

For the Loved Ones of Those Who Served and Died

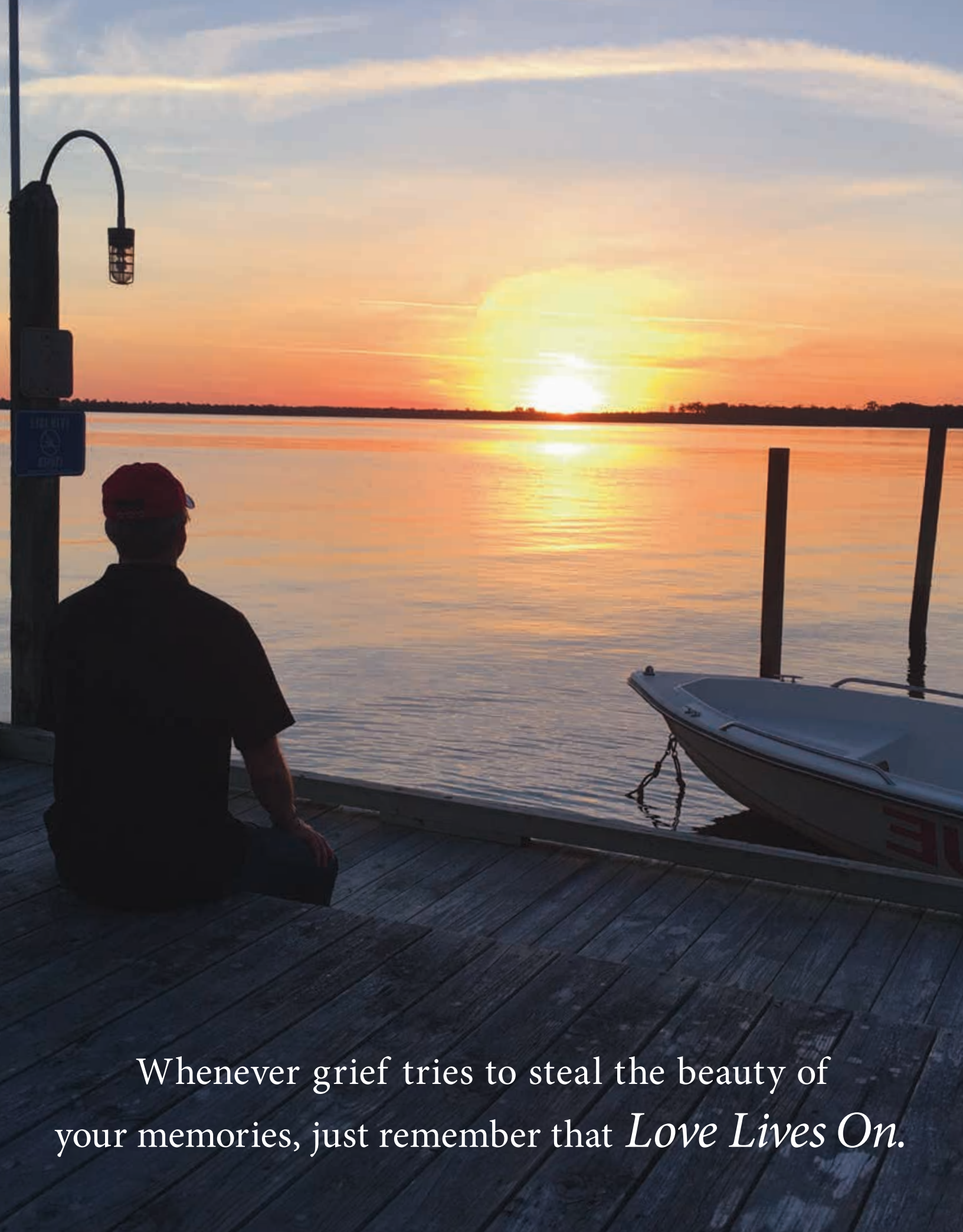
T★A★P★S®

SPRING 2019 | **MAGAZINE**

Love Lives On



Solitude or Social Support in Grief ★ Blooms of Hope
Family and Football ★ 25 Years of TAPS



Whenever grief tries to steal the beauty of
your memories, just remember that *Love Lives On.*

Foundation of Love

To Our TAPS Family,

Welcome to this edition of *TAPS Magazine*. This year we are reflecting on 25 years of the loving support and compassionate care of TAPS. Our family has grown over the years and we have expanded to meet needs and be present in every way.

Within the pages of our magazine, you will find articles by professionals who support us and fellow members of the TAPS family. A gentle reminder you are not alone on this journey. May these pages provide you with inspiration and encouragement.

Spring is a time of gentle warmth, of longer days and budding flowers and of emergence from a dark winter. When we are grieving, it may feel so unfair that the world around us is coming to life again when our loved one is gone. In this issue, we offer gentle ways to embrace this time of renewal despite the heartache we feel.

At TAPS, we hold on tight to each other without judgment or direction. We accept each other as we are in the moment, facing the sunshine and feeling the warmth of spring or closing the drapes and pulling the covers up. You now have in TAPS a family who just “gets it” and is here for you with patience and love. We encourage and support one another and take steps toward a future where we can find the sunshine again, bloom in our own special way and honor our loved ones.

Love and support are ever-present. I hope you have connected with a TAPS peer mentor, someone who’s walked a similar journey and been trained to provide support, there to reach out to you as a friend along the way. You can also explore talking to a grief counselor, which we can arrange for you at no charge. Inspiration and conversation are also as close as your computer or smart phone through our social media outlets (@TAPSorg). And plan to be with us for our National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp over Memorial Day weekend.

TAPS is a home built on love and understanding. Wherever you are, TAPS is there and is your safe place where love is spoken and legacies live on.

With hugs,



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Our Mission

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers compassionate care to all those grieving the death of a military loved one.

TAPS is here

24 HOURS A DAY / 7 DAYS A WEEK

- ★ National Military Survivor Helpline
24/7 at 800.959.TAPS (8277)
- ★ National Peer Support Network
- ★ Connections to Community-Based Care
 - ★ Casework Assistance
 - ★ Emergency Financial Assistance
 - ★ Education Resources and Support for Post-Secondary Education
- ★ TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing
 - ★ Grief and Trauma Resources
- ★ Seminars, Retreats, One-Day Gatherings
 - ★ Sports & Entertainment Events
- ★ Good Grief Camp for Children/Teens
- ★ National Military Mentor Program
 - ★ Young Adult Program
 - ★ TAPS Online Community
 - ★ TAPS Magazine

For more about the resources we provide, turn to page 30.

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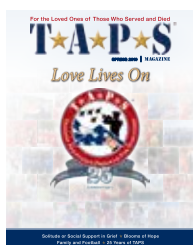
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 #WeAreTAPS



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By Ellen Andrews,
TAPS Senior Advisor,
Survivor Services

Dear TAPS...



COMMUNITY FOR LIFE

I am in awe of how TAPS has provided such care, understanding and compassion since my husband's passing. I've already attended an Inner Warrior Program event with Band of Runners, which opened my eyes to my what my future could hold. I hope to be a part of TAPS community for life.

Erica Lopez

California

Surviving spouse of
CPO Ernest Lopez, US Navy

TAKING A VILLAGE

Your program and people shepherded me through a very difficult time in my life. I did not build my resiliency on my own; it really did take a village. Thank you for the work you do, I couldn't have gotten to where I am today without your help. I wish you nothing but strength and grace. Thank you for saving my life.

Laura Futrell

North Carolina

Surviving Battle Buddy

SHOWING THE LIGHT

I thought I didn't belong because I was Bryan's ex wife. I felt lost until I spoke with the amazing TAPS mentors at the Snowball Express at Disney. They showed me the light. They gave me hope and filled my heart with love. My sons felt it as well.

