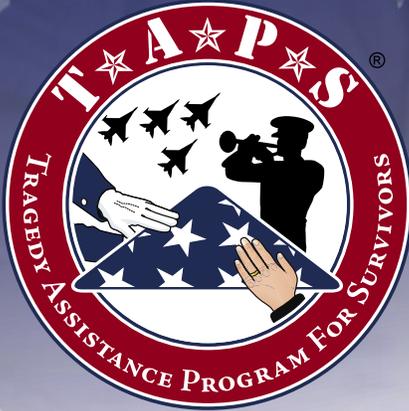


TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS



IMPACT

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW



A Letter from TAPS Founder and President

There is a small group of Americans who have a special stake in this country because their family's blood has been shed to make America safe—to make all of us safe. The families of TAPS understand freedom because their loved ones pledged an oath to die for it. They understand commitment because their loved ones never backed down from a mission. And they understand service because their loved ones gave selflessly for all of us.

TAPS is America's family whose members have paid a dear price. They become part of an organization that exists to serve them whenever they have a need, to comfort them whenever they are fearful, and to honor them when others have long forgotten their sacrifice.

TAPS provides an array of programs, services, and support for the families of the fallen. Each year, TAPS holds more than 200 programs that welcome and support thousands of participants. We answer more than 17,000 calls to our National Military Survivor Helpline each year. We share our expertise, conducting nearly 200 training sessions on grief trauma and suicide prevention for military commands and other professionals across America and around the world.

In 2017, more than 5,000 newly bereaved loved ones come to us for care. That's an average of 15 new families every day. Our staff members are primarily survivors of military loss who have grown up in the TAPS family and who have now made it their profession to pay it forward.

What we do cannot be measured in numbers. It involves matters of the heart and the spirit. In their darkest hours, and when hope has faded away, surviving military families find a place of solace, a place of understanding, and a place of renewal at TAPS.

The need is ever-present; the mission continues. We are able to support families because of friends who step forward and join our efforts. On behalf of the thousands of survivors who make up the TAPS family, we thank those who recognize the sacred duty we all share to care for those left behind after loss.

Gratefully,



Bonnie Carroll
TAPS Founder and President





TAPS OFFERS COMFORT, CARE AND RESOURCES TO ALL THOSE GRIEVING THE DEATH OF A MILITARY LOVED ONE.

“The words that changed my life were ‘Welcome to the TAPS family, you’re not alone. We’ve got you.’ They then went on to explain that everyone at TAPS was a survivor, and knew the horrific pain and sadness I was going through. I cannot even explain the sudden relief I felt. To know that I was ‘safe.’ Right after my husband died, I seriously didn’t know which way was up. I felt like I had gotten thrown under a massive waterfall and couldn’t come up for air. TAPS was my ‘air’ for my early days. They called several times a day, just to help me breathe. I cannot even say thank you enough for everyone’s kindness. They were able to calm me down, and shine a light onto my path. I seriously don’t have the words to express my thank you to TAPS. Thank you for saving my life.”

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RECAPPING A YEAR OF REMEMBERING THE LOVE, CELEBRATING THE LIFE, AND SHARING THE JOURNEY



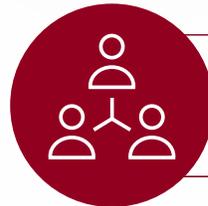
5,715 NEW SURVIVORS



17.9% ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF NEW SURVIVORS



15 NEW SURVIVORS JOINED TAPS EACH DAY



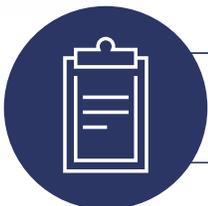
36,735 HOURS TAPS PEER MENTORS SPENT CONNECTING WITH NEW SURVIVORS IN 2017



\$84.7 MILLION-WORTH OF EDUCATIONAL FUNDS TAPS FOUND FOR SURVIVORS BY CONNECTING THEM WITH EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS



\$5.1 MILLION WORTH OF BENEFITS THAT TAPS HAS SECURED FOR SURVIVORS BY CONNECTING THEM WITH RETROACTIVE BENEFITS



13,955 HOURS OF FREE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING FOR SURVIVORS



12,257 SURVIVORS ATTENDED 270+ TAPS PROGRAMS



652,162 VISITS TO TAPS.ORG



176,500 FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

“THE LIVES OF THOSE WE LOVE AND REMEMBER AND HONOR ARE CARVED INTO OUR SOUL, IMPRINTED ON OUR HEARTS AND WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR NATION. THEY MAKE US STRONGER, THEY INSPIRE US, AND IN THAT WAY, THEY ARE ETERNAL.”
- BONNIE CARROLL, TAPS FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT



“TAPS LISTENS, TAPS CARES, TAPS IS THERE.”



Survivor Services

At the heart of our survivor support outreach program is the TAPS Survivor Care Team. This team is made up of TAPS staff members who reach out to other surviving military family members.

Members of our Survivor Care Team have lived through a similar grief experience. They've also been through extensive professional training on emotional peer-based support, grief and traumatic death. These amazing team members are proud to serve as advocates, attentive listeners, and companions for our survivors.

