



# 2023 GOLD STAR YOUTH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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Honoring the service and sacrifice of the American military through active remembrance.

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Dear Supporter,

Thank you for your generous support of the Gold Star Youth Mentorship Program (GSYMP)!

As the first full-time staff entirely dedicated to nurturing the program, I had a pivotal opportunity to grow our impact in my first year in the role. I am excited to share a few recent accomplishments:

In 2023, we:

- Launched a mentorship community in our nation's highest op-tempo military installation: Fort Campbell, Kentucky.
- Reactivated in-person training for our local leaders, Mentors, and families.
- Strengthened our relationship with MENTOR, the nation's most trusted leader in mentoring.
- Hosted special events across the country for our participants, including:
  - STEM-based Day at the Races with active-duty Air Force Special Tactics Officer and professional race car driver, Chris Walsh
  - Rock 'n' Roll Nashville 5K for Mentees and Mentors
  - Fiesta River Parade with the Texas Cavaliers Challenge Day with First Special Forces Group
- Implemented quarterly "Social Saturday" events to ensure Mentees and Mentors stay connected in the off-season.

In this report, you'll notice some of the ways we are shifting our language around mentoring. Research suggests that instead of measuring and messaging the presence of negative outcomes (substance use, depression, etc.), programs would be better served by measuring the rates of positive youth development (PYDs), including competence, confidence, connection, character, caring/compassion, and the consideration of youth contribution to the community.

The Mentees in the Gold Star Youth Mentorship Program are strong, confident, and competent, and the Mentors in the program are caring, capable, and smart. Together, we are providing tools to cope with grief, empowering families, and creating strong communities.

We can't wait to show you more!



Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kari Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Kari Moore**

**Gold Star Youth Mentorship Program Director**

*wear blue: run to remember*

**“In 2024, we are excited to launch our newest Gold Star Youth Mentorship location Colorado Springs, as well as enhanced mental health resources for our Surviving families.”**

# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Gold Star Youth Mentorship Program pairs children of fallen military with service connected mentors of our armed forces to build resilience, healthy coping habits, and a connection to a life of service. Children are empowered to navigate the complicated impacts of traumatic childhood grief, and reclaim their lost identities as military children, while Mentors are able to complete their own cycles of healing.

This spring, *wear blue: run to remember* hosted a ten-week run-focused mentorship program for children who have lost a parent in military service. Gold Star and Surviving youth aged six to sixteen were matched with currently serving or recently separated Service Members. Mentors and Mentees met on Saturday mornings to set and work toward S.M.A.R.T. goals, learned about a life of military service, developed friendships, and trained for a Memorial Day 5K run.

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*Mentors can act as protective influences for youth, helping them to identify and use their strengths to overcome challenges.*

*(Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005)*



# THE RESULTS

- 95% of responding Mentors (service connected Mentors of our armed forces) strongly agree or agree that they had a **positive impact** on the life of a Gold Star or Surviving Child in the GSYMP.
- 92% of Mentors report that serving as a Mentor in the GSYMP **increased their self-esteem and made them feel valued as a community member.**
- 91% of Mentees were satisfied or very satisfied in their **program experience** this year.
- 90% of surveyed parents strongly agree or agree that **their child is more resilient** as a result of GSYMP.
- 79% of Mentees report that participating in the program helped them feel a **greater sense of pride and connection to their hero's military service.**
- 74% of Mentors report being very satisfied and 26% report being satisfied in their **mentor experience** this year.

**According to our partners at Mentoring.org, children who are mentored are:**

- 90% are interested in becoming a Mentor.
- 81% are more likely to participate regularly in sports or extracurricular activities.
- 78% more likely to volunteer regularly.
- 55% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school.

## LOCATIONS SERVED



62

Mentors

58

Mentees

35

Parents



TOGETHER, DURING THIS PROGRAM, WE HELD  
CLOSE THE NAMES, STORIES, AND SACRIFICE OF  
THE FOLLOWING FALLEN HEROES.

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**Fort Campbell, KY**

MAJ Steven J. Guevara

SFC Mark J. Jones

MSgt Nathan C. Pollard

CPL Mark Rodgers

SGT Brendan J. Scallon

**Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA**

SSG Bryan C. Black

SPC Adam N. Brewer

CW3 Frank A. Buoniconti

SGT John T. Good

CPT John L. Hallett

MAJ Thomas Hernandez

COL Timothy J. Hoiden

1LT Konrad Marsolek

SGT Joseph B. R. Milledge Sr

SFC Abraham W. Parmar

CPO Jon "JP" Pollard

SFC Dennis M. Urdaneta

SPC Tyler R. Walshe

**Fort Bragg, NC**

1SG Russell R. Bell

SSG Jimmy Enfinger

SFC Matthew Kyle Evans

SSG Cristian C. Gilfranco

MSG Nathan L. Goodman

SSG Przemyslaw S. Mazur

SFC James A. Smith

SGT Jack E. Stillman

MSG Joshua L. Wheeler

**Joint Base San Antonio, TX**

SGT Conrad Alvarez

MAJ Alan E. Colley

SGT James M. Crider

SGT Joshua A. Hester

CPT Andrew F. Caswell

SPC Joshua D. Madigan

MAJ Jean M. Muderhwa

SGT Yosbel Perez

SGT Joseph D. Ponder Jr.

SSgt Jacob Bradley Rich

CPL Jeremy M. Thompson





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**To all of the donors and supporters, thank you.** In a perfect world, all of our heroes would have made it home to their families, and *wear blue* wouldn't exist. But in our imperfect reality it is the generosity of donors and supporters like you that make our nation worth fighting for. It is why myself and countless other warriors continue volunteering to serve in our armed forces knowingly prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect our way of life. Your generosity honors our fallen warrior's legacy.

**CW2 Jack Webb, Mentor**



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