Nicole Winfrey

Florida

Surviving ex-spouse of
SSG Bryan P. Pitney, US Army

GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

I cannot thank you enough for all that you have done for me. Your support has meant so much. Your phone calls and talks with me helped me in so many ways. Just knowing someone is there for you that understands firsthand (unfortunately) what I have been going through. There are feelings/emotions that I feel only another mother can truly understand. Again, my deepest thanks for all you have done.

Leslie McGivern

Colorado

Surviving mother of
SPC Ethan Jacob Edelman, US Army
Veteran

MOVEMENT TO HEALING

I have no words to describe the impact being with all of you has had on me, but I guess I really don't have to, you already know. I came home changed. I realized a few days ago that while I was physically tired, I was mentally and emotionally rested. For four days I didn't have to fake or pretend anything. My mind and soul actually feel movement in healing. I am grateful beyond measure and wish I had some way to express it to you.

Since returning home, my mind is spinning with ways to be of service to others. For four years I have pretty much functioned on automatic and have been a taker, in some ways. Now it is time for me to start giving. Although my heart will always feel sad from losing Parks, I know my heart can also open up to great joy and happiness and live a life that my son would want me to live.. I have prayed since the day I lost him for God to guide my steps, give me direction and reveal to me how I can help others. I am exponentially blessed and I try to never take that for granted.

Tammy Bussard

Tennessee

Surviving mother of
SSG Nolan Parks Barham, US Army

HOPE REINS

Wanted to let you know that my daughter Danielle and I had a wonderful time Saturday at Hope Reins! The folks there were so kind and welcoming. The grounds were lovely and I haven't made a s'more over a campfire since I was a Girl Scout. Great event! It was also nice to be with other TAPS families. My brother's passing was last Thursday, and his birthday is today...it's been an emotional week, perfect time to be with others who understand.

Monique Marcum-Nichols

North Carolina

Surviving sister of

John P. 'Paulie' Marcum, US Air Force

A BEACON OF HOPE

TAPS has been a refuge for my three surviving children and myself. The families and friends we have met along this life-changing journey will always be a part of our lives. Bonnie has established one of the most profound and empathetic groups of people to reach out to those who have suffered the loss of a service member. A beacon of hope and healing for sure!

Julie Hepner

South Carolina

Surviving mother of

PFC Thomas R. Wilson, US Army

STRENGTH TO SHINE

I just wanted to take a minute to thank you so very much for this amazing experience (TAPS College Experience Week)! You've blessed us in such amazing ways and it was such a great treasure to see some of these kids really bloom and grow and SHINE last night! I was astounded by what I saw in Rory last night! She never talks to people like that! To see her come out in her shell last night and shine like never before was the most amazing gift!

We truly appreciate all your hard work and effort for our kids! We would truly be lost without you!

Thank you!

Heather Tolf-McDermott

Florida

Surviving spouse of

SSGT Gregory W. McDermott, USMC



Connect with Us!

WRITE TO US

We welcome your thoughts about anything you read in our pages or any experience you have with TAPS. Please write to us at editor@taps.org.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Your stories can bring hope and healing to TAPS families. We invite you to share a story about your loved one or your grief journey. All submissions will be considered for TAPS Magazine, our blogs at taps.org, and other TAPS publications. We invite you to read our submission policy and submit your story at taps.org/shareyourstory.

JOIN US ONLINE

Find information about our resources, programs, and events on our website taps.org. You'll also find our blog with stories of survivor strength and healing. Our Online Community host chat sessions for connection to others from the comfort of home. Learn more at taps.org/onlinecommunity.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE SATURDAY MORNING MESSAGE

The Saturday Morning Message is a weekly email written by and for survivors to provide support along the grief journey. To subscribe, send a request to online@taps.org.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[facebook.com/tapsorg](https://www.facebook.com/tapsorg) | [@tapsorg](https://twitter.com/tapsorg) | [@tapsorg](https://www.instagram.com/tapsorg) [Snapchat](https://www.snapchat.com/add/tapsorg)

[youtube.com/c/tapsorg](https://www.youtube.com/c/tapsorg)

For more on TAPS resources and support, turn to page 30.

Solitude or Social Support in Grief?

Why We Need Both

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.



In many ways, grief is an experience replete with contradictions.

We feel like time stops, yet time goes on. We can't stop thinking about the death, yet we distract ourselves so we won't think about it. We're strong, yet we're weak. We're resilient, yet we're vulnerable.

Acknowledging and embracing these necessary contradictions (and others) is part of our work of mourning. It's a question of balance and back-and-forth. While there's no set formula that applies to everyone, you'll find that working each day on creating a balance that's right for you will help you achieve momentum in the journey.

Another one of the contradictions in grief that is essential for you to explore is the need for solitude versus social support. Which is better? The answer is both.

The Need for SOLITUDE in Grief

For many of us, solitude in grief comes naturally. When we are emotionally and spiritually torn apart, we often turn inward. The numbness of early grief settles in like fog. Later, we may often find ourselves mired in the thoughts and feelings inside us. This is normal.

I sometimes call this helpful inner experience of being mired in your grief "sitting in your

wound." When you sit in the wound of your grief, you surrender to it. You acquiesce to the instinct to slow down and turn inward. You allow yourself to appropriately wallow in the pain. You shut the world out for a time so that, eventually, you have created space to let the world back in.

In grief, we need the stillness of alone time to feel our feelings and think our thoughts. To slow down and turn inward, we must sometimes actively cultivate solitude. Being alone is not the curse we may have been making it out to be. It is actually a blessing. After all, we are born alone, and will die alone. We are each by ourselves a unique child of the universe.

Solitude in grief is both necessary and healing. If you are someone who avoids solitude, however, through constant distraction, busyness, or attachment to others, you may be avoiding your normal, necessary pain. You may be plugging your ears to the still, small voice inside you that asks you to slow down, turn inward, and pay attention to it. You may be ignoring your spirit and your soul. When this happens, your grief journey stalls. You get stuck in avoidance and denial.

Note that too little solitude is harmful in grief, but so is too much solitude. The griever who shuts the world out completely and does not receive and accept the support of others will also get stuck.

The Need for SOCIAL SUPPORT in Grief

One of our key needs of mourning is to receive and accept support from friends, family members, neighbors, and colleagues. The empathy of others allows us to express our natural and necessary grief outside of ourselves. Whenever we talk about our grief and share our stories of love and loss, we are taking a step toward healing.

Another reason social support in grief is necessary is that human beings need companionship. We are social creatures, and our relationships give life meaning. In fact, our very grief is testament to that truth. The relationship we had with the person who died gave our life meaning. The same is true of other relationships in our continued lives.

When we lack companionship, we are lonely. Loneliness can be challenging after the death of someone special, especially someone who had been a part of our daily lives. Loneliness hurts. To counteract our loneliness, we must find ways to reach out to others.

We have the capacity to establish new routines of spending time with friends, family members, neighbors, fellow volunteers, work colleagues, likeminded hobbyists, and other people with whom



we have things in common. Not only does working on connection quell our loneliness, it also provides us with listening ears for the expression of our grief.

The social support we ask for and receive during our time of grief helps build a bridge of meaning that carries us toward our future. While a special relationship has been ended by death, we can form and strengthen other relationships. These people will never replace the person who died, but they can and will make our lives worth living again.

If you're an introvert or someone who tends to self-isolate, you may find reaching out for and accepting social support in grief challenging. Yet I promise you that developing or strengthening a relationship with even one other person will enrich your life in myriad ways and help you through your time of grief. As the poet John Donne famously wrote, "No man is an island." Never is this truer than in grief.

Finding a BALANCE

I hope you will work to find the balance between solitude and social support in grief that is right for you. One indication

to look for is momentum. Are you feeling like you are experiencing movement in your journey? (Sometimes the movement may be backward, and that's OK.) Are you feeling the hope that comes with motion?

