



COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Navy Gold Star Program – 10 Years of Service

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

The Navy Gold Star Program was established on Oct. 1, 2014, to serve as the Navy's long-term support program to ensure the families of our Sailors who die on active duty can remain connected to their Navy family for as long as they desire. Since the program's inception, we have supported more than 18,000 Gold Star family members. Although our primary support lies within the Navy community, we are also committed to providing support to the Gold Star families of the other military service branches.

Over the last 10 years, our primary focus has been to provide support to our families and help survivors navigate through the personal, family, social, financial, legal, educational, and vocational needs and concerns that frequently arise after a loved one's death. Our coordinators have also worked closely with military and civilian organizations and programs to develop relationships so they can deliver the best possible service at the right time.

As we move toward the next 10 years, the Navy Gold Star Program strives to raise the bar of superior support to our survivors, bring awareness inside and outside of our military gates, and exceed the goals of our mission. Our survivors consistently share their gratitude and successes with us, which inspires and drives us to continue providing the exemplary support they deserve. Our program believes there is no greater calling or duty than to remember, honor and respect those who died while in service to our nation and care for their family members.

What our families are saying:

"I wanted to take the time to say thank you for the card you sent for my brother's passing. Nobody acknowledged that day, and the fact that you did ... well, it showed you cared and weren't too afraid to do the uncomfortable. Thank you."

– Julie G., a Gold Star sibling

"I just wanted to send you a thank you note for a newsletter you sent a couple months ago informing me of a college scholarship available to Gold Star siblings. Because of the information you provided, I applied and was ultimately awarded \$2,500 to help pay for my MBA schooling. As always, I greatly value the information you all provide to Gold Star families. Thank you for all that you do!"

– Zach L., a Gold Star sibling

"Please accept my sincere thanks for hosting Gold Star families on today's fleet week ship tours. My two grandchildren and I appreciated the opportunity. Please extend our gratitude to Navy personnel on both the USS John S. McCain and the USS Kansas City for opening their ships to public tours. The crew members we interacted with were all very professional and polite. We appreciate the time they took with us, their dedication and service to our country."

– Steve E., a Gold Star father

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program, please visit www.navygoldstar.com or www.facebook.com/navygoldstar.



**BELLS ACROSS AMERICA
FOR FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS**

Tolling in Remembrance of Our Nation's Fallen

Join us as we pay tribute to the brave men and women who died in service to our nation and recognize the sacrifices of those who have been left behind.

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Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Since 1936, the last Sunday in September has been designated as Gold Star Mother's Day to recognize and honor those who have lost a child while serving our country in the United States Armed Forces. In 2009, fallen service members' families were officially recognized and added by presidential proclamation, renaming the observance to Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day.

Each year, the president signs a proclamation reaffirming our commitment to honor the individuals "who carry forward the memories of those willing to lay down their lives for the United States and the liberties for which we stand." This year, on Sept. 29, we will pay tribute to those mothers and families who have sacrificed so much.

The Navy Gold Star Program provides survivors a safe environment to experience their own unique grief while assessing needs and ensuring appropriate resources are provided. The program supports Gold Star families while they adjust to the new normal and provides opportunities for remembrance so they know they will forever be a part of the Navy community.

As we observe Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, remember that that no one has given more for our nation than the families of the fallen. Let them know they will never be forgotten.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program, please call 1-888-509-8759, or visit www.facebook.com/navygoldstar or www.navygoldstar.com.

Bells Across America For Fallen Service Members

In September, Navy installations worldwide will be hosting Bells Across America For Fallen Service Members events, sponsored by Navy Mutual. These ceremonies help ensure that families of the fallen know their loved ones are remembered and that those touched by their loss have a way to pay tribute. During the ceremonies, the names of fallen service members are read out loud and a bell is tolled in remembrance. Visit www.navygoldstar.com/events/bells-across-america or www.facebook.com/navygoldstar to learn more about this year's hosting locations.

**Gold Star Mother's
and Family's Day**

September 29, 2024

Sacrifice - Remembrance - Strength

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CNIC
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FFSP Learning Management System Offers Classes for Gold Star Families

By Erick C. Roberts, Navy Gold Star Program Area Supervisor-West

A great resource you may be missing out on is the CNIC Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) Learning Management System (LMS), available at www.mynavyfamily.com. Perhaps you have seen the invitations to attend the Mind-Body Mental Fitness (MBMF) class. That class is offered through the FFSP LMS. MBMF is a six-class course. The six sessions can be taken together as a series, or any one session can stand alone. Each class deepens your understanding of mental fitness and gives you the tools to manage stress as you adjust to your new normal. MBMF gives you the ability to learn from the stressors you face and provides tools to use to manage the stressors of everyday life. This is just one example of the programs available to you through the FFSP LMS.

