

# CAREGIVERS *On* *The* HOMEFRONT ANNUAL REPORT 2022



ESTABLISHED  
2017

*Although thier mission is complete, ours has just begun.*

**2022**

**CAREGIVERS***On*  
*The* **HOMEFRONT**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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## **OUR VISION**

Our vision is to create a vibrant future of dignity and wellbeing for all veterans and first responder families. Redefining our countries perceptions that surround both the physical and invisible wounds of the brave men and women that serve our country and communities.



# HOPE \* RESILIENCY \* TOGETHERNESS



As we say good-bye to 2022, I give pause to look back over this year to the good work our team, donors, and volunteers put forth for the family caregivers and their children we support.

This past year we introduced our Homefront Hangout program which supports children who are living in homes with a veteran who have mental and/or physical disabilities. Homefront Hangout trains teens to mentor tweens through a ten week virtual program which is followed by an in-person mental health and wellness restorative weekend in Kansas City, Missouri. It is so important to support the mental health of these "secondary caregivers" to get ahead of generational trauma. This program was supported through a grant from Veterans United Foundation.

We held three mental health and wellness restorative weekends in Kansas City to include our first ever reunion weekend. Thanks to a grant from GEHA, twenty-seven of our previous restorative weekend participants attended our reunion weekend where they caught up with each other, took part in self care at our historic Elms Spa in Excelsior Springs, went on a Kansas City themed scavenger hunt, and attended our 5-year Celebration Gala. We continue supporting our caregivers along their caregiving journey through Trauma ReBoot courses. This is a 12-week course where caregivers get to work on their own trauma. We also continue to provide psychoeducation to family and friends of military and veterans through our partners at NAMI.

In June we were awarded a Creative Forces Grant through the Mid-America Arts Alliance to provide art workshops to veterans and their family members. To date we have held ten workshops both in-person and virtually to participants all throughout the United States. This grant continues through June of this year and is something we want to continue.

As we all know, non-profits can't do good work without funds. We are grateful to all of you who came out to our spring and fall Poker tournaments, our 5K in June, and our Celebration Gala. Those who donate through our Amazon Wish List, Amazon Smiles, Facebook, our monthly donors - every little bit goes to our mental health programs and we could not do it without YOU!

Food insecurity in the military and veteran population is at an all time high. If people are hungry, they cannot work on their mental health. In November, we partnered with Feed the Children, Tyson, KAMO Adventures, The David Woods Kemper Veterans Foundation and the Chiefs Ambassadors to host Operation Honor KC. Thanks to volunteers at GEHA Health, Russell Stover Candies, Daughters of the American Revolution, and several other individuals, we passed out food and personal care boxes to feed 1600 people in the Kansas City Metro area.

After advocating for mil/vet caregivers for over nine years now I still run into people who do not know that family members are taking care of our wounded, ill, and injured veterans. This is why it is very important that I continue to advocate for our caregivers which means educating our communities. I presented at several conferences this past year to include The American Association of Suicidology, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, The Arch Respite Conference, The Care Colloquium, KU Suicide Prevention Conference, mental health organizations, and others.

As we move into the next year our work is not over. Without you; our caregivers, donors, partners, and supporters, none of the above would be possible. Although we had an impactful year, we end it on a year that saw a decrease in funding. Families cannot be well supported unless our communities step up. Caregivers on the Homefront will continue to step up and offer the support they deserve. I encourage you to read about the impact our programming has had in the pages that follow.

Thank you for your continued support. Please reach out to us. There is so much more to do. Remember, our veterans do not heal in a vacuum. What they go through, their families do as well.

**Shawn Moore, LMSW**  
**Executive Director**

# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS



## CareyLyn Ryan

I am a caregiver to my Army Veteran husband and have been since 2010. I did not find Caregivers on the Homefront until 2021. My mentality about being a caregiver changed for the better. I learned that it is imperative to care for myself as much as I do for my veteran. It is ok to have great days and horrid days. COH gave me the freedom to understand that I do not need to be perfect in my caregiving duties. My mental health and wellness matter and are just as important as my veterans. COH brought out unity during the weekend retreat, we realized that we were all walking the same road and that we need to be there for each other. Everyone's background and caregiving story are different, yet we all carry the title of caregiver. COH showed me that it is great to be proud of that title, all the while tending to my needs as well. Neglecting myself is more harmful than helpful during this phase of my journey as a caregiver.



## Marlee Purcey

Caregivers on the Homefront has been a great organization. They have provided a support system and have introduced me to other caregivers that I still connect with and talk to fairly regularly. We were able to create bonds with each other over our lives that many don't understand. The restorative weekends help us to regain our individual identity outside of caregiving, parenting, and our jobs or careers. They also provide other resources such as Trauma Reboot to help us through our Traumas that have happened through our lives. Thank you.



# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS



## Gabriela Headen

I have been a caregiver for my husband Tommy for 7 years. I am thankful for the opportunity to be part of Caregivers on the Homefront. I know through them I am not alone on this journey. My son Tommy was able to join Homefront Hangout and mentor a tween. He gained new friends and made many memories. I am grateful that he had this opportunity. My daughter Tamara and I have been enjoying the art therapy offered virtually. We love that through art we can destress and enjoy the company of other caregivers.



## Tara Plybon

I live in Taylor, Texas and have been caring for my husband, Todd for 13 years now. Caregivers on the Homefront's Restorative Weekend has helped me deal with the numbing that happens during caregiver burnout and ambiguous grief. I am so very grateful for having experienced that weekend as it helped me reconnect with a part of myself I had forgotten along the way.