If you are feeling stuck, on the other hand, or hopeless, you may need to consciously work on your solitude/social support balance. If you're tipping too much to one side or the other, or if you're not really engaging in either but are instead spending most of your time on non-meaningful distractions, try carving out some time for true solitude or genuine social interaction (or both). They will transform your present as well as your future. ☆

A longtime TAPS supporter, Dr. Alan Wolfelt serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition and is a member of the TAPS Advisory Board. He has written many books that help people mourn, including *Healing Your Grieving Heart After a Military Death* (coauthored with TAPS President Bonnie Carroll.) Visit www.centerforloss.com to learn more about grief and to order Dr. Wolfelt's books.

Putting on My Oxygen Mask

A Father's Journey to Healing and Helping Others

Don Lipstein | Surviving father of MA2 Joshua L. Lipstein, US Navy

I believe we are faced with choices along our journey. Some of those choices can help us heal while others tend to slow our progress and deflate our hope of ever getting to a safe place in our journey. A common thread among the men with whom I have come in contact is that we were raised to be the strong, stoic presence. We were encouraged to help everyone else before thinking about ourselves.

What I have learned however is that you have to take care of yourself in order to be a solid source of support to another. Similar to the familiar instructions given during airline safety briefings – the oxygen mask needs to be applied to yourself before assisting others. I have grown to have a more keen awareness and appreciation of the metaphor as it applies

to the extension of support to another in any circumstance.

I knew very little about grief when my oldest son, Joshua died by suicide in March 2011. He was a proud Navy sailor who seemingly had everything to live for but wasn't able to see the sun through the clouds in his head. His mother had just died from a 3-year battle with cancer and he was not able to figure out how he could ever recover from such a devastating loss. He had been abusing opioids and turned to heroin after her death. He lost all hope of a future worth living.

His suicide set my life on a path I never would've imagined prior to this tragedy. My heart had been ripped open and my life seemed all but shattered. Could

I do what he did? I thought about it, but quickly realized that I had much more to do in my life.

My path to hope and healing started with my call to TAPS and I was connected with a Survivor Care Team Advocate. They referred me to grief counseling at the local Vet Center. These two encounters saved my life. I found connecting with others who understood gave me hope. They walked this difficult journey with me as I found my way out of the wilderness.

My counselor helped take off the 'victim mask' I wore so proudly, and focus on finding healing through the pain. She carefully guided me, allowing me to make conscious decisions. One of those decisions was to not medicate, as I felt



Becoming involved with TAPS gave me the encouragement I needed to talk about Joshua and talk about my grief. Initially, this felt very strange, as I was not one to discuss my thoughts and feelings openly with anyone outside my tiny circle. With the support of many in TAPS I stepped out of my comfort zone and told my story to anyone who would listen. Finding this strength to share enabled my healing to take flight, and over time the darkness turned to light.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DON LIPSTEIN

I would only be numbing the natural feelings brought on by grief. For me, this was the best decision for my personal journey. It helped me to move more fluidly through the challenges of the journey I was thrust into traveling.

Becoming involved with TAPS gave me the encouragement I needed to talk about Joshua and talk about my grief. Initially, this felt very strange, as I was not one to discuss my thoughts and feelings openly with anyone outside my tiny circle. With the support of many in TAPS I stepped out of my comfort zone and told my story to anyone who would listen. Finding this strength to share enabled my healing to take flight, and over time the darkness turned to light.

As I ventured more into the light, I wanted to find ways I could honor Joshua and help others who have had to endure the pain of loss. Unexpectedly, I was given an amazing

opportunity to be a part of the supportive mission of TAPS. In my work as a member of the TAPS Survivor Care Team, I have learned my story is very similar to many of the male survivors who are lost and just need a little encouragement and guidance into the healthiest ways to grieve. With men often feeling the need to be strong and stoic, it is easy to ask - do men actually grieve? Of course they do. Do we all do it the same way? No. We each grieve on our own terms and within our own time frames.

TAPS offers men varied forums and programs to be among peers and have a safe environment to explore thoughts and emotions. Each month the TAPS Online Community hosts a men's only video chat where you can have open and honest conversations from the comfort of home. For in-person connections, there

are retreats for men as well as discussion/support groups at TAPS seminars.

I chose to channel my energy and offer my experience and encouragement to other men in order to keep me on a healthy path and honor my son. You can also take your experience and be a beacon of hope for another. If you are 18 months beyond your loss, you can complete training to become a TAPS Peer Mentor. You will be given tools to help you be a companion and offer hope to another.

The grief journey is different for each individual. We find our own way in our own time. My chosen path has strengthened me and opened my life to a wonderful circle of friends. I invite all male survivors to participate and connect with others through TAPS programs and I look forward to meeting you. ★

Learn more about upcoming men's retreats:
www.taps.org/events/?tag=Retreats

Men's only video chats and online peer groups:
www.taps.org/onlinecommunity

Become a TAPS Peer Mentor:
www.taps.org/becomeapeermentor

You are cordially invited to attend



MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR & GOOD GRIEF CAMP FOR YOUNG SURVIVORS

★ **MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND** ★

May 24 – 27, 2019

Arlington, VA

*Join your TAPS family for a weekend of connection, reflection,
and inspiration as we illuminate paths to hope and healing.*

Remember the Love ★ Celebrate the Life ★ Share the Journey

Open Hearts, Open Arms, Sacred Spaces

PLAN TO BE WITH TAPS OVER MEMORIAL DAY

Registration can be accessed through our website at www.taps.org/national. For this year only, in celebration of 25 years of care, the registration fee for all attendees will be \$25 (adult or child).

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Plan to arrive Thursday for early registration or early Friday morning for our opening sessions. Friday morning check-in will be available, but we want you to have as much time with your TAPS Family as possible before our opening session and keynote address. Our event concludes Monday afternoon after attending the National Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery or the National Memorial Day Parade.

YOUR HOME FOR MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

All events and workshops for the 25th Annual TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp take place in, or depart from, the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. The closest airport is Washington Reagan National Airport (DCA), and free shuttles to the hotel are available.

To make your hotel reservation, visit the seminar webpage at www.taps.org/national to get our special conference rate of \$145 per night. The last day you can register for the seminar and reserve a room at this guaranteed rate is Friday, April 26, 2019.

A limited number of scholarships are available for those who have financial need. Please visit taps.org/national for more information or call TAPS at 800-959-TAPS (8277).

PEER MENTOR TRAINING

We welcome those who are at least 18 months beyond their own loss to become a TAPS Peer Mentor. TAPS provides a full day of instruction to prepare you and ongoing guidance to support you as you offer your care and experience to a newly bereaved survivor. If you are interested, please register for the Peer Mentor Training as a part of general registration and visit the Peer Mentor Program webpage: www.taps.org/BecomeAPeerMentor



25TH ANNUAL TAPS NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR AND GOOD GRIEF CAMP

Start planning now to join us over Memorial Day weekend. Go to www.taps.org/national to register.

25TH ANNUAL TAPS NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR AND GOOD GRIEF CAMP

Remember the Love, Celebrate the Life, and Share the Journey

NEW TO TAPS

Whether your loss is recent or you are new to TAPS, you will be welcomed with open arms to our national event. A special orientation will be available for you on Friday morning to provide an overview of the seminar as well as information on other newcomer groups that will meet throughout the weekend. TAPS staff and peer mentors will be on hand to guide you and surround you with the loving care of your new TAPS family.

Even if you're some years out from your loss, prioritizing these "first-timer" sessions will help you feel grounded and connected. You'll have a chance to meet others who have just found their way to TAPS and start to pick out familiar faces. You'll make new friends and meet staff who will be present for you during the weekend.