There have been some updates and additions to the FFSP LMS as well as increased access to the learning materials for Gold Star families. As Gold Star family members, you have your own Gold Star family member portal on the LMS to ensure that you are only seeing classes that pertain to most of you. Some of the subject areas include: employment, Exceptional Family Member Program, family emergency preparedness and response, parenting, personal financial management, personal growth, and resilience.

Each subject area has a list of individual class offerings that fall under that title. Please take the time to set up an account and browse through the materials available. I am certain that there will be a class that will pique your interest and provide new insight for managing your day-to-day life.

If you have questions as you go through the set-up process, please feel free to reach out to learning@zeiders.com.



NAVY GOLD STAR LMS ACCOUNT AID

Use these instructions to create a new account on the CNIC FFSP LMS. <https://learning.zeiders.refineddata.com>



1. **New Account.** On the log-in page of the LMS, you will see the option to log in or create a new account. Choose "New account."



2. **Privacy Policy.** The next screen outlines your rights as a user of the CNIC FFSP. Your information will never be sold, shared with solicitors, or used in any way other than to facilitate your training. Read the privacy policy and click "Next" at the bottom.

3. **Policy Acknowledgement.** Check the box to acknowledge the privacy policy. Note that the site uses session cookies that are active only while you are using the LMS.

4. **Choose your user name and password.** User names may be email addresses but cannot have capitals or special characters.

5. **Choose Navy Gold Star Family Member.** This ensures you are able to access the right information and training for your needs.

6. **Email.** Enter your email address twice. You will receive an email to confirm it is a valid address. If you do not receive one, write to the help desk at learning@zeiders.com

7. **First Name, Last Name and Country.** Fields are required.



8. **Time zone.** The most common time zones are listed at the top. This field is extremely important. The LMS adjusts the calendar and any reminder emails to your time zone. If you do not select a time zone, your profile will be set to Eastern Standard time and you may miss a training if that is incorrect.



9. **Learner type or staff role.** Chose Navy Gold Star Family Member for this item as well.

10. **Rate/Rank.** Select N/A.

If you have any problems or questions, please write the Help Desk at learning@zeiders.com
Tickets are answered from 7am to 8pm Eastern.

Updated 6/14/2022

Gold Star Children's Day Virtual Art Contest

By Alicia McCoy, Navy Gold Star Coordinator

Both the U.S. Congress (H. Res.551) and the U.S. Senate (S. Res.328) designated Aug. 1, 2021, as Gold Star Children's Day. Since that time, the Navy Gold Star Program has strived to provide activities and events that pay honor to the surviving children of our nation's fallen heroes each year on and around Aug. 1.

In honor and support of this year's Gold Star Children's Day, Navy Gold Star coordinators created a Virtual Art Contest for Gold Star children. The contest encouraged children to submit art in recognition of the 2024 Paris Olympics, which was underway during Gold Star Children's Day.

Gold Star children were asked to submit art that displayed their favorite Olympic event that they were excited to watch or the sport and/or event they would want to compete in. The submissions were separated into four groups for participation and judging: K3-K5, 1st-5th grade, 6-8th grade, and 9-12th grade.

The participating submissions came from an Army family assigned to the National Capital Region/Naval District Washington, D.C., area, and a Navy family from the Hampton Roads, Va., area. A huge thanks to Navy Gold Star coordinators Patsy Jackson and David Graham for sharing this opportunity with their fellow survivor outreach services coordinators and Gold Star families in their respective areas.

The winning submissions for the younger groups came from Helen Tin, surviving spouse of U.S. Army Major Stewart McGurk. She provided hand-drawn pictures created by their sons, Bronson McGurk, 11, 6th grade, and Florian, 7, 2nd grade. Bronson's picture clearly shows he loves the butterfly swimming events, while Florian's picture shows he is all about the U.S. men's soccer team events! The final entry was submitted by Alicia Adams, mom of Taylor Davis, 15, whose wonderful picture shows her love of women's volleyball. Taylor is the surviving daughter of Logistics Specialist First Class (LS1) Shannon Davis. She used the ibisPaint app to create her digital drawing. All three of these entries each earned 1st place prizes for their submission groups. Way to go!

