNLEE**

**STEVE HILTON**

**LAURA SCHMIEGEL**

**DOUG WILSON**
Key Influencers

**ADVISORY BOARD**

PETER BLOOM  
Chairman, Advisory Board

DOUG BELAIR  
JACKIE BOLDEN  
ROBIN BRONK  
JORDAN BROWN  
WARD CARROLL  
ELLYN DUNFORD  
ROBERT GORDON  
FRED HANNETT  
DR. INGRID HERRERA-YEE

STEVE HILTON  
DONNA HOFFMEIER  
ROBIN KELLEHER  
COL. LORNA MAHLOCK  
AIMEE MALNATI STROMBERG  
DOUG MCCORMICK  
KATHLEEN MCMASTER  
EDWARD MEAGHER  
MARCIA NELSON  
VAL NICHOLAS  
HOLLY PAGE  
MISSY PERLIS  
DOUGLAS ROZMAN  
REBEKAH SANDERLIN  
LAURA SCHMIEGEL  
JONATHAN SOROS  
MALERIE STALKER  
BARBARA THOMPSON  
LOU WEISBACH  
DR. STEPHEN XENAKIS
## Top Donors

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<tr>
<td>Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation</td>
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<td>CJM Foundation (Connie Milstein)</td>
<td>Northrop Grumman</td>
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<td>Disney Worldwide Services, Inc.</td>
<td>Schultz Family Foundation</td>
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<td>George Link Foundation</td>
<td>Starbucks Coffee Company</td>
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<td>Georgia Southwestern Foundation</td>
<td>The Robert R. McCormick Foundation</td>
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<td>Got Your 6</td>
<td>United Health Foundation</td>
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<td>Lockheed Martin</td>
<td>USAA</td>
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<td>McDermott &amp; Associates</td>
<td>Veterans United Foundation</td>
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Financials

**ASSETS**

**CURRENT ASSETS**

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<th>Asset</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
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<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
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<td>Property and Equipment, Net</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

**CURRENT LIABILITIES**

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**NET ASSETS**

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**Total Liabilities and Net Assets**  

**$2,296,714**