2017 SURVIVOR CARE TEAM

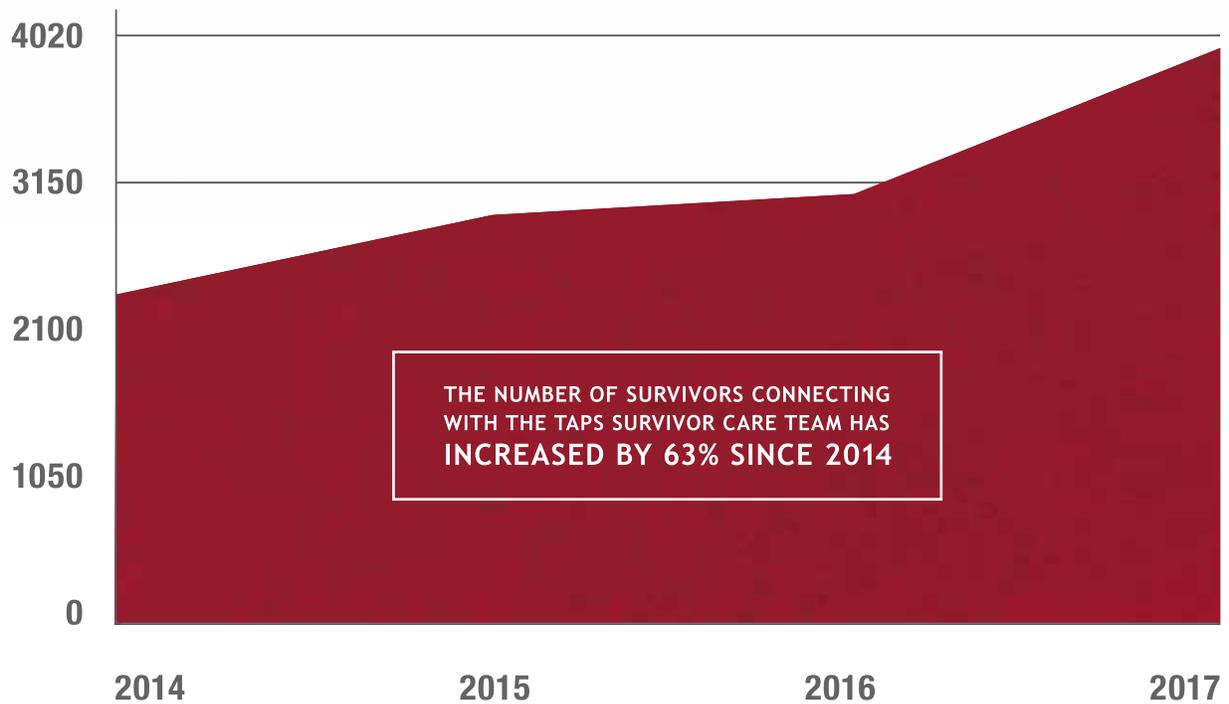
5,715 NEW SURVIVORS

24,614 OUTREACH CALLS MADE

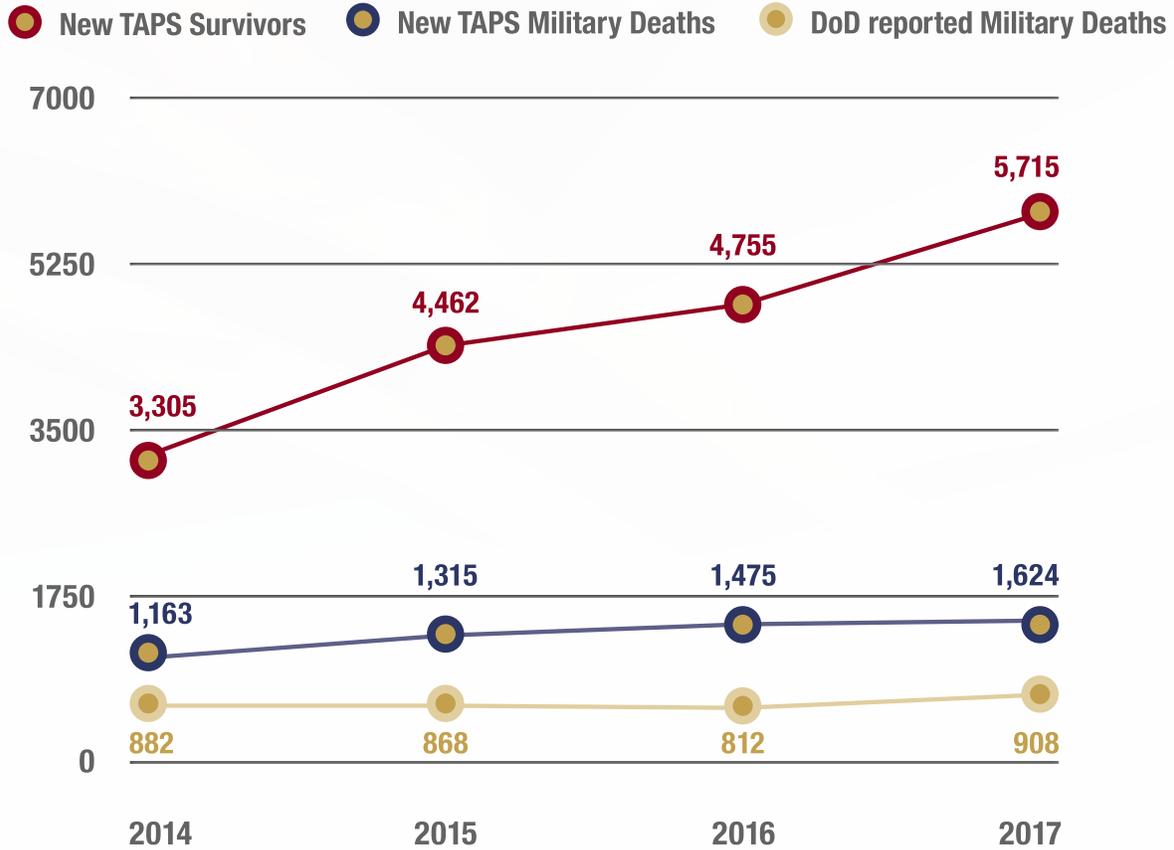
162,512 HOURS OF TALK TIME WITH SURVIVORS

3,241 CONNECTIONS TO TAPS PROGRAMS

63% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF NEW SURVIVORS SINCE 2014



2017



TAPS military deaths include members of the armed forces who were on a duty status, retired, reserves, and discharged from the military and have sought comfort from TAPS.

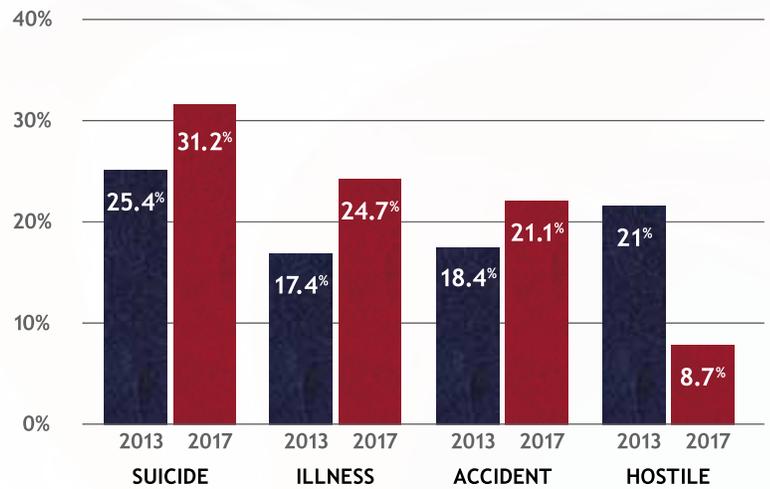
Department of Defense (DoD) reported military deaths include members of the armed forces on duty status. Information retrieved from the Defense Casualty Analysis System by Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).



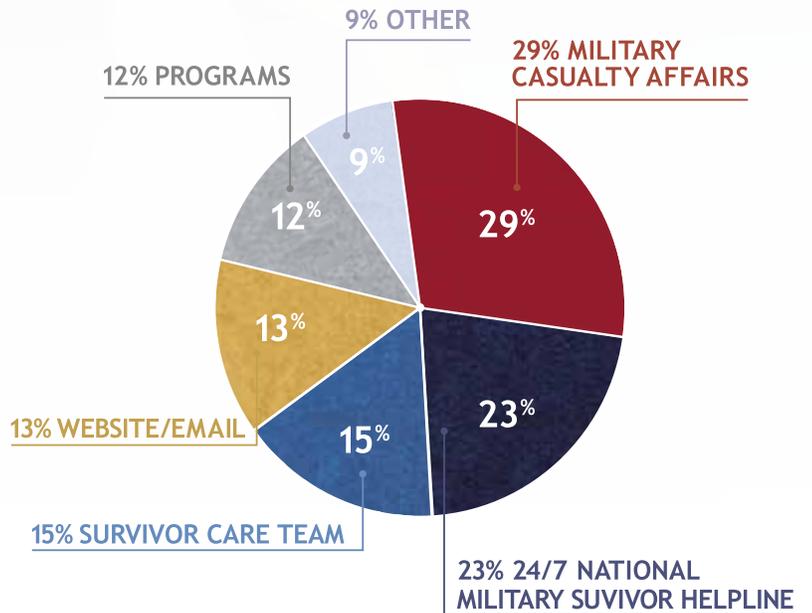
TAPS is There

TAPS HONORS AMERICA'S HEROES BY CARING FOR ALL THOSE THEY LOVED AND LEFT BEHIND, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF DEATH OR RELATIONSHIP TO THE DECEASED.

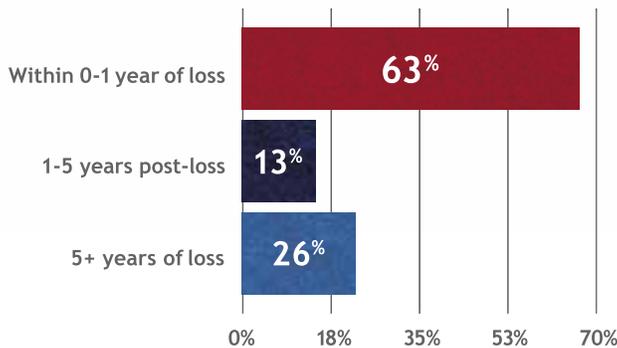
2013 VS. 2017 TAPS MILITARY DEATHS CAUSE OF DEATH



HOW OUR SURVIVORS CONNECT WITH TAPS



2017 New Survivors Connect with TAPS



RELATIONSHIPS TAPS SERVED IN 2017

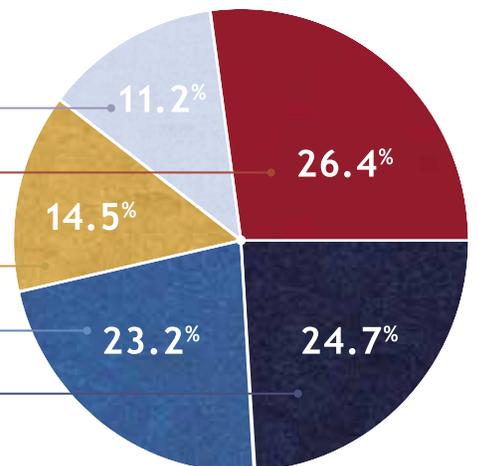
11.2% **SIBLINGS** Brothers, Sisters, Step-siblings, and Half-siblings (may be under the age of 18)

26.4% **CHILDREN** Mothers, Fathers, Step-Mothers, Step-Fathers

14.5% **OTHER** Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents, Ex-Spouses, Battle Buddies

23.2% **SIGNIFICANT OTHERS** Husbands, Wives, Fiancés, Significant Others and Partners

24.7% **PARENTS** Son, Daughter, Step-son, Step-daughter



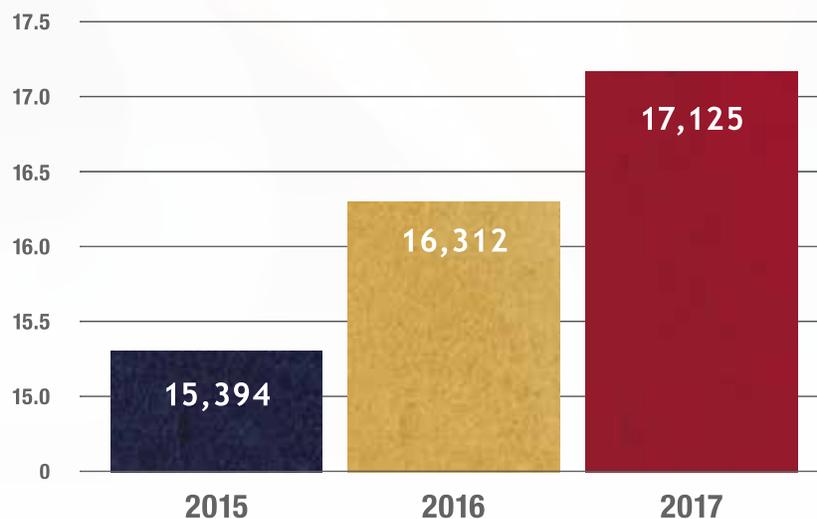
“TAPS IS THERE FOR THE EVERLASTING MOURNING AND GRIEF, FOR THE DAYS THAT TAKE YOU TO YOUR KNEES”



24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline

The TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline consists of a network of trained professionals and peers who are on call for TAPS survivors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whether they are in emotional crisis, want to connect with TAPS resources and programs, or simply need a reminder that they are part of a loving family, survivors can pick up the phone and receive care, concern, and support by calling 800.959.TAPS (8277).

