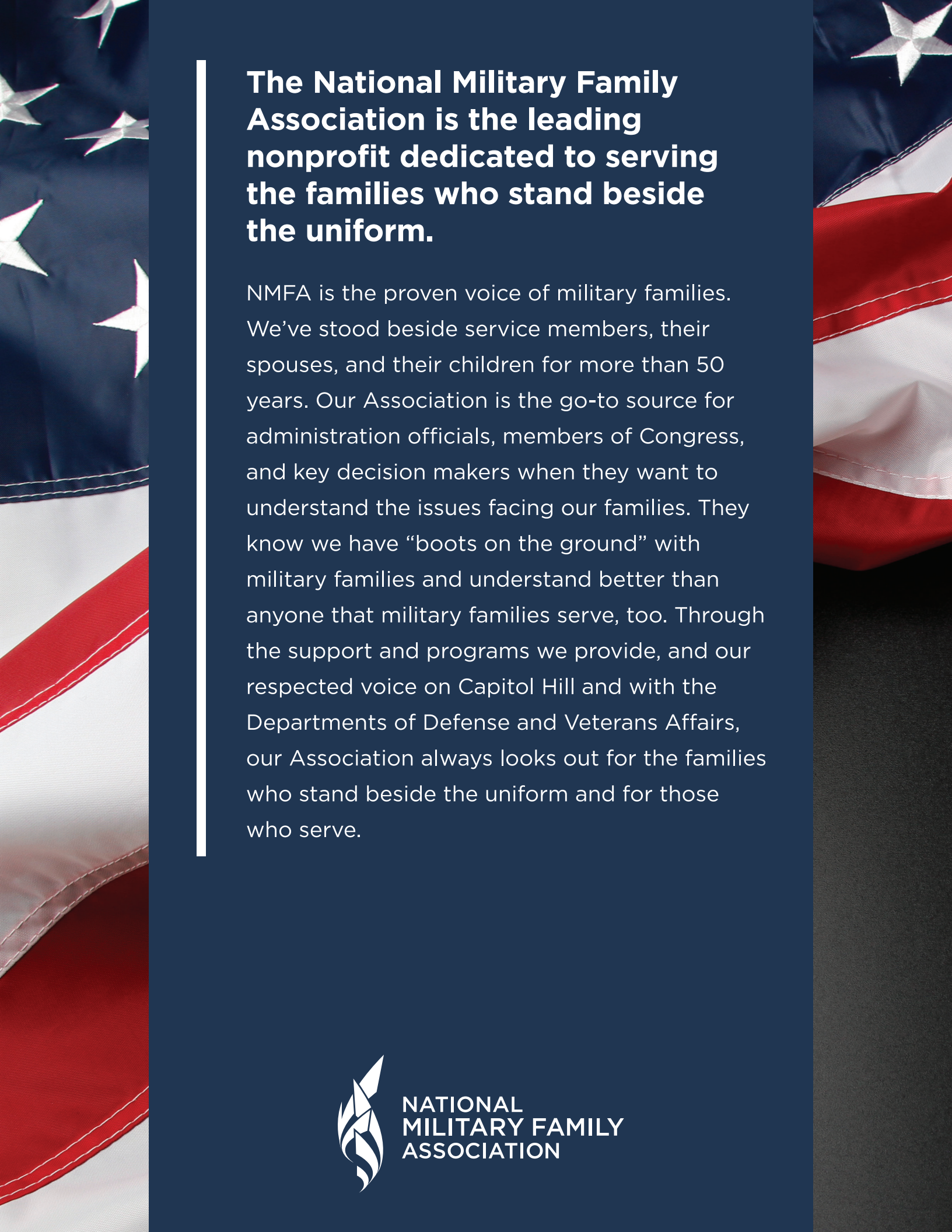




NATIONAL
MILITARY FAMILY
ASSOCIATION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly angled view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The flag is positioned such that it frames the central text area.

The National Military Family Association is the leading nonprofit dedicated to serving the families who stand beside the uniform.

NMFA is the proven voice of military families. We've stood beside service members, their spouses, and their children for more than 50 years. Our Association is the go-to source for administration officials, members of Congress, and key decision makers when they want to understand the issues facing our families. They know we have "boots on the ground" with military families and understand better than anyone that military families serve, too. Through the support and programs we provide, and our respected voice on Capitol Hill and with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, our Association always looks out for the families who stand beside the uniform and for those who serve.



**NATIONAL
MILITARY FAMILY
ASSOCIATION**



MILITARY
KIDS SERVE TOO!
www.MilitaryFamily.org

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

PCS + Moving Hub

Created a comprehensive PCS information hub for military families in partnership with PCSGrades

Operation Purple Program

Launched Operation Purple Camp at Home and Operation Purple Camp Junior at Home, in addition to hosting in-person camps and retreats

Military Family Health Care

Urged TRICARE to cover young adult dependents up to the age of 26 at no additional cost, just like every other health care plan

Military Spouse Scholarship Program

Nursing, mental health, and education were among the most popular fields of study for this year's 750 recipients

Research + Insights

Released unprecedented research focused on understanding the military teen population



YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 wasn't a normal year. We marked the end of the war in Afghanistan, the twentieth anniversary of 9/11, and American children started their third school year in a pandemic. Across the nation, families navigated new challenges and continued uncertainties—all while America's military families continued to serve.