RETURNING SURVIVORS

Returning survivors are able to take advantage of new programming options as well as some of our important traditional

workshops, all tailored to the various stages of the grief journey. In addition to familiar topics such as understanding complicated grief and coping with family dynamics, we will introduce you to new speakers and workshops. As grief changes, so do our perspectives. We also encourage you to experience familiar speakers and workshop leaders from changing vantage points - what didn't speak to you one year might resonate the next.

YOUNG SURVIVORS

TAPS Good Grief Camp for young survivors is America's premier program for children and teens whose parent or sibling has died in military service. In our unique model, children are paired with trained mentors who support them as they explore their feelings, learn coping skills, and have fun in a place where they feel connected with other children who experienced a similar loss. Because each developmental stage presents new perspectives and different challenges, young survivors (ages 4 through high school graduation) are encouraged to attend.

The very youngest members of our TAPS family (0-3 years) will be cared for by loving childhood educators.

YOUNG ADULTS

Good Grief Camp and Adult Programming, TAPS has developed curriculum for 18-25 year olds that is based on personal and career development, financial stability, communications, and service to others. During the course of the seminar, Young Adults will come together to strengthen bonds, share experiences, and learn ways to develop sustainable, balanced lifestyles - all while honoring their heroes.

CONNECTIONS

Small sharing groups offer gentle, supportive discussions. Some groups are topic-based, while others are reserved for specific relationships. Regardless of the topic or structure, these sessions are led by trained facilitators. The guiding principles for sharing groups include receptive sharing, listening and respectful peer support.



What You Can Expect

SPECIAL GUESTS

During our weekend we will be joined by special friends who give their time and their heart to our TAPS family.

General Martin Dempsey, US Army (Ret), was the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and is a member of the TAPS Board of Directors. He will open our 25th Anniversary National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp to honor our heroes and celebrate our TAPS family. General Dempsey is a combat veteran, served as Chief of Staff of the US Army, and has been knighted by the Queen of England.

Celebrity Chef Robert Irvine, long time TAPS supporter and star of TV's Restaurant: Impossible and The Robert Irvine Show will again bring his culinary talents to lead the military service chief chefs in preparing our Grand Banquet on Saturday evening. A veteran of the Royal Navy, Chef Irvine is a member of the TAPS Honorary Board and a steadfast supporter of our mission.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

We are excited to bring you an expanded suite of programming designed to address how grief and emotional stress affect body and mind. Deep inside each of us is our Inner Warrior - the voice that urges us to keep trying, the fighter that chooses to get stronger every day. The TAPS Health and Wellness staff, collaborating with other experts in the field, invites you to workshops designed to help you resolve pain, build confidence, and lean into the difference between "good tired" and "grief tired."

REFLECTIONS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

If grief, trauma, or exhaustion seem to have wrung everything from you, you're not alone. Numbness, detachment, and fear for the future can feel overwhelming in early grief and persistent or surprising when we're

further along. It's not uncommon to feel a void - a spiritual or emotional blank space. Yet, there are many powerful ways to honor this emptiness through art, writing, music, meditation, and yoga (to name a few). At our national seminar, these sessions help you find creative release, guide you on your journey, and soothe your spirit.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events in Washington, D.C. and Arlington, VA offer enriched ways to experience military traditions, remembrance ceremonies, musical and sporting events against the landscape of the nation's capital. Friday night special events include the Marine Corps Evening Parade, Nationals

Baseball Game, and Moonlight Monuments Tour, as well as memorable opportunities closer to the hotel. On Monday, TAPS families are guests of honor at the National Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery, and a limited number of slots are available for those who want to walk in the National Memorial Day Parade. Space for many of these activities is limited, so register early.

SURVIVOR SANCTUARY

The Survivor Sanctuary, set aside as a quiet place for adults, is a retreat for sitting, reflecting, and processing-a space to take a break and draw apart for a time to renew your spirit and find balance. ★



QUESTIONS ABOUT ATTENDING?

Visit our website at:

taps.org/national/2019/faq

Speakers and presenters:

taps.org/national/2019/speakers



Calendar of Events

TAPS INSTITUTE FOR
HOPE AND HEALING

SEMINARS

APRIL 25

Double Whammy –
Coping with the Death of a
Spouse While Parenting
a Grieving Child

LIVE WEBINAR

JUNE 20-21

Helping Individuals and
Families Coping with Grief
A GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Visit www.taps.org/institute
for more information

MAY 24-27

25th Annual National Military Survivor
Seminar and Good Grief Camp
Arlington, VA

JULY 12-14

Western Regional
Seminar and Good Grief Camp
City of Industry, CA

AUGUST 2-4

Midwest Regional
Seminar and Good Grief Camp
Cleveland, OH

SEPTEMBER 13-15

Southeast Regional
Seminar and Good Grief Camp
Jacksonville, FL

OCTOBER 11-14

National Military Suicide Survivor
Seminar and Good Grief Camp
Phoenix, AZ

NOVEMBER 22-24

Northeast Regional
Seminar and Good Grief Camp
New Brunswick, NJ



If you're a survivor of suicide loss,
TAPS has a special place for you.

Join your TAPS family
AT THE

**2019 NATIONAL MILITARY
SUICIDE SURVIVOR SEMINAR**

**OCTOBER 11-14, 2019
PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

At the National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar, you'll meet other people walking the same road — suicide loss survivors from across the country who come to share stories, struggles, moments of reflection and loving support.



Find strength in your TAPS family, knowing you are not alone as we celebrate the lives of our loved ones. Find out more at www.taps.org/nmsss.
Registration opens early June.



25 Years of TAPS

#LoveLivesOn

HONORING OUR HEROES AND RECOGNIZING THOSE WHO SUPPORT AND EXEMPLIFY OUR MISSION.



"We know that the TAPS family will be there. They will take care of those we leave behind."
 ~ GENERAL PAUL J. SELVA, USAF,
 VICE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF



"TAPS isn't something I do, it's something I am."
 ~ CAPTIAN KEVIN PENN, USMC (RET.)
 ☆ MILITARY MENTOR OF THE YEAR ☆



~ RICHIE McDONALD, JIMMY NICHOLS AND FRANK MYERS



~ CAMELITA, CHRISTOPHER AND PHILLIP JOHNSON, SURVIVING FAMILY OF 1LT DANIEL CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON, US ARMY

GO TO TAPS.ORG/GALA TO SEE PHOTOS AND SPONSORS FROM THE GALA



Because of you, the families of America's Fallen Heroes have this home. We have a new family. We know that our heroes are forever remembered and honored. We know that Love Lives On.

~ BONNIE CARROLL, TAPS FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT



The tools I've gained to navigate grief have become my strongest assets in adulthood. TAPS has given me the irreplaceable: Life after Tragedy.

~ANGEL PANSINI, SURVIVING SISTER OF SGT. NICHOLAS ANTHONY PANSINI, USMC

★ TAPS SENATOR TED STEVENS LEADERSHIP AWARD ★



TAPS SUPPORTER CHEF ROBERT IRVINE ENJOYING THE EVENING WITH TAPS FAMILIES.

~SURVIVING FAMILY OF PFC JASON LESTER, US ARMY VETERAN



TAPS was – and is – unique in that they welcome all military survivors, regardless of where – how – or, when their loved one died.