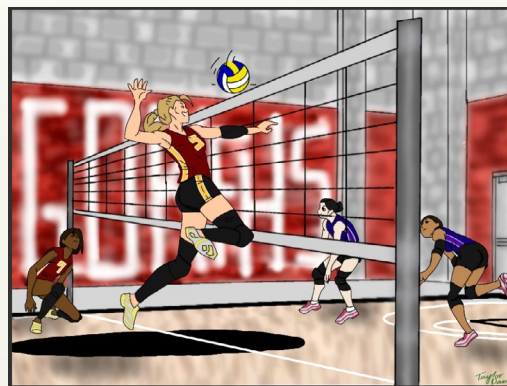
Thank you to our artists for their submissions and to their moms for participating! We appreciate you and look forward to future works of art from these young artists.



Florian McGurk, 7



Bronson McGurk, 11



Taylor Davis, 15





Understanding Service Animals

By Maura Bradshaw, Navy Gold Star Coordinator

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of assistance or support animals helping people who have a wide variety of diagnoses. These animals can be common in the military community for several reasons. The number of different categories and roles these animals fulfill can cause confusion and sometimes even distress for the animal handler.

So, what are the categories? Most commonly these animals are dogs and will therefore be referred to as dogs for this article. Support dogs fall into three categories: service dog, emotional support dog or therapy dog.

First let's define a service dog. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, "Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability." Only a service dog can go anywhere his handler goes, and only a service dog has legal protections. An emotional support dog is prescribed by a doctor or a licensed therapist to provide a therapeutic benefit through dedicated companionship for a person who has been diagnosed with an emotional or mental concern. Finally, a therapy dog is involved in animal-assisted therapy as a form of treatment. It is not uncommon to see therapy dogs at work in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, schools, libraries, and in other dog-friendly venues and situations.

A therapy dog is different because it is not trained to perform specific tasks for a disabled person like a service dog. This is an important distinction. The same is true in regard to an emotional support dog, who can help ease anxiety, depression and other conditions in affected individuals, but is not a service dog and does not have the same rights as a service dog.

What skills can a service dog provide? For those diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a service dog can provide stress-cue interruptions and deep-pressure therapies. The dogs can learn 80-100 commands to help their handler. Other ways the dog can support their handler is through mobility and bracing, retrieving and stability. Beyond PTSD, organizations may train service dogs to specialize in assisting those with diabetes, seizures, loss of sight, or hearing loss.

How should you respond if you see a service dog when you see one in public? Most of us in the military community will know to ignore the dog so they can focus on their job. After all, they are dogs, not robots. We also generally know not to ask to pet the dog, as well as not to ask why the individual has a dog. But did you also know if you ever come across a service dog without its handler you should follow the dog, as they may be leading you to the handler so you can help? While most dogs wear a vest identifying them as a service dog, it's not required by the ADA. A good practice with any dog that you are not familiar with is to always ask the handler if you can approach and/or pet the dog.

Dogs play so many roles in our lives, and these dogs perform important work in the daily lives of many people. We are grateful for what these dogs do.

If you are interested in applying for a service dog, please contact your Navy Gold Star coordinator or visit <https://dogsinc.org/get-a-dog/apply-for-a-skilled-companion-dog/gold-star-family-dog/> for more information.

Do you or a family member have a service dog, emotional support dog or therapy dog in your life? Share a photo of your pup on social media and hashtag it #NavyGoldStar.

Note: It is the mission of the Navy Gold Star Program to provide survivors with information on resources available to them. References to non-federal entities and the appearance of external hyperlinks do not constitute or imply Department of Defense or Navy endorsement of any company or organization.

Get Tech Ready

From www.ready.gov

September is National Preparedness Month, so let's talk about how to be "Tech Ready" in case of an emergency. Technology has made it easier than ever to prepare for emergencies, but it can be unreliable in an emergency if you haven't kept your gadgets protected and powered up. Here are some tips to make sure you are tech ready.

Be Informed

Download the FEMA app, <https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products>. Get weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States. Sign up for FEMA text messages, <https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products>, to get updates from FEMA (standard message and data rates apply).

Here are some basic commands to get started:

- To sign up to get preparedness tips: text PREPARE to 43362.
- To search for open shelters (for disaster survivors): text SHELTER and a ZIP Code to 43362.
- To get a list of all keywords, you can subscribe to: text LIST to 43362.
- To unsubscribe (at any time): text STOP to 43362.