NUMBER OF CALLS TO THE TAPS HELPLINE



TOP THREE REASONS WHY 2017 SURVIVORS CALLED TAPS HELPLINE

1. Casework Assistance
2. Mission Support Operations
3. Emotional Support

“It’s been a little over 3 years and I still can’t get past my grief. Today I called the TAPS Helpline. They listened to my stories about my son, his service to our country, his death, and how I feel that no one understands what I am going through. The Helpline staff told me I found my TAPS family and they are here to help me ‘remember the love, celebrate the life, and share his journey.’ I told her I had goosebumps and am looking forward to being a part of the TAPS family. I’m so grateful I made that call today.”

– Karen Maggerine, Surviving mother of Corporal Joseph Maggerine, USMC

Online Community

TAPS Online Community groups supports survivors wherever they are in the grief process—and wherever they are in the country or the world. The TAPS Online Community facilitates easy yet meaningful connections among survivors from the comfort of their homes. Options include chat sessions for real-time conversations, message boards for real-time questions and comments and peer-based sharing groups to encourage conversation and connection.

IN 2017, TAPS

**HOSTED 228 HOURS OF CHAT SESSIONS WITH SURVIVORS
REVIEWED AND FACILITATED 2,300 MESSAGE BOARD POSTS
CONNECTED WITH 7,250 ONLINE COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS**

TEXT CHAT

- Survivors of Suicide Loss—Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month
- General Support Group—Meets every Tuesday of each month
- Widow-Widower-Fiancée and Significant Others—Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month
- Parent—Meets the 2nd Monday of each month
- Survivors of Illness Loss—Meets 4th Wednesday of each month

VIDEO CHAT

- Family—Meets 2nd Tuesday of each month
- TAPS Meet and Greet—Special Chat for those new to the National Seminar
- Peer Mentor—Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month
- Men Only—Meets 4th Wednesday of each month
- Spanish—Meets 1st Tuesday every other month
- Women's Empowerment—Meets 3rd Tuesday of every other month
- Pre-9/11 and Vietnam Families—Meets 4th Tuesday of every month
- New Jersey—Meets 4th Thursday of every other month

*“The people in this group accepted me and understood, but most of all they just listened to me.
I’m so glad that TAPS is here for all branches of service and all military survivors.”*
– TAPS Survivor

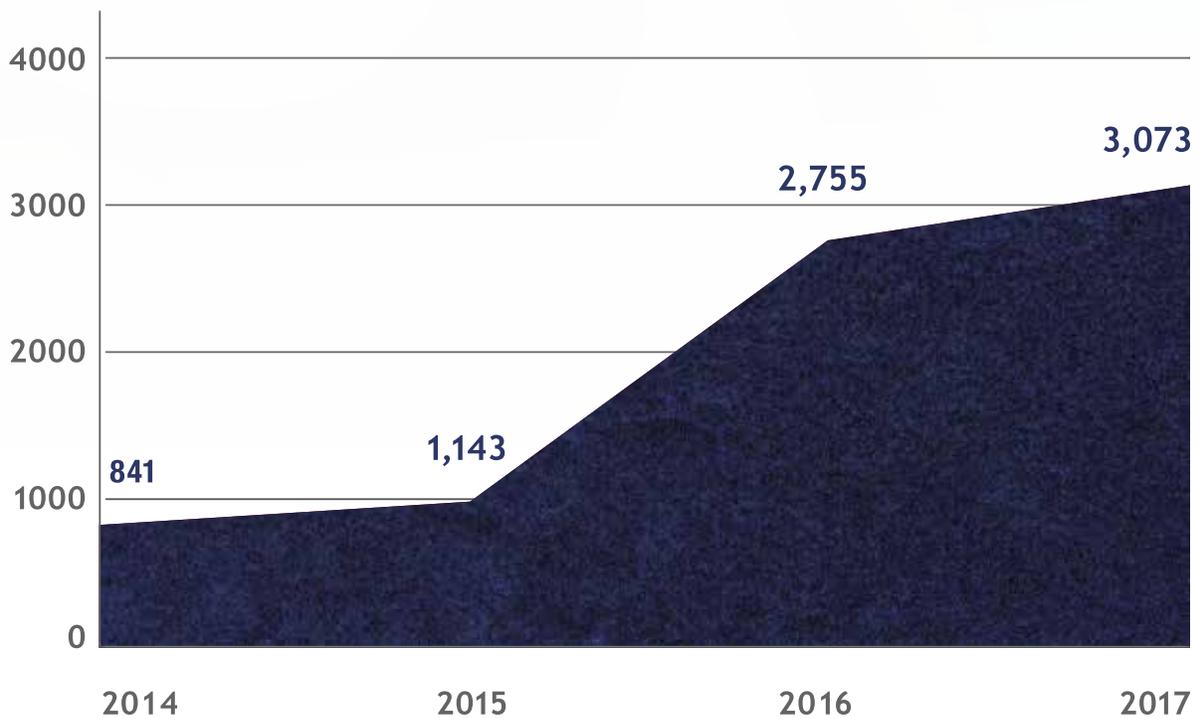
“The group offered me a place of understanding and a feeling of belonging.”
– April Shoemaker, surviving spouse of Staff Sergeant Russell Shoemaker, Army

Community Resource Reports

TAPS is everywhere to support survivors on their grief journey. For survivors who request individual counseling connections, TAPS Community Based Care provides a Community Resource Report for loved ones to receive information about local bereavement groups, parenting support, community organizations, and more. Each Community Resource Report is carefully created specific for our survivor needs and geographic location.

10.3% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMMUNITY RESOURCE REPORTS SENT SINCE 2016
1,679 CONNECTIONS MADE BETWEEN SURVIVORS AND COUNSELORS ANNUALLY
13,955 FREE HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROVIDED TO SURVIVORS

TOTAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE REPORTS SENT



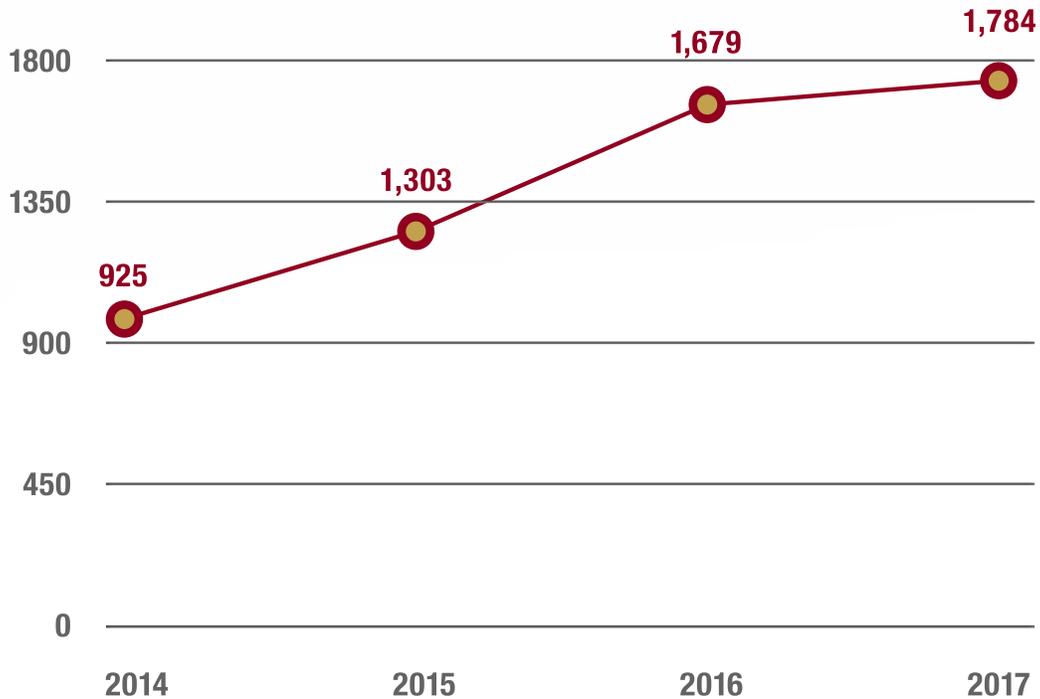
Community Based Care

TAPS delivers comfort close to home through access to local grief support services, unlimited free clinical counseling, online support, and local events.

TAPS staff members are well connected in communities across all 50 states. They use their expert connections, training, and networks to link survivors to local grief support resources. TAPS Community Resource Reports provide loved ones information about bereavement groups, parenting support, community organizations, and more. This isn't just a list of phone numbers; each resource has been verified and actively supports the TAPS mission. We carefully research and compile these reports with love and care for our TAPS Family.

“My mother is very pleased with her therapist; I can't thank you enough for setting that up for her. Dr. B continues to be a wonderful outlet for me, and is an important part of my mental and emotional health. I never thought I would be one to rely on therapy, but she is really great. Thank you for that connection. I don't know where I'd be without her.”

NUMBER OF CONNECTIONS TO FREE AND UNLIMITED PROFESSIONAL GRIEF SERVICES



IN 2017, TAPS COMMUNITY BASED CARE CONNECTED 1,784 SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH \$2.5 MILLION WORTH OF FREE AND UNLIMITED PROFESSIONAL GRIEF SERVICES.