~KYRA PHILLIPS, ABC NEWS



~GENERAL MARK MILLEY, CHIEF OF STAFF, US ARMY

PHOTOS BY NESSA CHASE, CHELSEA BISHOP, MARION MEAKEM, TARA RUBY AND TONY STEELE

TAPS Through the Years

25 Years of Hope and Healing

1994

- ★ Incorporated as a nonprofit on October 17, 1994 with a national peer support network, information and resources, casework assistance, and 24/7 helpline at 1-800-959-TAPS



1995

- ★ First newsletter
- ★ First National Military Survivor Seminar and TAPS Kids Camp



1996

- ★ Website launch of TAPS.org



1997

- ★ First weekly chat sessions through America Online (AOL)
- ★ Recognized as a Veterans Service Organization by the VA
- ★ First TAPS Honor Guard event to raise funds and honor donors, legislators, and military



1998

- ★ "TAPS is a wonderful story of courage and commitment. In its countless contributions, TAPS helps to deliver the triumph of tenderness and kindness over pain, suffering, and loss." ~ 12th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, USA



2002

- ★ TAPS Magazine graduates to full color 24-page publication
- ★ First all-day TAPS Peer Mentor Training at national seminar



2003

- ★ TAPS partners with the VA Vet Centers to expand bereavement counseling to all family members



2000

- ★ First TAPS Run & Remember Team ran the Marine Corps Marathon



2001

- ★ Elite military athletes competed in the first TAPS Armed Forces Eco-Challenge, an extreme adventure race raising funds for TAPS
- ★ TAPS adopts motto of "Remember the Love, Celebrate the Life, Share the Journey"
- ★ TAPS present at Pentagon Family Assistance Center for six weeks providing support for 9/11 families and survivors



2004

- ★ TAPS Kids Camp renamed Good Grief Camp



2005

- ★ Launch of TAPS Regional Military Survivor Seminars

2007

- ★ First TAPS Resource Kit mailed



2009

- ★ TAPS collaborated with Sesame Street Workshop to produce *When Families Grieve*



- ★ First National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar for survivors of suicide loss
- ★ Partnered with USO to send Resource Kits to survivors
- ★ First overnight Good Grief Campout

2011

- ★ U.S. Navy Memorandum of Agreement signed
- ★ U.S. Air Force Memorandum of Agreement signed
- ★ First Quick Series Guide to Benefits and Finances published
- ★ Dickey Chapelle Award from the Marine Corps League



2010

- ★ U.S. Marine Corps Memorandum of Agreement signed
- ★ First printing of *Klinger, A Story of Honor and Hope*
- ★ First Quick Series Survivor Guide published



2008

- ★ TAPS retreat program began with a Widow's Retreat
- ★ Defense Department with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service



★ I am eternally grateful for TAPS. We spend a lot of time, in these very challenging times, looking for organizations that make a difference." ~ 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen, USN



2012

- ★ Vice President and Mrs. Biden attend TAPS national seminar
- ★ *Big Miracle* Movie Premiere



2013

★ U.S. Coast Guard Memorandum of Agreement signed



★ Joint American/Israeli Good Grief Camp in Washington, D.C.



★ TAPS survivors join with counterparts in the United Kingdom to find comfort and healing



★ National Guard Memorandum of Agreement signed

2015

★ TAPS Founder and President Bonnie Carroll receives Presidential Medal of Freedom



★ Bonnie Carroll receives the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Service Award



2016

★ Launch of stars4taps



★ TAPS partners with USA Basketball

★ Partners with Home Base to provide intensive clinical program for survivors suffering from trauma related to their loss

★ TAPS is first non-clinical recipient of the Association of Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) Clinical Practice Award – Recognition of efficacy of emotional support programs for bereaved military families

2014

★ TAPS release of best practice three-phase model for suicide postvention

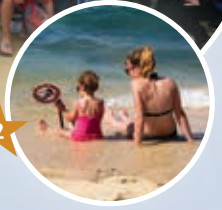
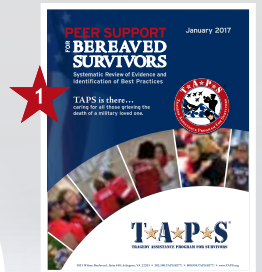
★ IDF Widows and Orphans organization – Trip to Israel

★ Launch of teams4taps



2017

- ★ TAPS publishes Peer Support for Bereaved Survivors - Systematic Review of Evidence and Identification of Best Practices
- ★ Department of Veterans Affairs Memorandum of Agreement signed
- ★ American Psychological Association (APA) Division 19, Society for Military Psychology's 2017 Yerkes Award for exceptional contributions to Military Psychology by a non-psychologist
- ★ "No organization is as responsible for the sense of confidence that our families would be taken care of as TAPS." ~ 19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford, USMC



2018

- ★ TAPS new National Headquarters opens
- ★ TAPS Inaugural Cruise
- ★ Launch of TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing
- ★ International Working Group and Statement of Support
- ★ Inaugural TAPS College Experience Week for Young Adult Survivors
- ★ 10th Annual TAPS National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar (Over 1000 attendees)
- ★ Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award



Family and Football

TAPS at the NFL Pro Bowl

Christina Romero | Surviving spouse of MAJ Benny Romero, US Army

At this year's NFL Pro Bowl, twenty families, including my children and myself were treated by teams4taps to a once in a lifetime experience. Initially, I was excited yet anxious. My children (Liam and Gracie) and I had only attended one other TAPS event. The seminar and Good Grief Camp had been so positive for us and I hoped this event would be as well.

From the moment we landed in Orlando, TAPS military mentors and staff extended kindness and warmth to all the families attending and we immediately felt that we were amongst friends. Every detail was planned for what became an amazing weekend.

On Friday, we were able to observe the NFL Pro Bowl players' practice. When practice was completed, TAPS families were able to meet the players, get autographs and take pictures. As a lifelong San Francisco 49ers fan, you can imagine how excited I was when all three 49ers came directly over to my family and me. George Kittle, tight end for the 49ers, took my daughter Gracie in his arms and onto the field so a better picture of them could be taken. Much to my delight, Gracie now tells anyone who will listen that she and George Kittle are best friends.

The next day, every family was paired with an NFL player and together we took on a woodworking project, making American flags as a take home memory of our experience. This was great as we got to have one-on-one time with the players and could share about TAPS and about our hero that we were honoring. Sunday was game day and we all attended the Pro Bowl. Despite the pouring rain, everyone donned his or her TAPS poncho and we had a fantastic time.



While the Pro Bowl activities were amazing, the most delightful aspect of this trip was the feeling of acceptance and love we felt from all the families, TAPS military mentors and staff. When we left, it was like leaving a family reunion. We were all there because we lost someone we loved. I could share my story and talk about my husband with both laughter and tears in the same sentence and they understood. Being able to talk to others in a safe environment and to be able to tell your story with others who know what you're going through is priceless. Bonnie Carroll, TAPS President and Founder, said, "TAPS loves you and we are your family."

I truly feel that way and so do my kids. My son Liam and another boy were talking while on a bus ride. The boy told Liam how his dad died and Liam replied, "My dad died too." Liam then said, "But it's okay, because we are like brothers now because we are part of the TAPS family."

When we got home, Liam asked if it would be okay if I brought the flag, his autographed ball, autograph book and TAPS lanyard from the Pro Bowl experience to school so he could show his class. I said of course as long as it was fine with his teacher.

So, I went to school, brought all of the items and stood with him in front of the class. I thought immediately he would start showing off his autographed hat or ball. But there, in front of his class, he gave me a sweet surprise. He picked up his TAPS lanyard and began to tell his class what TAPS was, why we were involved and some of the things TAPS does to help

families like ours. He then explained how TAPS is like a family to us now and since they are family, they help us by talking about his dad and helping our family heal. As much as I would like Liam to open up about his feelings to me, he rarely does. In that moment, my heart was so full.