At the National Military Family Association, we know when there's a need, there's a way.

In 1969, when a few military spouses gathered around a kitchen table, determined to figure out how they could help their war-widowed friends, they found a way. They marched door-to-door on Capitol Hill, calling for change and creating ways to support military families in need.

When families came to us with their concerns this year, our response was no different. Here's how we supported the military families who serve alongside those in uniform in 2021:



Creating More Healing Connections

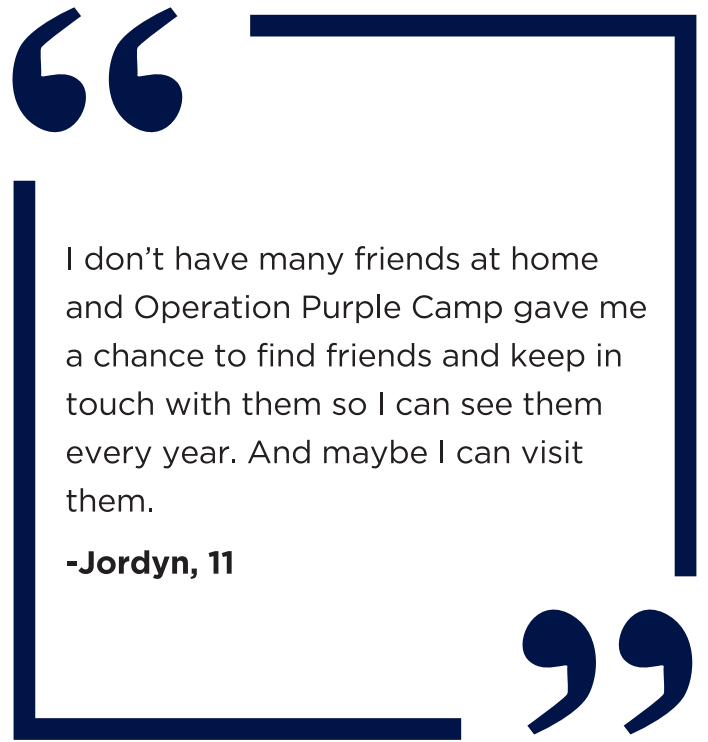
Military kids went back to camp! After a year off, we were thrilled to welcome 765 military kids back to in-person Operation Purple Camp at 13 locations across the country with Wounded Warrior Project's support. Kids enjoyed a traditional, sleepaway summer camp experience complete with waterskiing, horseback riding, ropes courses, team building activities, GaGa ball, and more!



For kids who are in the middle of a military-mandated move, live far from one of our Operation Purple Camp locations, or for whom sleepaway camp isn't the right fit, we launched Operation Purple Camp at Home, serving 1,695 campers. The new program combined hands-on activities with virtual summer camp programming to build independence, cultivate curiosity, and get kids engaged in nature. In its inaugural year, military kids ages 7-14 took part in 134 virtual camp activities and live classes and shared nearly 9,000 pictures, videos, and drawings. Younger campers ages 3-7 were able to get a taste of the fun with Operation Purple Camp Junior at Home, enjoying age-appropriate activities and daily meetings with camp counselors that made them feel like they were at camp just like 'the big kids.'



In 2021, we hosted two Operation Purple Healing Adventures. At these retreats for families of our wounded, ill, or injured service members, 30 families experienced a relaxing weekend together while focusing on strengthening their family bond and building new connections with fellow families also learning to navigate life after a service-connected injury. Families who couldn't attend Healing Adventures in person had the opportunity to engage in a similar experience through a virtual retreat, enabling 34 families a chance to create new memories from the comfort of home.



I don't have many friends at home and Operation Purple Camp gave me a chance to find friends and keep in touch with them so I can see them every year. And maybe I can visit them.

-Jordyn, 11

We welcomed 25 military families reconnecting after a deployment or separation to two Operation Purple Family Retreat weekends. These events gave service members and their loved ones an opportunity to step away from their screens and pick up oars and fishing rods instead, putting the focus back on family and fostering the connections families need most.

We also introduced a new concept in 2021: Operation Purple One-Day Family Retreats. At these retreats, local military families spent the day together at camp without the commitment of a whole weekend away while still enjoying all the fun camp has to offer. In the Hampton Roads area, 166 family members attended One-Day Family Retreats where they made new memories together, met other families, and enjoyed wilderness activities like archery, canoeing, fishing, and swimming in the James River.

New Advocacy Efforts, Big Impact

Our commitment to advocacy that improves the lives of military families extends well past legislation, and this year was no different. We know our military families are at their strongest when they are their own best advocates. So throughout 2021, we supported our military family community with both in-person and virtual advocacy-focused events, roundtable discussions, and educational webinars that centered around our policy priorities and how to achieve them.