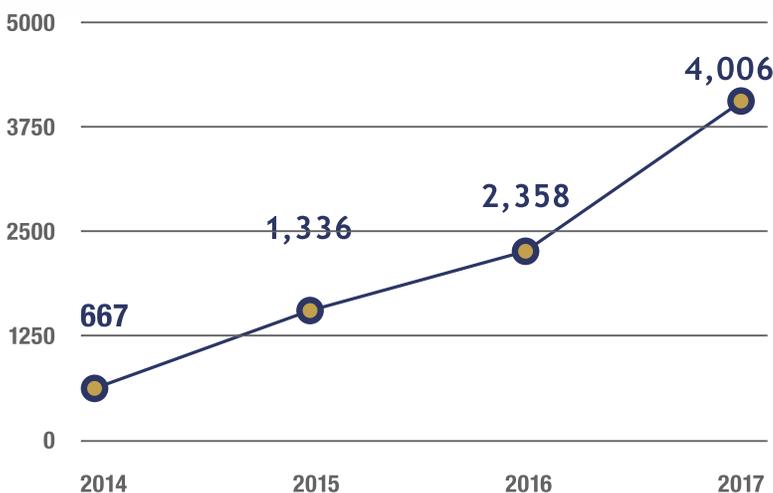
Casework Assistance

When survivors hit an administrative roadblock, TAPS Casework can help. We work closely with trusted partners to find and use as many resources as possible that fit the needs of our survivors. 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.

- † Policy changes
- † Toxic Exposure
- † Education benefits and information
- † Connections to TRICARE, DEERS, and Department of Veterans Affairs
- † Benefits Guidance
- † Scholarship opportunities at the federal, state, and private level
- † Connections to other organizations on your behalf for financial assistance
- † Pro bono legal options
- † Connections to local resources within your own community
- † Employment assistance and job searches
- † All military paperwork

“I just want to thank you for taking care of this rather strange turn of events concerning the eulogy of my son. I am eternally grateful for your immediate action in obtaining Deacon Rowland Desjardins. Rarely have I experienced such selfless dedication given to others in their time of need. You are truly an inspiration to me. I aspire to become an active part of our TAPS family so that I may help reach out to other military families.” – Melissa Stalter Hicks, Florida, Surviving mother of Sergeant Timothy Stalter, Army

TOTAL NEW CASES WORKED 2014 - 2017



2017 CASEWORK ASSISTANCE

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

\$84.7 MILLION

Amount of federal aid, scholarships and grants secured to send TAPS survivors to college.

RETROACTIVE

FEDERAL BENEFITS

\$5.1 MILLION

Amount TAPS helped survivors obtain in rightful federal benefits

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

\$556,000

Amount of financial support provided in emergency situations, including during the holidays

THE TAPS MAGAZINE

TAPS Magazine is dedicated to America's fallen heroes, their surviving families, caregivers, and friends. This quarterly magazine is sent free of charge to anyone interested in receiving it, including survivors, service members, supporters, and grief professionals.

The articles in each edition are written by military survivors, grief professionals, and TAPS staff. Our TAPS survivors find inspiration, comfort, support, resources, and a sense of belonging within these pages.

2017 TAPS printed and distributed **112,300 MAGAZINES**.

SURVIVOR RESOURCE KITS

As soon as TAPS is notified that a military loss has occurred, TAPS immediately responds to hurting hearts and delivers to each household, the Survivor Resource Kit. These care packages are filled with vital information, available resources, items to provide comfort, and a personal message offering a supportive presence for the journey ahead.

"...several days later I got this amazing care package full of awesome literature and coping tools. It was completely unexpected and I'll admit that I broke down when I opened it and saw that someone had gone through the work of carefully placing each item in there, it felt personal but in a very good way."

IN 2017

2,582 RESOURCE KITS SENT TO NEW SURVIVORS

\$210,000 COST TO TAPS

\$0.00 COST TO SURVIVORS

GRIEF EDUCATION MATERIALS

TAPS has created a series of pocket-sized guides for many various aspects of grief, including "Survivor Guide," "Benefits and Finances," "Education Support Services," "Children's Grief," "Grief Guide," and "Supporting Survivors of Suicide Loss." These quick series guides – available at no cost to survivors and supported by experts in the field of grief – offer tools and resources that can be used no matter where you are on the grief journey. They define grief and trauma, help you find your footing, and give advice for finding your way forward.

FOR OUR TAPS CHILDREN

Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope
Based on a real horse that serves in the Caisson Platoon in Arlington National Cemetery, this work of fiction was written for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors in honor of all of America's beloved fallen heroes.



Policy

The Policy Department at TAPS listens to the concerns of our surviving families. Our dedicated team at TAPS actively collaborates with other military and veteran organizations and federal agencies to serve as a liaison with officials. The Policy Department serves to educate, represent and protect military survivors.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

In 2017, TAPS lead the effort to extend the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance beyond May 31, 2018, for an increase in the cost-of-living for survivors.

- ✦ Utilization transferred Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits
- ✦ Removal of the 15 year delimiting date for surviving spouses

Issues of Importance We are Supporting

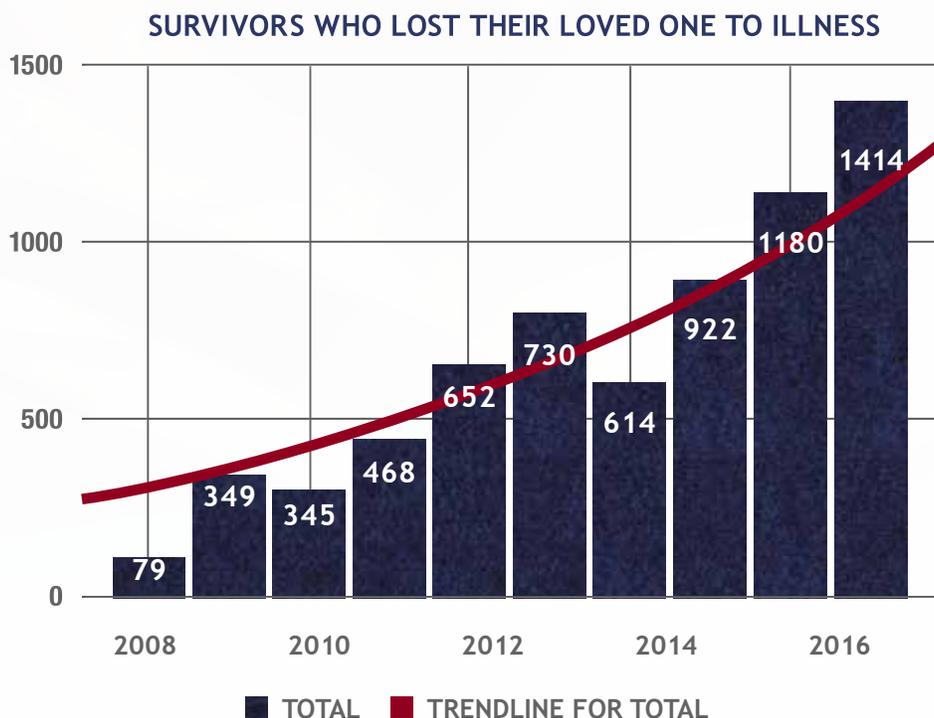
- ✦ Elimination of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset to the Survivor Benefit Plan Annuity
- ✦ Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation payments
- ✦ Extend CHAMPVA eligibility to Young Adults
- ✦ Seek legislation to establish a distinct DoD-wide bereavement policy
- ✦ Seek additional research by DoD and VA on the link between cancers that may be caused by toxic exposures in combat zones.
- ✦ Expand the current Burn Pit Registry so that it becomes a Toxic Exposure Registry, and includes exposures to depleted uranium, experimental medications, vaccinations, and aircraft fuels.
- ✦ Create an education program for distribution in both DoD and VA for veterans and family members that includes the known symptoms associated with toxic exposures in order to initiate earlier intervention.
- ✦ Allow surviving family members who believe that their service member/veteran may have died from a toxic exposure to add their names to the Toxic Exposure Registry.
- ✦ Suicide Prevention

EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

TAPS serves as a resource for scholarship information and education benefits for military survivors. Our education support team can help explain benefits; work with survivors to align resources and education goals; provide talking points to schools, colleges, and universities; and help survivors go confidently into the next phase of their life.

TAPS Education Support Services helps surviving families of military loss to access education through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), state waivers and private scholarships. The Education Support Service team can answer questions to help survivors understand benefits and eligibility. Through a partnership with the VA, staff can help correct any barriers the survivors may have in accessing benefits. Staff also works with the individual universities to guarantee the schools understands the benefits eligible military benefits for our families. The creation of an online portal provides basic information on all benefits a survivor is eligible for.

In 2017, TAPS Education Support Services worked to release **\$84.7 million dollars** in VA benefits, scholarships and state waivers to send TAPS survivors to college. TAPS Education Support Services has released over \$200 million since inception in 2014.