This was the first time most of them found out that Liam's dad had died three years earlier. And kids being kids, they had questions. It was a great opportunity for Liam to share with his classmates and he was so proud to be able to talk about his dad and our life in the Army before we

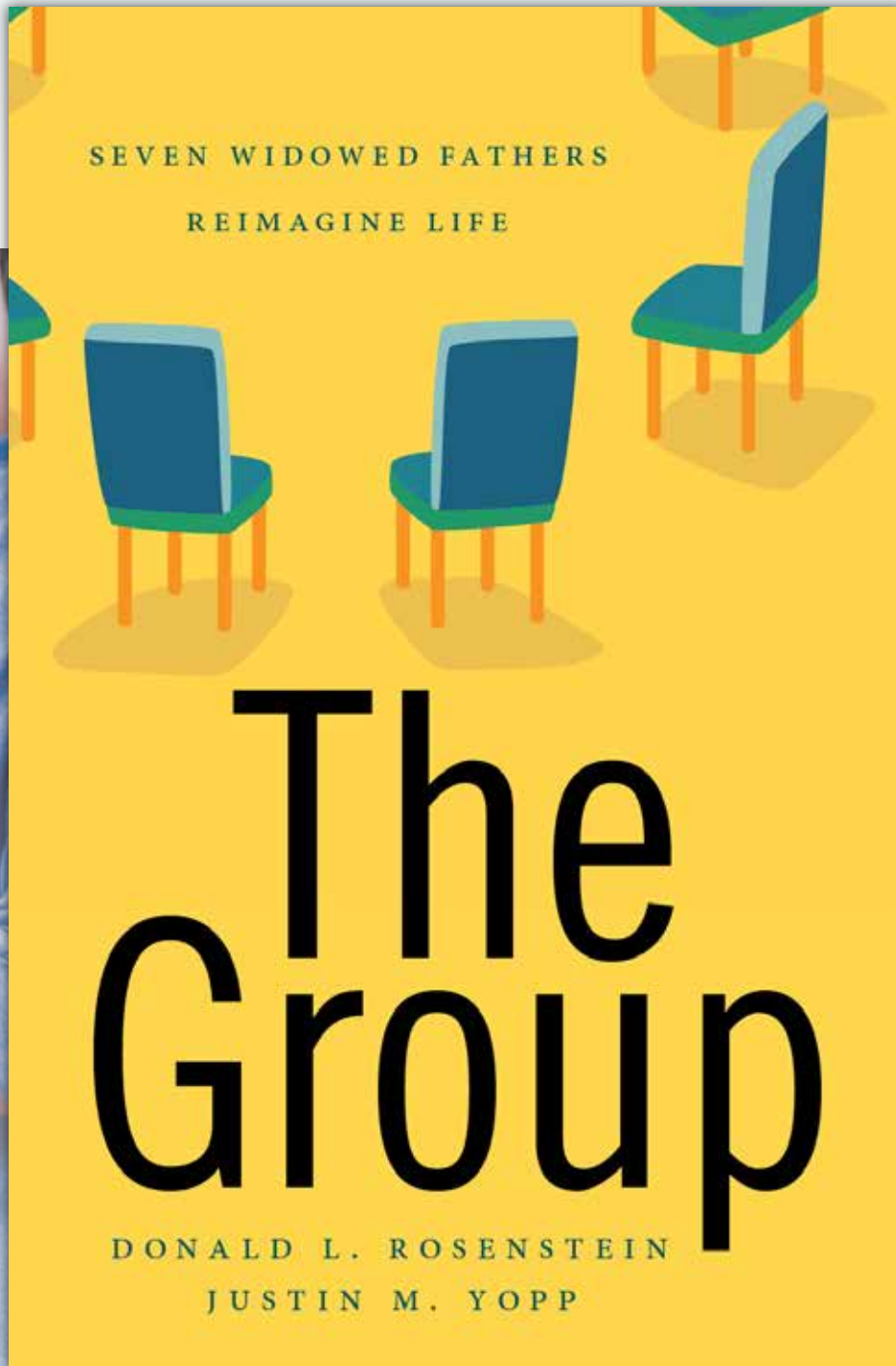


moved there. He eventually showed his ball, the flag we made and some of our pictures. His classmates were excited to see them!

As I got into my car to go home, I sat there and realized - this is what TAPS is all about. They are our new family. We can speak our truth - good, bad or ugly - and we are still accepted. We can take down our armor;

show emotion and it's okay. We can laugh, share, cry and grieve and we know they will be there for us - no matter what. Now, as a single mom, I don't really have anyone to share with, so it's amazing for me to be around others who know what I'm going through and to share our experiences. As a family, we are thankful for this wonderful opportunity we had and for all the new friends and family we made. ★

teams4taps and Stars4TAPS offer opportunities to create new memories while honoring your loved one. To learn more and share your story of a favorite sports team, athlete or entertainment activity, visit www.taps.org/entertainment.



A group of widowed fathers were brought together for what was planned as a six-session lecture and discussion forum. As it developed, the meetings became more like a support group and continued for nearly four years. From this experience, Dr. Donald Rosenstein and Dr. Justin Yopp have penned *The Group: Seven Widowed Fathers Reimagine Life*. The doctors recount the personal stories of these fathers and their struggles with loss and raising their children alone.

It is a poignant thought that in 2013, while these fathers were meeting in Chapel Hill, just twenty minutes from where I live, I became a widowed father. I too was seeking support and searching for my way forward. I was connected to TAPS through the Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) at Fort Bragg, NC. My daughters and I attended our first TAPS Regional Seminar in Southern Pines, NC. There we found the needed support of those that understood the struggles of losing a loved one.

The Group attests to the healing potential of shared grief. The fathers each benefited by sharing their stories and hearing those of their peers. In the opening chapter, Neill, a reluctant and private person,

The Group

Seven Widowed Fathers Reimagine Life

Michael Scott Brezenski | Surviving spouse of Irene Brezenski-Jordaan and father to Isabella and Natasja

identifies his peers as others who were “in the same awful boat.” This identification helps him to share a dilemma he was having about the upcoming anniversary of his wife’s death. He hesitantly sought advice from the group on how to handle the situation and they offered him their thoughts and encouragement. In this group, Neill found the strength to share a real-life family dilemma.

I empathized with the heart-wrenching stories and even cried a little remembering the tough times and the joys I experienced raising my daughters. I found myself nodding in agreement as I read about daily tasks that were easily accomplished with a spouse even though my daughters were already teenagers. It is difficult to balance the personal struggles of not wanting to get out of bed in the first days and weeks following the loss of a spouse with the needs of young children.

As I read, I felt a camaraderie with the other fathers enduring a life situation that we never expected to experience. No one chooses to be a widowed single parent—yet it can happen to any one of us at any time. How does one honor the memory and endure the agony of the loss? In walking the tightrope of personal grief as a surviving

spouse and as a surviving parent, where do we invest our efforts? The drive to be present for our children is a powerful one. Where should I draw the line between my own grief as a widower, and as a sole parent guiding my daughters through the uncharted waters of grieving the loss of their mother? I was totally unprepared. This was not how I expected my life to be and I did not have a plan for raising our two daughters alone.

As the fog lifted and I began to function again, I looked for a therapist at Fort Bragg for myself and another therapist in Durham for my daughters, or for my daughters and me together. I already knew the benefits of therapy, so I did not give my teens a choice for the first three sessions. I told them that after the first three sessions, I felt they were old enough to decide for themselves whether they wanted to continue or not. We all continued for nearly two years learning how to communicate with each other in new ways. When my wife was alive, I was stationed 50+ miles away at Fort Bragg while my family remained at home in Durham. Irena did the daily

parenting, so my daughters were not used to sharing their daily issues with me. After my wife died, our relationships strengthened over time as I learned to share more of my personal struggles and eased up on always being the strong one. They needed to see me be vulnerable so they knew it was okay for them to be vulnerable too.