For military spouses continuing to struggle with high levels of underemployment and unemployment, that meant doing everything we could to bridge the gap between higher education and employment. For the third of military spouses employed in fields requiring a professional license or certification, we held targeted advocacy webinars on how to advocate for yourself in the relicensing process after a PCS move and how to affect the legislative changes needed for all military spouses working in these fields.

NMFA and military spouses met with Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) in June about the Jobs and Childcare for Military Families Act, bipartisan legislation that would create a military spouse target group in the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and establish dependent care flexible spending accounts for service members.

Child care remained an additional crisis point for military families throughout the year. We heard from thousands of families sharing disappointment and frustration facing rising child care costs and reduced access. To help with families' immediate needs for financial assistance to cover child care costs, we partnered with Army Emergency Relief and the Air Force Aid Society to award more than \$2.8M in child care fee relief to qualifying military families. By the end of 2021, more than 3,400 families will have received over \$5M in funding to help offset the financial hardship.

When military kids are safe, their parents can focus on the mission at hand—whether that is their service to this nation, or the education, training, and careers that will provide for their families for years to come.



As we supported these families with child care fee relief, we continued to offer year-round applications for our Military Spouse Scholarship Program—which saw an increase in applications over the previous year. Many spouses use the funding they receive from NMFA to cover the cost of tuition, books, exam fees, and entrepreneurial expenses.

During a time when the state of employment was bleak, military spouses felt the hit harder. Working spouses already earn a reported 26.8% less than their civilian counterparts, but those who were out of work also had to overcome a rising unemployment rate of 22%—six times that of the national average of 3.6% in 2019.

Now in its 18th year, the Military Spouse Scholarship Program continues to help spouses reach career and education goals.



In 2021, NMFA provided

\$800K in scholarships to 764 spouses.

Nearly all recipients report going on to work in their respective fields and add **financial stability to their households.**

Since 2004, NMFA has awarded over

\$7.4M in funding to 7,450 military spouses.



Bringing New Ideas Forward to Support Military Families

Our programs and advocacy are based on a strong understanding of what military families need. When they call us for help or share their stories and experiences with us at our in-person programs, we listen and make sense of what it means for the whole military family community. We officially launched the Research & Insights department in 2021 to formalize this process and build a platform for new analysis and learning.

The department conducts research, data collection, and analysis to come up with meaningful insights in areas critical to military family well-being, including health, financial security, education, employment, and military children.

We use this research data to form and shape our advocacy efforts and the programs we provide military families. In addition, we release and distribute it to partners, policy makers, and legislative leaders to show the interventions and support military families tell us they need.

Our Association's first large-scale research and data launch focuses on an often overlooked demographic: military teenagers. NMFA partnered with Bloom—a nonpartisan organization created by military teens for military teens—to carry out this important work and reach the military adolescent population. With Bloom's help, we surveyed our military teen community and had more than 2,000 respondents, each helping us shape a detailed picture of our modern military teen community, their experiences, and what military teens need today.

NMFA Welcomes New Leadership

In early 2021, NMFA named Besa Pinchotti as our new Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer. With more than eight years of dedicated work experience at NMFA, as well as personal insight into the military family experience, her deep understanding of both brings charged momentum to the Association's mission to be the voice for military families in 2022 and beyond.



Despite the challenges and uncertainty military families face in the wake of an ongoing pandemic, continued sacrifice, and the realities of the end of 20 years of war, we know that healing must take place next. During 2022, we will take every opportunity to remain true to our motto, Together We're Stronger, as we find new and innovative ways to strengthen and empower our military families when they need it most.

“ Camp was a really fun experience for me because I got to talk about what it’s like to be in the military. Normally people wouldn’t understand so it was really helpful to have other kids understand what it is like. ”

-Jayla, 10



“ Thank you for helping our family reconnect! When our service member (husband and dad) left for his last deployment, our girls were kids. He returned to teenagers, and we just haven’t been able to connect, until now. Thanks again for everything. ”

**-The Hirak family,
Army National Guard**



“ Our family attended the one-day retreat today with 5 children. We made wonderful memories, really enjoyed spending time outdoors, and it was fun to do new activities together. Plans are already in the works to continue doing things together at home. This retreat will be the highlight of our summer! ”

**-The Gentry family,
Marine Corps**

“

This award will go a long way toward helping me finish my degree, which I'd feared I'd have to give up during our upcoming PCS. I'm relieved I'll be able to continue my education while supporting my husband and the important work he does with the US Navy.

-Brianna P., Navy Spouse

”

-Brianna P.



“

My NMFA scholarship is enabling me to build a solid foundation for myself, my husband and our two children (and our two dogs!). One day allowing me to give back more to the community and serve those in need as a Family Nurse Practitioner. I am truly thankful for this opportunity.

-Jennifer W., military spouse and veteran

”

-Jennifer W.



“

The pandemic has tested our faith. We have had to hold on to each other tighter and love harder, always remembering that this too shall pass. Thank you for providing a ray of hope to our little family.

-Child Care Fee Relief recipients, Army

”



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