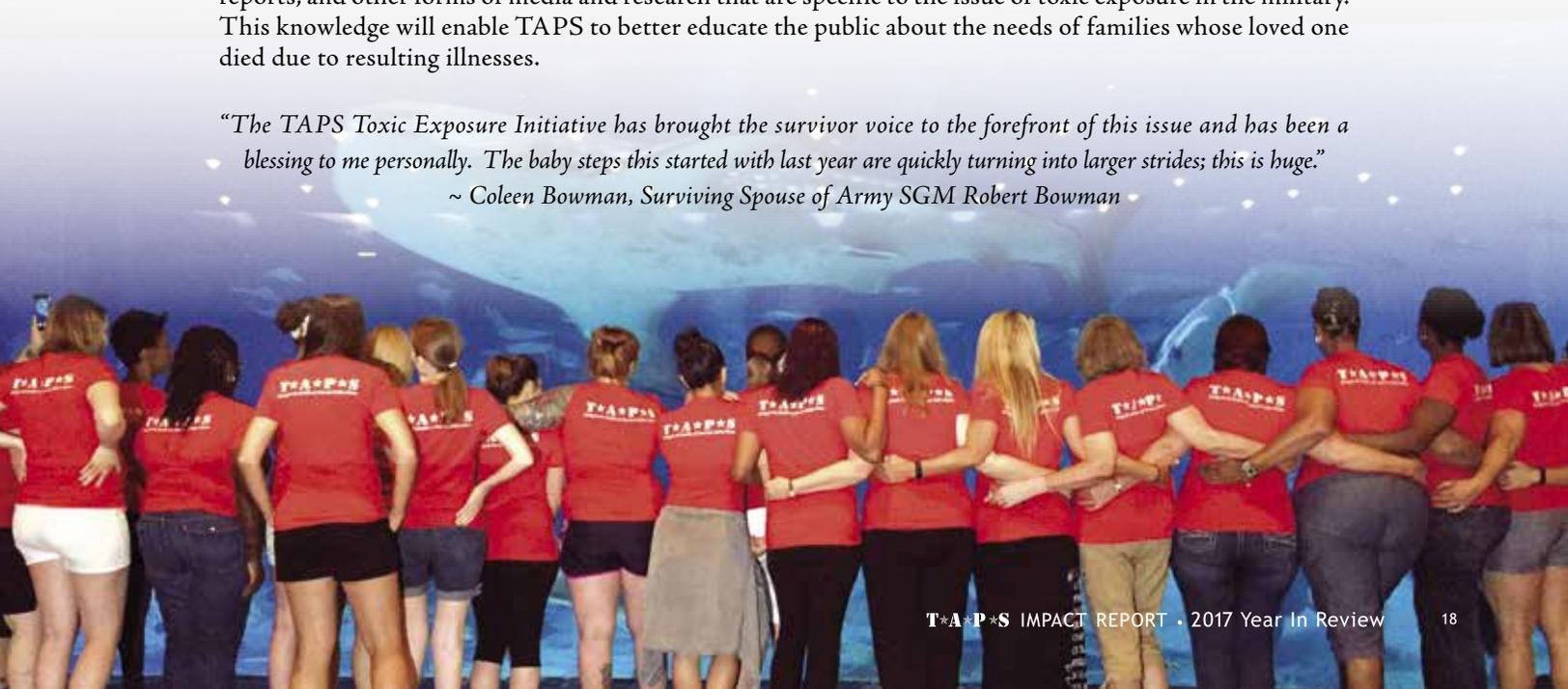


**SINCE 2008, 7,200 TAPS SURVIVORS HAVE LOST LOVED ONES TO ILLNESS.
IN 2017, 1,400 NEW FAMILIES SELF-IDENTIFIED AS A TOXIC-EXPOSURE RELATED LOSS.**

In November 2017, in partnership with the Wounded Warrior Project and Vietnam Veterans of America, TAPS launched an initiative aimed at increasing understanding of the impact of toxic exposures in the military and assist surviving family members whose loved one died after experiencing symptoms of that exposure.

To this end, TAPS will develop and curate a library of relevant legislation, medical studies, literature, reports, and other forms of media and research that are specific to the issue of toxic exposure in the military. This knowledge will enable TAPS to better educate the public about the needs of families whose loved one died due to resulting illnesses.

“The TAPS Toxic Exposure Initiative has brought the survivor voice to the forefront of this issue and has been a blessing to me personally. The baby steps this started with last year are quickly turning into larger strides; this is huge.”
~ Coleen Bowman, Surviving Spouse of Army SGM Robert Bowman



**“TAPS GIVES THE GREATEST
GIFT WE COULD ASK FOR;
THE GIFT OF REMEMBRANCE.”**



MILITARY MENTOR

Military Mentors are the selfless members of our retired and active armed forces who volunteer their time to make a one to one connection with a surviving child at a TAPS Good Grief Camp. Military Mentors are responsible for being a caring companion for a surviving child and remind the child that the military still cares for them. TAPS Volunteer Services establishes thoughtful connections with local military organizations to keep an active database of available Military Mentors to maintain our one to one ratio of Military Mentor to Surviving Child. Our Military Mentors are identified by their blue mentor shirts they wear at our Good Grief Camps.

"My military mentor reminds me that I'm not alone!"

LEGACY MENTOR

A Legacy Mentor is a special mentor for our TAPS survivors. Legacy Mentors are military survivors who have completed TAPS Good Grief Camps as a survivor and are now ready to mentor a new younger survivor. The Legacy Mentors represent how the community of TAPS has walked alongside them to remember the love, celebrate the life, and share the journey. Our Legacy Mentors are identifiable by the purple shirts they wear as a symbol of the mix of colors from growing up in the red Good Grief Camp Survivor shirts and the compassion they experienced from their blue shirt Military Mentors.

"We walk this journey together, hand-in-hand and step-by-step. We are never alone as we navigate through this grief journey, because two is always better than one!"



Peer Mentors

Survivors helping survivors heal. This is the foundation of TAPS and is realized through the dedication of TAPS Peer Mentors. When life has been altered through military loss, the ability to connect with others who have walked a similar path can be life saving. TAPS Peer Mentors are adult survivors at least 18 months beyond their loss who have stepped forward to gift their time and their hearts to being present for the newly bereaved. The peer professional staff at TAPS provides online and classroom coaching sessions and ongoing guidance to assist this volunteer force in best practices for providing comfort and care to another. Taking their experience, TAPS Peer Mentors pledge to be a companion for new survivors whether one to one, in a care group or at an event, they pass along their compassionate understanding to grieving hearts, fostering hope and healing.

2017

TOTAL PEER MENTORS IN TRAINING 719

6,370 CONTACTS WITH PEER MENTORS

8,452 VOLUNTEER HOURS DONATED BY PEER MENTORS



“My becoming a TAPS Peer Mentor has been a positive experience for me because I have been able connect with Mentee’s knowing we all have experienced a death so uniquely our own. To hear my Mentee’s tell me that they were happy that I phoned and that someone else understand what they are going through. My connections with the Mentee’s have helped me in my healing and to find a joyful purpose in life. Sharing their memories multiply both of our healing. Memories hurt, memories help and memories heal. I knew I wanted to help others who had their whole life turned upside down like mine. Mentoring has become a passion I have in my life. I never would have thought that through my grief journey that it would lead me to a purpose in my life to provide healing and hope to other Mentee’s. My connection with my Mentee’s makes me feel hopeful and optimistic for the future to continue my growth emotionally and spiritually. My life will never be exactly the same but I have hope in discovering fulfillment in life by living, laughing, and loving every moment.”

Peer Mentors

In alignment with best practices, the TAPS Peer Mentor program offers survivors a Peer Mentor who is¹:

- easily accessible and quick to respond
- confidential
- trained to provide a safe environment for the survivor
- trained to provide a peer supporter who closely matches the survivor in life experience
- carefully selected to assure their suitability for the role
- partnered closely with mental health professionals
- thoroughly trained to be a peer supporter
- monitored and cared for by the Peer Mentor Team

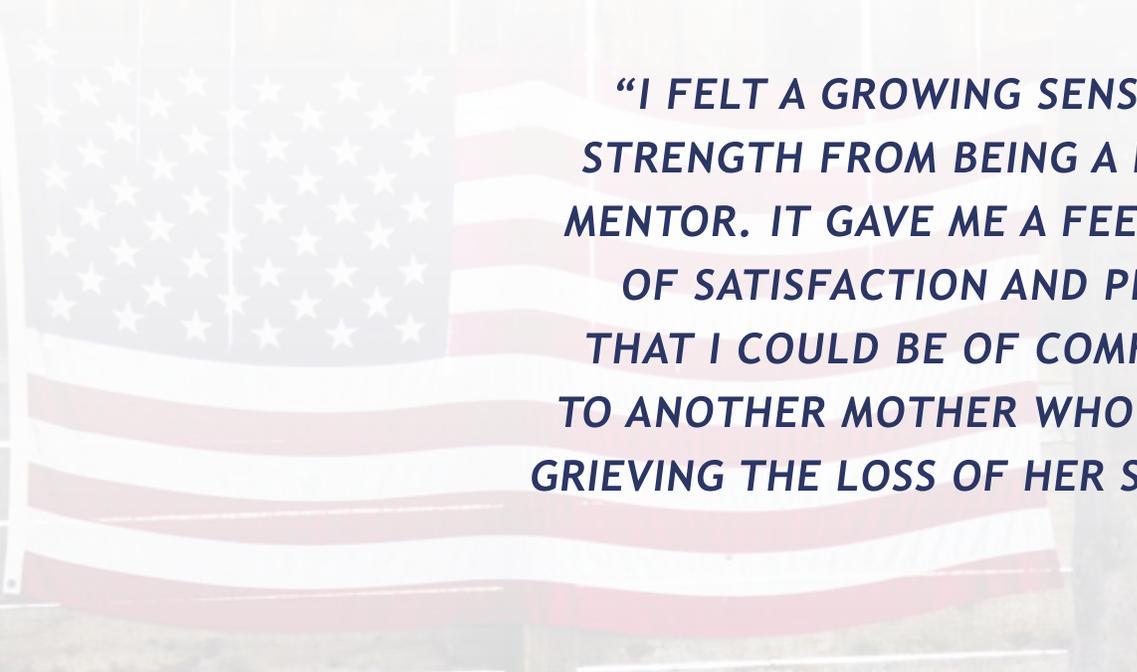
¹ Bartone, P. T., Bartone, J. V., Gileno, Z., & Violanti, J. M. (2018). Exploration into best practices in peer support for bereaved survivors. *Death Studies*, 42(9), 555-568. doi:10.1080/07481187.2017.