I found *The Group* to be a comfortable, easy to read book of personal loss experiences that doesn’t rely on science/medical jargon. It is not a reference book or how to book – it simply recounts the stories of seven everyday fathers coping with a situation they felt totally unprepared for—going it alone raising their children. It provides an anonymous step for fathers navigating the grieving process that may lead them to investigate other support resources. The main message I took away from reading *The Group* was that a support group is beneficial in ways one cannot realize at first. By choosing to overcome initial apprehension to a therapy group, each father accepted help as well as helped other fathers - fostering friendship, confidence, strength, hopefulness and resilience. ★

Widowed parents (men and women) who have lost a co-parent within the last three years are invited to complete a brief survey, conducted by widowedparent.org.

Your participation will help foster better understanding of the challenges facing widowed parents. Find the survey at www.widowedparent.org/survey

Blooms of HOPE

Finding Strength Amid Devastation

Ellen Andrews | TAPS Senior Advisor, Survivor Services

Twisted, battered and broken. The camellia bushes in my front yard reflected their battle with Mother Nature. To be more specific, their battle with the 150+ mph winds and torrential rain of Hurricane Michael. The storm cut a path of destruction - laying waste to structures, beautiful mighty oak trees and my camellias.

My neighborhood was unrecognizable. Mountains of debris were piled along the streets that just days before had been lined with graceful southern oaks. My once quiet neighborhood was now filled with the constant sound of chainsaws and power trucks.

Life was different. Blue tarps dotted the landscape and street signs were gone.

Normal day-to-day activity came to a halt. The storm dominated thoughts and actions. And while the task ahead seemed overwhelming, everyone came together to begin the journey toward recovery.

With the help of family, friends and kind strangers, work was done to clear my yard yet the scars of what had taken

WE HAVE ENDURED THE STRUGGLE, WE ARE FOREVER CHANGED, BUT WE ARE NOT GIVING UP.



In the midst of devastation, there was this beautiful symbol of life, a ray of hope, a statement of strength and endurance.

place where still evident. Where five camellia bushes had lined my front yard, only three remained. I did what I could to shore up the bushes. I removed debris, moss, and trimmed some of the branches in hope of offering a chance at renewal. I had such pleasant memories of these beautiful camellias that had graced my home for as long as I can remember. They had brought springtime joy over the years and I wanted to help them blossom again.

The surviving bushes were twisted and broken from falling trees with branches dipped toward the ground. I imagined these bushes struggling to hold on during the onslaught of torrential rain and wind, clinging to the soil through this monster storm. I considered the possibility they were irreparably damaged - only tattered remnants of what was once so beautiful.

The death of a loved one can leave us feeling the same way. Our beautiful lives - so full of joy and happiness are now tattered and broken. Grief can leave us twisted, out-of-sorts and uprooted. In the early days, we struggle to survive, so we certainly can't comprehend "blooming" ever again.

A few months after the hurricane, I noticed buds beginning to populate the bushes. Could it be there was life still left? Then one morning, as I opened the blinds and peered out my window at the sunny day I saw a solitary flower. In the midst of devastation, there was this beautiful symbol of life, a ray of hope, a statement of strength and endurance.

As days passed more flowers appeared. Now the remaining bushes are once again

decorated in pink. These little bushes were sending a message for anyone who passed by. We have endured the struggle, we are forever changed, but we are not giving up. Where once there was beauty, there can be again.

They are still twisted - still showing the scars of all they have endured; yet their inner strength is still present. They weathered a tremendous battle; they remained standing and are once again sharing their beauty with the world.

Our lives can change like the weather. Heartache and sadness can blow in at any given moment: the passing of a loved one, the loss of a job or a natural disaster. Destruction and loss can make us feel as if we have been through a storm (literally and figuratively). We are knocked down; the landscape of our lives forever altered.

Like my city and the camellias, we carry the battle scars and the weight of our experience.

Yet beauty and hope remain.

It is easy to become discouraged when we are carrying such a heavy burden and feel surrounded by destruction and heartache. Sometimes a little sign or a simple gesture can bring promise for the future and remind us of all that is still beautiful - the gentle care of a friend, a helping hand from a stranger, a hearty little camellia.

We, like these bushes stand as testament to a past, a present and a future. We have stories to tell about what we have witnessed and what we have endured. We have survived and we are finding strength to bloom again. Devastated but not destroyed. And we remain - beautiful. ★



TAPS Online Store

taps.org/shop



- 1. Belt Bag - \$20
- 2. Camelbak Chute Mag BPA-Free Water Bottle, Red - \$20
- 3. Camelbak Chute Mag Vacuum Stainless Water Bottle, Olive - \$30
- 4. Gift Cards - Various Amounts
- 5. Klinger Gift Set - \$20
- 6. Hook and Tackle Short Sleeve Fishing Shirt - \$30
- 7. TAPS Baseball Cap - \$20
- 8. Team TAPS Women's Race Shirt - \$35 (also available in Men's)
- 9. Born Brave Youth Tee - \$15
- 9. Women's Purple Heart Tee - \$20



Hollywood's *Biggest Night*

A long with red carpet photo ops, glittering gowns and popular celebrities celebrating Hollywood's grandest night – TAPS was honored to be represented in a special collection of gifts given to top Oscar nominees this year. TAPS for Hope bracelets were included by Distinctive Assets in their 17th Annual Everyone Wins Nominee Gift Bags. These acclaimed gift bags were featured by media outlets around the world and given to nominees in major award categories including Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress, and Best Director.

The signature lapis lazuli bracelet is part of a special project that has brought together families of those who have sacrificed for freedom in America and Afghanistan.

Sourced in the mountains of Afghanistan and crafted by widows in Kabul, the precious lapis and gold bracelets are sold by the families of America's fallen heroes through TAPS to raise funds to support widows and children of war.

This was an amazing opportunity to share both the TAPS story of hope and healing and the work being done internationally to support survivors in other countries. While the world was watching the gold statuettes awarded at the 91st Academy Award ceremony, we were proud to know a bit of TAPS love was being spread among the Hollywood elite. ★



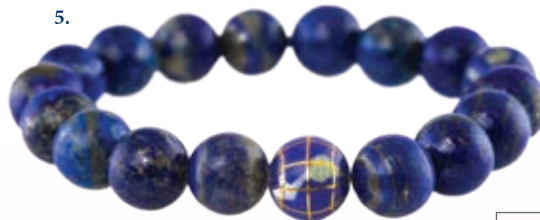
The Everyone Wins Nominee Gift Bags are NOT affiliated in any way with the OSCARS® or the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. A.M.P.A.S. does not award, sponsor, endorse or provide these Gift Bags. Neither the Academy nor Distinctive Assets want there to be any association in the media between the Everyone Wins Gift Bags and the OSCARS® or the Academy.

SAVE 25% on LAPIS with the code TAPSFAM25

The Afghan Hope Collection

taps.org/afghan

#TAPS4Hope



1. Lapis Post Earrings and Heart Necklace Set - \$89
2. Silver TAPS Charm Necklace and Lapis with Silver Bezel Earrings Set - \$62
3. Lapis with Silver Bezel Earrings - \$49
4. Lapis Healing Hearts - \$29
5. Lapis Golden Globe Stretch Bracelet - \$49
6. Lapis Heart Necklace - \$59
7. Round Lapis Post Earrings - \$39
8. Lapis Bracelet with 20k Gold Charm - \$115
9. Lapis Bracelet with Hand Tied Knot - \$59

*Prices before discount

We Are Here for You!

TAPS offers immediate and long-term emotional help, hope, and healing to all those grieving the death of a military loved one.

THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE OUTLINES SOME OF THE WAYS TAPS PROVIDES COMPASSIONATE CARE



National Military Survivor Helpline

Grief doesn't follow a schedule, and often some of the loneliest moments come at night or on weekends, holidays or even in the middle of a busy day. Continuously operational since 1994, our Helpline consists of a network of trained peer professionals who are on call for you 24/7/365 at 800-959-TAPS (8277), whether you are in emotional crisis, need to connect with TAPS resources and programs, or just want to remind yourself that you are part of a loving, supportive family.