Before a disaster, follow your local government on social media to stay up-to-date with official information before, during and after a disaster. Sign up for Twitter alerts from trusted government agencies to get notified when critical information goes out.

Make A Plan

Use text messages, social media and email to connect with friends and family during emergencies.

- Mobile networks can become overwhelmed during emergencies, making it hard to make and get phone calls. Text messages require less bandwidth, which means they are able to be transmitted more reliably during situations when many people are trying to use their mobile phones at the same time.
- Social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter can also be an effective way to update family and friends during emergencies. Facebook's Safety Check feature, <https://www.facebook.com/help/1761941604022087>, allows users to easily post a status update indicating that they are safe during a time of disaster.

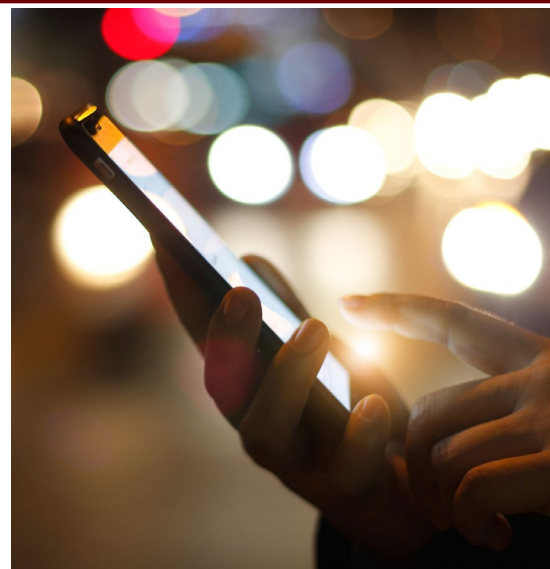
Have an emergency charging option for your phone and other mobile devices. Smartphones have become a vital tool to get emergency alerts and warnings, <https://www.ready.gov/alerts>, so it's important to make sure you can keep them powered up in an emergency.

- Prior to severe weather, make sure that all of your electronic devices are fully charged. If the power goes out, save battery power by minimizing device use. Keep a back-up power source on hand.
- Change the settings on your phone to low power mode or place it on airplane mode to conserve energy. Keep a portable phone charger in your car at all times and consider purchasing a back-up power supply to keep in your car as well.

Store important documents on a secure, password-protected jump drive or in the cloud.

- There are several apps for mobile devices that let you use your phone's camera as a scanning device. This lets you capture electronic versions of important documents such as insurance policies, identification documents and medical records. Don't forget to include your pet's information.
- Back up your computer to protect photos and other important electronic documents. Scan old photos to protect them from loss.
- Keep your contacts updated and synced across all of your channels, including phone, email and social media. This will make it easy to reach out to the right people quickly to get information and give updates. Consider creating a group listserv of your top contacts.
- Create a group chat via a texting app or a thread for family/friends/coworkers to communicate quickly during a disaster.

Sign up for direct deposit and electronic banking through your financial institution so you can access your paycheck and make electronic payments wherever you are. Federal benefit recipients can sign up by calling 800-333-1795 or at GoDirect.org.



National

POW/MIA

RECOGNITION DAY

Honoring their **sacrifice**.
Earnestly **searching** for those still missing.



SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 | **#OURPROMISE** | WWW.DPAA.MIL



Navy Gold Star Coordinators

Area of Responsibility	Phone
California (Los Angeles County/Northern CA), Japan, Guam, Korea	901-671-6720
California (San Diego/Riverside), Colorado, Utah, Hawaii	901-930-8290
California (San Diego/Riverside), Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada	901-930-8308
Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Minnesota, Canada	901-930-8062
Washington, Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Iowa	901-671-7519
Texas	901-930-8109
Michigan, Illinois, Indiana	901-930-8593
Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee	901-930-8300
Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine	901-671-6910
New York, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire	901-930-8388
West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, and all other counties in Virginia not listed below	901-930-8578
Virginia (these counties: Isle of Wight, Suffolk, Chesapeake City, Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Williamsburg City, Hampton City, Newport News City, Portsmouth City, York, Poquoson City)	901-930-8008
North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio	901-930-8210
Georgia, South Carolina, Europe	901-671-5597
Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida	901-671-6521
Florida	904-542-5706

Note: All postal mail should be sent to the below address.

Commander, Navy Installations Command
ATTN: Navy Gold Star Program
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Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5140