TAPS regularly reviews best-practices^{2, 3} to ensure we are meeting the needs of our survivors. Research in peer-based emotional support provides the framework for the design of the Peer Mentor program. In alignment with research, the TAPS Peer Mentor program offers the following benefits for survivors:

- foster social networking
- improve quality of life
- promote wellness
- improve coping skills
- support acceptance of illness/situation
- improve compliance
- reduce concerns
- increase satisfaction with health status

² Castellano, C. (2012). Reciprocal peer support (RPS): a decade of not so random acts of kindness. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*, 14(2), 105-110.

³ Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. (2011). *Best practices identified for peer support programs*. Retrieved from https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/sites/default/files/Best_Practices_Identified_for_Peer_Support_Programs_Jan_2011.pdf



“I FELT A GROWING SENSE OF STRENGTH FROM BEING A PEER MENTOR. IT GAVE ME A FEELING OF SATISFACTION AND PEACE THAT I COULD BE OF COMFORT TO ANOTHER MOTHER WHO WAS GRIEVING THE LOSS OF HER SON.”



Suicide Pre/Postvention

The TAPS National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp has been recognized by the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the American Association of Suicidology and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention as a crucial healing event for those who have experienced the death of a loved one to suicide while serving in the military.

Under the TAPS Suicide Postvention Model™, the TAPS Suicide Pre/Postvention team provides comprehensive care for survivors who are at highest risk for complicated grief, mental health issues, addiction, and additional suicides. Our programming has been described internationally as a best practice in postvention. We stand witness to suicide loss survivors who are not only surviving such a traumatic event but actually thriving and experiencing post-traumatic growth^{1, 2, 3, 4}.

The TAPS Suicide Pre/Postvention team engages with survivors and the community to provide a greater awareness for best practices in suicide pre/postvention. This team devotes their time, attention, and resources to develop and conduct trainings on best practices in suicide pre/postvention, psychological autopsies to understand suicide loss, provide consultations to organizations to increase suicide awareness, produce and disseminate knowledge including publications and press releases, and convene and facilitate online forums.

- **IN 2017, 123 AMERICANS DIED BY SUICIDE EVERY DAY⁶**
- **FOR EVERY 1 DEATH BY SUICIDE, THERE ARE ON AVERAGE 6 LOVED ONES DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE DEATH⁵**
- **1 IN 3 NEW SURVIVORS TO TAPS ARE SUICIDE SURVIVORS**
- **10,000 SUICIDE SURVIVORS HAVE CONNECTED WITH TAPS SINCE 2009.**
- **TAPS EXPERTS PRESENTED AT 50+ TRAINING SESSIONS PARTNERING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON BEST-PRACTICES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

1. Cook, F. J., Langford, L., & Ruocco, K. (2017). Evidence-and practice-informed approach to implementing peer grief support after suicide systematically in the USA. *Death studies, 41*(10), 648-658.

2. Gibbs, N., & Thompson, M. (2012). The War On Suicide?. *TIME.com*.

3. Harrington-LaMorie, J., Jordan, J. R., Ruocco, K., & Cerel, J. (2018). Surviving families of military suicide loss: Exploring postvention peer support. *Death studies, 42*(3), 143-154.

4. Harrington-LaMorie, J., & Ruocco, K. (2011). The tragedy assistance program for survivors (TAPS). *Grief after suicide: Understanding the consequences and caring for the survivors*, 403-411.

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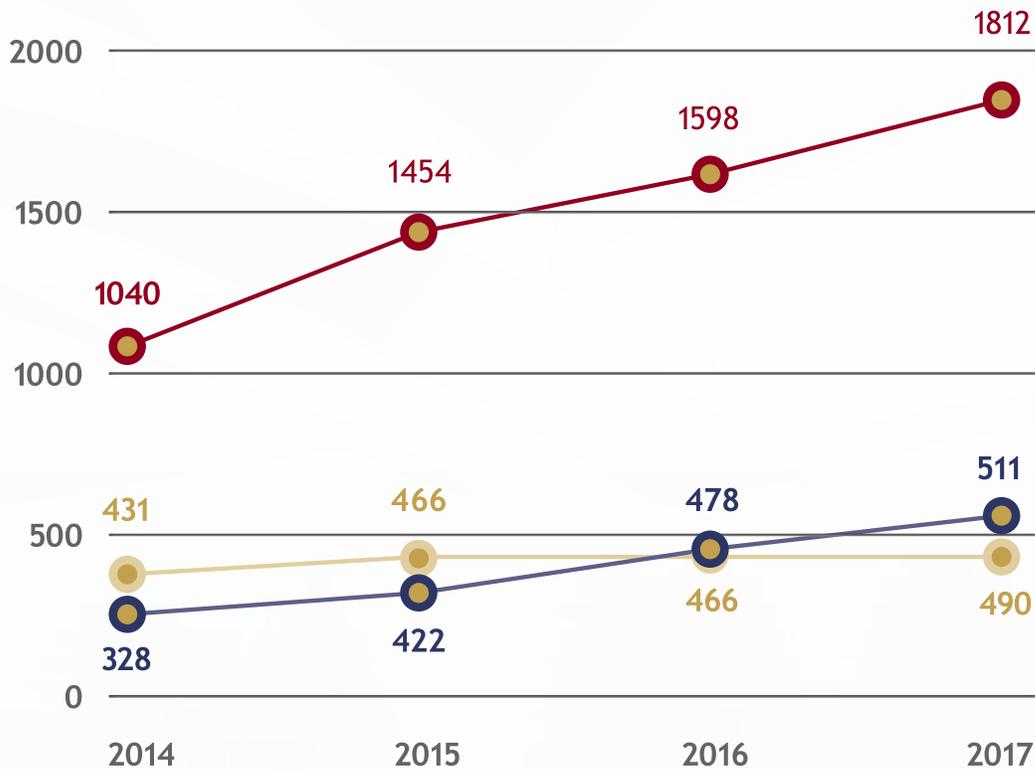
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injury

“Enjoyed hearing about all the research. It was good to examine the process of building trust. I think it will be easy to apply to help rebuild the trust with my partner. The last segment with how to identify/present problems with my partner will be extremely useful. I found your presentation very interesting – I liked the discussion of research!”

“I’ve been guarded in sharing things with my partner. I feel guilty and I didn’t know why I would do that until you brought up the reasons why. This was key for motivating me to open up so we can build trust – thank you!”

Suicide Pre/Postvention

- New 2017 TAPS Suicide Survivors
- New 2017 TAPS Suicide Deaths
- DoD Suicide Casualties



¹DoD Quarterly Suicide Report. (2018). Defense suicide prevention office. Retrieved May 3, 2018, from www.dspo.mil/Prevention/Data-Surveillance/Quarterly-Reports.

**DoD suicide deaths include armed forces members on duty status

*TAPS suicide deaths include armed forces members on duty status, retired, reserves, and discharged members as identified in the TAPS Database.

IN 2017, THE NUMBER OF TAPS SUICIDE AND SUSPECTED SUICIDE SURVIVORS INCREASED BY 25.5%

In alignment with research-based best practices in suicide postvention care, the TAPS Pre/Postvention Team has identified the TAPS Postvention Model™ over the past 10 years.

- 1. STABILIZATION** - suicide survivors face unique challenges when they lose their hero to suicide. TAPS works quickly to support survivors to help them feel a sense of stability.
- 2. GRIEF INTEGRATION** - as time progresses, suicide survivors need support to embark on a healthy grief journey. TAPS programs offer specific support to our survivors of suicide loss.
- 3. POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH** - suicide survivors are often left with emotions such as guilt, and doubt among other emotions. TAPS programs are sensitive to the needs of our suicide survivors and offer opportunities for survivors to gain hope and healing to achieve post-traumatic growth.

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 provide safe spaces for military children to explore grief and embrace healing.

GOOD GRIEF CAMPS are where children are able to share and learn coping skills through games, crafts and other activities in a fun and supportive environment. Each child is paired with a military mentor who serves as a companion and reminds the child that he or she is still a part of the military community.

TEEN ADVENTURES provide opportunities to tackle a challenging outdoor adventure, like hiking the Appalachian Trail

FAMILY RETREATS are a place for surviving significant others and children to connect as a family through a variety of activities in a safe and supportive environment with other surviving families.

GOOD GRIEF CAMPOUTS combine traditional camp fun, like ziplining, water activities and s'mores, with grief support and remembrance ceremonies.

These adventures teach teamwork, communication skills, and positive coping skills which will remain with our survivors even after they leave our programs. Separate programming workshops for parents provide information on resources, communication strategies, and ways to help grieving children at across child development.

In 2017, TAPS hosted seven Good Grief Camps at regional and national seminars, four Good Grief Campouts and Family Camps throughout the summer, and two GGC adventures that supported military surviving children and provided them the opportunity to come together around the nation to connect with other survivors, continue their individual journeys of grief, learn coping skills, and honor their military hero.

Healing events were held across the country and across all segments of the survivor population that brought families together to build coping skills, connect with others and find peace in this new, unexpected normal. In 2017, we also continued the collaboration with TAPS adult programs to provide programming that enabled families to continue their grief work beyond the scope of the event with grief metaphors and shared language.