Peer Mentor Network

The TAPS Peer Mentor Program ensures you'll never walk alone. We equip survivors who are at least 18 months past their loss to serve as mentors to fellow survivors looking for someone who truly understands. They are there to listen when you need someone to talk to, be a friend

when you're feeling lonely, and celebrate the triumphs in your grief journey. Knowing you are not alone, you can find validation and ultimately a sense of hopefulness with your peers. Find out more: taps.org/peermentors.

Casework Assistance

In the midst of emotional exhaustion, many of the bereaved are surprised by the complexity of managing benefits, paperwork, and the loose ends that require attention. We work closely with trusted partners to find and use as many resources as possible that fit your needs. Close relationships with government agencies and service branches help us resolve issues regarding burials, benefits, eligibility, records, and more, while a network of other organizations consult regularly on everything from health care and insurance issues to financial hardship and credit counseling. Find out more: taps.org/casework.

Connections to Grief Counseling

TAPS provides connections to free and unlimited grief counseling, trauma resources, and local area support groups. Individual grief counseling is important to many survivors. Sitting one-on-one with a skilled therapist who understands grief and trauma can help you work through some of the most painful parts of your loss. Finding the best fit is important, and we can help. The right grief counselor can help you discover strengths, develop your own coping skills, and help you work through questions, changes in relationships, and secondary losses. Find out more: taps.org/griefcounseling.

Education Support Services

TAPS serves as a guide to scholarship information and benefits resources for military survivors. We work with you to align resources with your goals; help you communicate with schools, college, and

universities; and support you in going confidently into the next phase of your life. Your education is part of your loved one's legacy for you—and we want you to grow into it with as much peace of mind as possible. Find out more: taps.org/edu.

Suicide Loss Support

A death by suicide can leave behind a wake of emotions that complicate an already painful grieving process. Many of us ask, “Why did this happen?” We worry that our loved ones will be remembered for how they died instead of how they lived and served. Suicide loss survivors can be assured that they have a safe space within TAPS to remember, honor, and grieve their loved one's entire story. Special TAPS programming and resources, including the annual National Military Suicide Survivors Seminar,

provide gentle, understanding support as we work through the emotions associated with this type of loss. We have walked in your shoes and are here to offer comfort and care. Find out more: taps.org/suicide.

TAPS Online Community

The TAPS online grief support groups are here for you wherever you are in the grief process—and wherever you are in the country or the world. Whether you want to share your story or just read how other survivors are coping, our online grief support community is a way for you to develop and strengthen your connections with your TAPS family from the comfort of your home. As a gathering place for survivors, the TAPS Online Community hosts chat sessions for real-time conversations, message boards that provide space for questions and comments,

a blog, and peer-based sharing groups to drive conversation and connection. Find out more: taps.org/onlinecommunity.

Publications

TAPS has created a series of pocket-size guides—including *Survivor Guide*, *Benefits and Finances*, *Education Support Services*, *Children's Grief*, *Grief Guide*, and *Supporting Survivors of Suicide Loss*—that are available at no cost to survivors and supported by experts in the field. Other resources include *Healing Your Grieving Heart After a Military Death: 100 Practical Ideas for Families and Friends* by Bonnie Carroll and Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., and the children's book *Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope*. Find out more: taps.org/publications.

TAPS Events

The grief journey takes you out of your comfort zone. But when you see that others share this journey, you can find new ways to grow and heal with a little more confidence. Our events bring surviving family members together for sharing, growth, and healing. TAPS events take place all over the country each year. Opportunities for connection include: national and regional survivor seminars; TAPS Togethers, casual one-day events in your local community; health and wellness retreats, empowerment programs and expeditions; and sports and entertainment experiences.

Youth Programs

Though their lives are marked by grief, young survivors at TAPS know their lives will also be marked by camaraderie, mentorship, emotional maturity, adventure, and fun. Led by experts in the fields of child development, mental health, and education, TAPS Youth Programs—which include Good Grief Camps at TAPS seminars, summer campouts, teen adventures, and family retreats—provide safe spaces for military children to explore grief and embrace healing. Find out more: taps.org/youthprograms. ★



PHOTOS: TAPS ARCHIVES

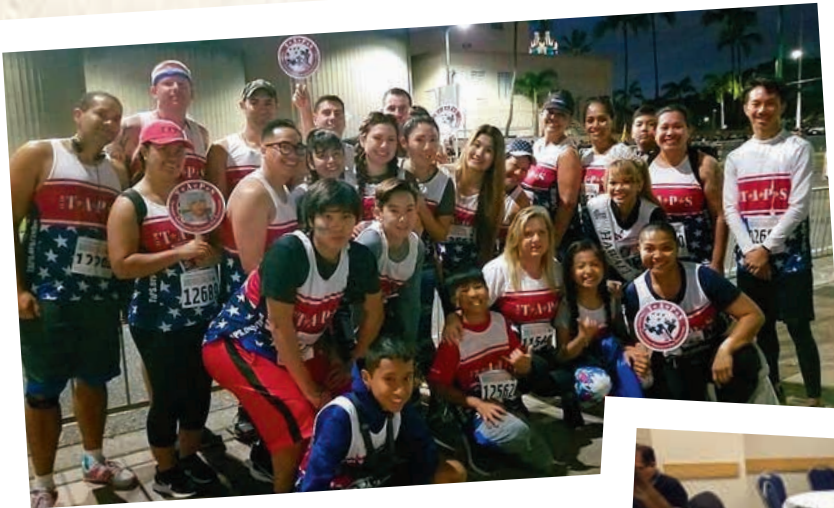
To learn more about the support waiting for you from your TAPS family, visit our website at taps.org or call the Helpline anytime at 800-959-TAPS(8277).

TAPS Family Album



**HERSHEL "WOODY" WILLIAMS
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT
VISITS TAPS HEADQUARTERS**

Woody's foundation honors surviving military families by building Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments throughout the United States. The foundation has dedicated 47 memorial monuments and has 53 more in the works. In addition to building lasting memorials to our fallen heroes, the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation offers scholarships to Gold Star children and educates communities about the sacrifices of military families.



GREAT ALOHA RUN - HAWAII
30 TAPS families-including TAPS children-along with military mentors and battle buddies came together in Honolulu's 8.15 mile Great Aloha Run honoring their fallen military heroes.



**GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY (GWU)**

George Washington University's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. The GWU students learned about the TAPS mission and who we serve. Then they worked on service projects throughout the day supporting our families.





★ | **FLORIDA SPOUSES / SIGNIFICANT OTHER RETREAT**
January 18 - 20, 2019
Jacksonville, FL



★ | **TAPS 2019 WESTERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE**



★ | **TAPS TOGETHER**
Survivors gather at coffee hours across the country.
1. Houston, TX
2. Quincy, IL
3. Naples, FL



★ | **TAPS UKRAINE TRIP**
Sharing TAPS compassion and care with survivors around the world.
January 16-21, 2019



800-959-TAPS (8277) ★TAPS.org

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers comfort, care, and resources to all those grieving the death of a military loved one.



TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

3033 Wilson Boulevard, Third Floor
Arlington, VA 22201

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
Stevens Point, WI
PERMIT NO. 272

 TAPS is a participant organization in the Combined Federal Campaign, No. 11309

Spend time with your TAPS family in the comfort of home.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION IN
OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY.

Weekly and Monthly Text Chats

General Support – All Survivors: Every Tuesday

Parents Chat: 2nd Monday

Widow/Widower/Sign. Other: 2nd Wednesday

Survivors of Suicide Loss: 1st & 3rd Thursday

Monthly Video Chats

Women's Empowerment: 3rd Tuesday

Pre-9–11 and Vietnam Era: 4th Tuesday

Peer Mentor Group: 3rd Wednesday

Men's Chat Group: 4th Wednesday