2017 Youth Programs

Youth Programs	Location	Date	Adults	Children	Total Survivors	Military Mentors
Chicago Area Regional Good Grief Camp	Chicago, IL	March	175	56	231	36
GGC Adventure at the Georgia Aquarium	Atlanta, GA	April	10	18	28	10
TAPS Colorado Regional Good Grief Camp	Colorado Springs, CO	April	109	53	162	80
National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp	Arlington, VA	May	756	406	1162	413
TAPS North Carolina Good Grief Campout	Columbia, SC	June	28	49	77	27
TAPS Southern California Good Grief Campout	Julian, CA	June	26	49	75	26
TAPS Washington Family Retreat	Islandwood, WA	July	18	232	3	9
TAPS Tennessee Family Retreat	Bolivar, TN	July	21	45	66	6
Texas Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp	Austin, TX	July	198	107	305	71
National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp	Phoenix, AZ	October	437	143	580	163
TAPS Teen Adventure at Outward Bound	Baltimore, MD	October	8	9	17	N/A
Georgia Family Retreat	Dahlongea, GA	November	19	35	54	13
TAPS San Diego Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp	San Diego, CA	December	256	97	353	101
Totals			1886	1043*	2929	919

*Total number of children ages 0-18. Children ages 4-18 are connected with Military Mentors

TAPS PROVIDED COMFORT, CARE, AND COMPASSION TO 1,043 CHILD SURVIVORS IN 2017 THROUGH OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS AND GOOD GRIEF CAMPS.



Programs

In grief's darkest hours, survivors ask themselves the hard questions: What do we do now? What does this new life look like? Who are we without our loved ones? Survivors wring the questions as though they're trying to squeeze out wisdom or answers and face the everyday realities of their loss.

Although the path to peace and purpose is different for everyone, TAPS programs can be signposts — pointing the way toward comfort, camaraderie and companionship. Through TAPS programs, survivors gather to heal, console and explore these hard questions.

2017 TAPS PROGRAMS

- SEMINARS
- GOOD GRIEF CAMPS
- RETREATS
- FAMILY RETREATS
- EXPEDITIONS
- INNER WARRIOR
- TEAM TAPS
- EMPOWERMENT
- TEAMS4TAPS
- STARS4TAPS



Every TAPS program is designed to help survivors feel companioned as they grieve, supported as they rebuild and united as they choose to hope.

257 TAPS PROGRAMS IN 2017

- 7,327 SURVIVORS
- 3 COUNTRIES
- 50 STATES

"The loss of my son has been the hardest thing I have ever experienced. It has been over 3 years since his death, and I am still here trying to hang on and be strong. The staff and the fellow survivors helped me gain a new perspective - I don't have to be alone just hanging on. The TAPS staff created an atmosphere where everyone felt comfortable enough to share. Thank you so much."



**“THANK YOU FOR
ONE OF THE
MOST AMAZING,
INSPIRING, AND
HEALING WEEKENDS
OF MY LIFE.”**

Seminars and Good Grief Camps

Each year, TAPS hosts National and Regional Seminars to offer support and connections to all families in all parts of their grief journey. The goal of our TAPS seminars is to provide a safe space for our survivors to share their hero and experience a sense of hope and inspiration knowing you have a family of others who understand. Both national and regional seminars are inclusive and host a variety of events survivors have the option of attending. Topics for discussion-based programs are optional for survivors to attend and cover a wide range of topics which impact our grieving military survivors. All workshops are led by industry experts and are specifically designed to create a safe space where survivors can connect with other survivors on a similar grief journey. TAPS National and Regional Seminars held in conjunction with TAPS Good Grief Camps.

2017 TAPS SEMINARS AND GOOD GRIEF CAMPS

2,775 SURVIVORS ATTENDED TAPS SEMINARS AND GOOD GRIEF CAMPS.

1,913 ADULT SURVIVORS

862 CHILDREN SURVIVORS

1,152 MILITARY MENTORS

“I’ve never seen anything like it. The TAPS seminar really is just a big family gathering. You can’t be involved and not become a part of the family.” – Lenzy Ruffin, Volunteer Photographer

“I met so many people and made some friends. I enjoyed being there even under the circumstances. You never know how many people are going through the same as you are until you go to these seminars. The program was put together very well. I felt like a family member to everyone. Thank you again for this experience.” – Randi McCaddon, Surviving mother of Captain Michael McCaddon, Army National Guard



“It’s like a family reunion and I love it.”

“I meet a better version of myself at each event I attend”

“Thank you for one of the most amazing, inspiring, and healing weekends of my life.”

“Our families are blessed to have such awesome people who care.”

“Thank you, TAPS. The smile on my daughter’s face is priceless.”

“We will cherish the memories for a long time to come.”

2017 Seminars

National Seminars		Location	Date	Adults	Children	Total Survivors	Military Mentors
National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp		Arlington, VA	May	756	406	1162	413
National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp		Phoenix, AZ	October	437	143	580	163
Total				1193	549	1742	576
Regional Seminars		Location	Date	Adults	Children	Total Survivors	Military Mentors
Midwest Regional Seminar and Good Grief Camp		Chicago, IL	March	169	56	225	36
Colorado Regional Seminar and Good Grief Camp		Colorado Springs, CO	April	83	53	136	80
Texas Regional Seminar and Good Grief Camp		Austin, TX	July	178	107	285	71
San Diego Regional Seminar and Good Grief Camp		San Diego, CA	December	290	97	387	101
Total				720	313	1033	288
South East Regional Seminar and Good Grief Camp*		Tampa, FL*	September*	296*	138*	434*	153*
*Canceled due to hurricane				Adults	Children	Total Survivors	Military Mentors
2017 Total Seminar Attendance				1913	862	2775	1,152

2017 TAPS NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR

1,162 SURVIVORS ATTENDED THE NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR AND GOOD GRIEF CAMP IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA.

756 ADULTS

406 CHILDREN

413 MILITARY MENTORS

“Eldridge is the only TAPS mentor I have had. When I came to GGC 2 years ago, I was unsure of what the experience would be like, and I was incredibly reserved. Eldridge became someone in whom I could confide, and helped make GGC a positive experience. We have stayed in contact since that GGC two years ago. Later when I was applying to colleges, Eldridge read over my admissions essay and gave me input. My family even got to meet him last year when he took us on a tour of the Pentagon (where he worked at the time).

– Allison Brooke Loftis, Surviving daughter of Lieutenant Colonel John Darin Loftis, Air Force

2017 TAPS NATIONAL MILITARY SUICIDE SURVIVOR SEMINAR

580 SURVIVORS ATTENDED THE NATIONAL MILITARY SUICIDE SURVIVOR SEMINAR AND GOOD GRIEF CAMP IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA.

437 ADULTS ATTENDED

143 CHILDREN

163 MILITARY MENTORS

Health and Wellness



RETREATS

TAPS Retreats take place over several days in a unique location and are often designed to bring together small groups of survivors who share similar losses to further build a sense of community.

- + Family Retreats
- + Young Adult Retreats
- + Significant Other Retreats
- + Parent Retreats
- + Adult Children Retreats
- + Sibling Retreats
- + Mens Retreats

12 RETREATS

291 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES

“This was my fourth time attending the Montana Men’s Retreat and it turned out to be the best one yet. This was the first time my son RaShawn has attended.... ... The experience on this retreat was positive and rewarding. This retreat allowed my son and I to not only spend time together, it allowed us to openly talk about our grief journeys and unresolved issues between us.” – Jon Ganues, Virginia Surviving father of Air Force Airman 1st Class Jon Ganues

EXPEDITIONS

TAPS Expeditions are longer, outdoor skills-based events that require dedication, preparation and a real sense of adventure.

7 EXPEDITIONS

67 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES

“This was an awesome overall experience. I wish I could relive it a thousand times. The people I met were amazing and I feel like I learned so much from each of them.”

INNER WARRIOR

The TAPS Inner Warrior program focuses on helping our survivors become as healthy as they can be so they can use the tools of their own mind and body to support and guide their grief.

7 INNER WARRIOR PROGRAMS
143 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES

“This was the first place I felt truly understood. I will never forget this incredible trip or these warriors I now call sisters.”

– Amanda Smith, surviving wife of Specialist James Curtis Smith, Army

TEAM TAPS

Creating a community of survivors and supporters to honor our fallen heroes in competitive sports such as running, walking, cycling, and swimming.

8 TEAM TAPS
ENGAGEMENTS - 785 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES

EMPOWERMENT

TAPS Empowerment programming helps survivors incorporate concepts of identity and spirituality into transformative goal-setting life ambitions.

3 EMPOWERMENT
57 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES

“The camaraderie that developed between the women including the TAPS leaders was lovely. I no longer felt alone when it was over. I appreciated all the activities and the circle of women at the end of each day when we shared about our loved ones and laughed and cried together.”



Sports and Entertainment

Stars4TAPS and teams4taps connect surviving military families with professional sports programs and the entertainment industry to bring hope and healing while honoring their fallen heroes.

“All the coincidences that led me to attend a teams4taps game with my favorite team, the Cleveland Cavaliers, was definitely my brother looking out for me and reminding me he’s still around looking down on me from heaven.”

– TAPS Survivor Jason Kriz

STARS4TAPS

Stars4TAPS works with the entertainment industry — including musicians, actors, Broadway and TV shows, films, and productions on tour — to create meaningful opportunities for surviving military families to make new memories with the entertainers who once brought them, and their fallen hero, joy and happiness.

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 STARS4TAPS PROGRAMS
- 322 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES
- 134 FALLEN HEROES HONORED
- 7 STATES HOSTED STARS4TAPS PROGRAMS



TEAMS4TAPS

teams4taps works with sports teams across the country to bring joy to surviving military families and to honor the lives of their fallen heroes.

2017 TEAMS4TAPS HIGHLIGHTS

- 181 TEAMS4TAPS PROGRAMS
- 3920 SURVIVOR ATTENDEES
- 985 FALLEN HEROES HONORED
- 30 STATES HOSTED TEAMS4TAPS PROGRAMS
- 3 COUNTRIES HOSTED TEAMS4TAPS PROGRAMS
- HOSTING TEAMS4TAPS PROGRAMS

“Carlee’s journey is the epitome of what TAPS is all about. I met this shy, quiet 10 year old over Memorial Day weekend, and already she is family. It is truly profound to realize what the TAPS organization has done to help her find healing. Gail and I smile when we think of TAPS and the great connection we’ve made with Carlee and her family.”

– Robert Irvine, Celebrity Chef



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Member
TAPS Survivor honoring
LCDR Rand McNally



Lewis F. Von Thaeer
Member
President and CEO, Battelle



AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- ★ 2015 Presidential Medal of Freedom
Presented to Bonnie Carroll
- ★ MOAA Military Family National Service Award
- ★ 2014 Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award • *Presented to Bonnie Carroll*
- ★ 2016 ADEC Clinical Practice Award
Presented to Bonnie Carroll
- ★ 2016 American Association of Suicidology Survivor of the Year
Presented to Kim Ruocco
- ★ 2016 Rosalynn Carter Caregiver Champion Award
Presented to Military Veteran Caregiver Network
- ★ Got Your 6"6 Certified" Review Committee
Presented to Bonnie Carroll
- ★ 2017 James Van Zandt Citizenship Award from VFW
Presented to Bonnie Carroll
- ★ 2017 Yerkes Award from the American Psychological Association
Presented to Bonnie Carroll

ACCREDITATIONS

- ★ Certification, American Grief Academy
- ★ Chair, Military Committee, Association of Death Education & Counseling
- ★ Co-Chaired, DOD Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide
- ★ Member, Association of Death Education and Counseling Board
- ★ Member, Community Blueprint Advisory Council
- ★ Member, Div. 19, American Psychological Association
- ★ Member, DOD Military Family Readiness Council
- ★ Member, Health Defense Board Defense Health Board
- ★ Member, International Conference of Police Chaplains
- ★ Member, International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies
- ★ Member, National Alliance of Grieving Children
- ★ Member, Sesame Street Advisory Board
- ★ Member, VA Advisory Committee on Cemeteries & Memorials

Support the Mission and Honor Their Service



IN 2017, TAPS AVERAGED 15 NEW SURVIVORS EVERY DAY



TAPS CARED FOR 75,000 SURVIVORS

YOUR SUPPORT ENSURES TAPS IS AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 365 DAYS A YEAR.

Thousands of military families receive a life-changing knock on their door every year after the tragic loss of a service member.

SUPPORT TAPS

Your generous gift makes possible the TAPS mission to support the families and loved ones who will forever mourn their loss. TAPS receives no government funding and relies on supporters like you to fund programs that make the biggest difference for our military families. TAPS.org/support

DONATE

DONATE NOW BY VISITING TAPS.ORG/DONATE OR CALLING 202.959.TAPS (8277)

Make a Donation

- ✦ Text to Fund the Mission
- ✦ Planned and Estate Giving
- ✦ Employer Matched Giving
- ✦ Combined Federal Campaign
- ✦ Online Store

Volunteer

- ✦ Military Mentor
- ✦ Grief Professional
- ✦ Team TAPS Volunteer
- ✦ Event Support
- ✦ Mission Support
- ✦ Talent

Sponsor

- ✦ Honor Guard Gala
- ✦ Event Sponsorship
- ✦ Stars4TAPS
- ✦ teams4taps
- ✦ National Seminars
- ✦ Regional Seminars
- ✦ Good Grief Camps
- ✦ Products
- ✦ Programs
- ✦ Services
- ✦ Retreats

Fundraise

- ✦ Host a Fundraiser



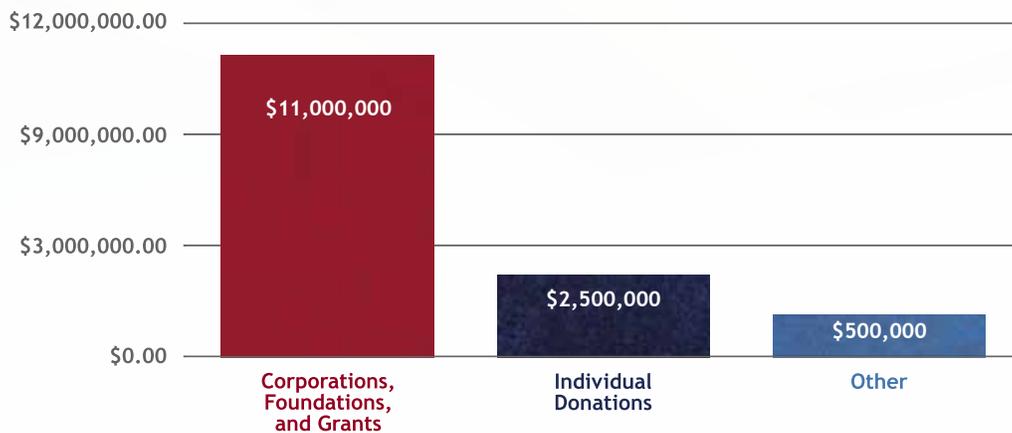
Text "TAPS" to 24700 to make a contribution.

CHARITY RATINGS



- 88% OF TAPS FUNDS WERE INVESTED DIRECTLY INTO SURVIVOR PROGRAMS IN 2017
- TAPS RAISED \$14 MILLION IN DONATIONS, GRANTS, FUNDS, MERCHANDISE PURCHASES, AND IN-KIND SUPPORT.
- \$0.00 FROM THE GOVERNMENT

2017 FUNDING

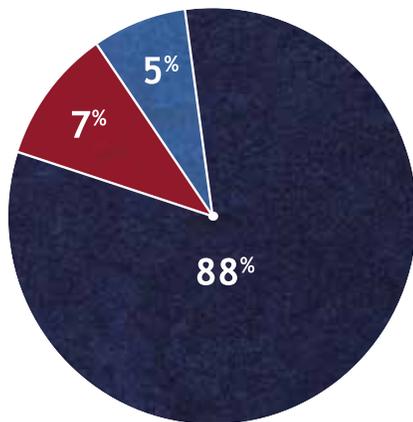


*The financial results included in this report may contain unaudited figures. TAPS complete, audited financial statements can be obtained online at taps.org/donate.

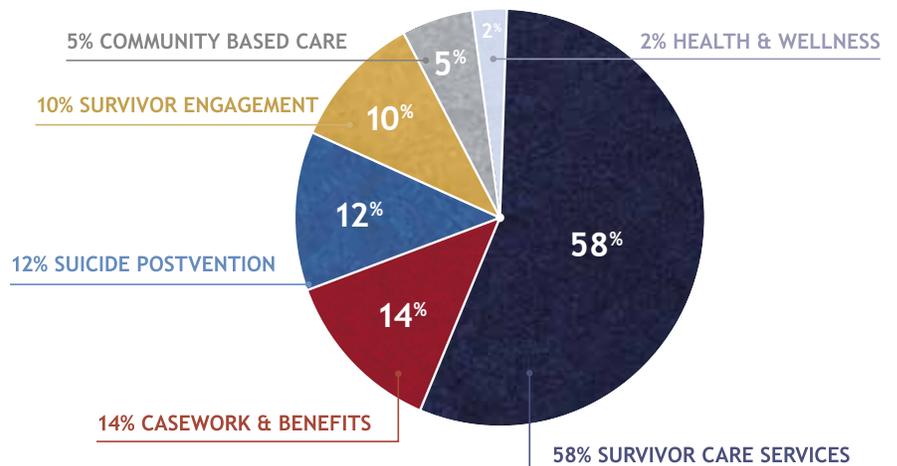
2017 TAPS INVESTMENTS

Since 1994, TAPS has offered comfort and care to 75,000 bereaved families who lost their hero who served America’s military missions.

TAPS EXPENSES



TAPS PROGRAMS



- TAPS Programs
- Fundraising to provide survivors with access to free programs.
- Keeping the lights on for Americas military families. TAPS is always here.

TAPS Sponsors

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**“TAPS IS WHERE LEGACIES
LIVE AND LOVE RESIDES.”**



Honor Their Service

YOUR SUPPORT ENSURES TAPS
IS AVAILABLE 24/7/365

Thousands of military families receive a life-changing knock on their door every year after the tragic loss of a service member and almost 6,000 found their way to us in 2017. TAPS is there for these families, as well as an additional 75,000 surviving loved ones of our fallen military heroes who reached out for hope and healing since TAPS was founded in 1994.

TAX ID # 92-0152268
TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS
3033 WILSON BLVD. THIRD FLOOR • ARLINGTON, VA 22201

Your generous gift supports the TAPS mission to provide the families of the fallen who will forever mourn their loss with comfort and care. TAPS receives no government funding and relies on supporters to be there for our military families.

DONATE FUNDS, TIME, AND TALENT NOW BY VISITING [TAPS.ORG/SUPPORT](https://taps.org/support) OR CALLING 202.588.TAPS (8277)