## Natalie Rojas

Caring for your veteran can feel lonely. Caregivers feel like no one understands what they are going through. Caregivers on the Homefront provides that community. It links caregivers to support and resources that sometimes due to isolation and exhaustion, can be lifesaving for the caregiver. Caregivers on the Homefront provided me with that life raft at a time when I needed it the most. I will always be a supporter of COH regardless of where life takes me.

# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS



Erin Musgrove

My experience with COH was so uplifting and helpful when going through a rough time, they helped me through it, as well as helped me connect with other caregivers, who I have been able to continue to connect with long after their events. They truly are instrumental in my life.



Anna Cochrane

I can honestly say that without COH I would not have found my identity. For the past 20 years I have been a caregiver, a wife, and a mom, but now I am Anna. I have realized how much I love health and fitness. I have learned that it isn't selfish to take a Barre class once or twice a week and it's okay to do something just for me.



Christina Lloyd

Caregivers on the Homefront is not just for me but for my family as well. I get time away from my spouse, learn tools, and make new friends.

I use the tools that I learn here and share them with my community!

# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS



## Jo & Ashley Rosser

One night, several years ago I realized I needed help. My husband's PTSD had taken over our lives. Through a rabbit hole I went in search of help. Thankfully, I found Caregivers on the Homefront. Through their Restorative Weekends I have gained tools, tips and tricks to manage my new life. I have learned that I am capable of more than I thought I was. While my husband learns to manage his PTSD, COH has empowered me to not only manage my day to day life, but to prepare for my future. I honestly don't know what I would do without Shawn and the rest of her team.



## Monique Meadows

COH is there for me as a caregiver, understanding the roles I have as a caregiver, and continually helps provide the tools to give me the strength I need to care for myself, and for WW. COH understands the roles of caregivers through experience, provides a safe environment to be open about the challenges we face as caregivers, continually check in on you, and most importantly always available to assist or help with resources.

## Cathrine Hoekstra



As a military caregiver with no connections to other caregivers in my home state, I connected with Caregivers on the Homefront in 2018. I have been fortunate to attend two restorative weekends through COH and have met brave, resilient women through my experiences. As a mom of three, I often find myself tending to the needs of others before myself. I am incredibly thankful for the donors and sponsors who support caregivers and COH. Without the generosity of all of you, these retreats would not be possible for a caregiver like myself to attend.



# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS



## Tricia Bauer

COH is especially important to me because of the support they offer, and the many effective ways they offered it to me. It was clear from the outset that there were expectations of me to learn. I wasn't sure what we'd be taught, but I was in need. I knew I needed help in caring for my Veteran and was hopeful they had information I didn't know...a magic wand perhaps? What I came to discover, with the help of Shawn and the Caregivers on the Homefront team, is that I am the magic and I don't need a wand. My Veteran was the center of my focus, he's the one who needed the care, it's only right that he be the center of my attention. After my first day with COH I realized that I was lost. I was so lost in fact, that I couldn't answer what I enjoy. My cohort helped me to realize that very answer I gave involved my Veteran. The program encouraged me and supported me to uncover who I was, apart from my role as a caregiver. Though I could tell you self-care was important, I didn't practice it. Since my time in KC I've been able to let go of things that were holding me back, to continue my journey back to me. I am able to embrace my husband-Veteran and meet him where he is in his journey, care for him as he needs and enjoy our journey together.

# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS



## Wendy Lawson

I am the mother of 3 and wife and a caregiver to a 100% disabled veteran. The road of caregiving is rocky. There are good days and bad days and most of them are out of your control. Being able to care for those that have served our country is an honor. That same man is also my husband and father of my children who I have been with since we were 15 and 17. Each day is different and yet the same. The path you walk with them is rewarding and I wouldn't have it any other way.

At a particular time in our journey I felt like I was losing myself and so alone. Finding Caregivers on the Homefront made all that change. Attending a retreat in Weatherford, Texas changed my life. I gained skills to help with self care and balance as well as ways to aid in everyday ways to assist my veteran. I made lifetime friends and other women that understand exactly what it's like and are there no matter what is going on. The resources we were provided were lifesaving and the friendships made are priceless.

# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHTS

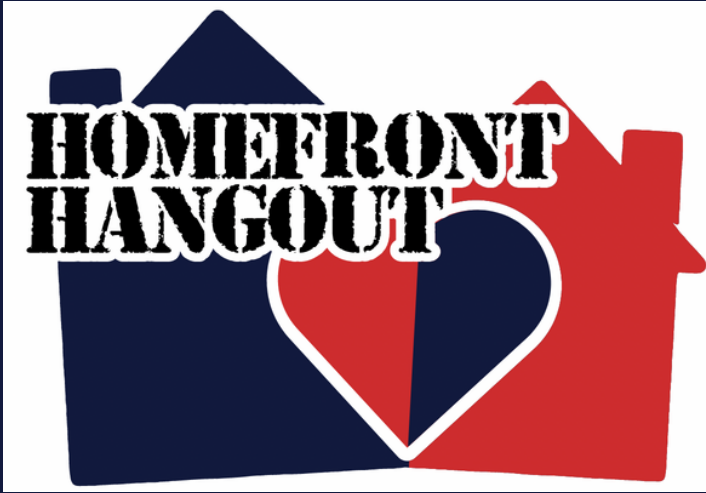


## Michael Bowles

I am a veteran, and a veteran caregiver to my wife Jennifer of over 20 years, whom I met while serving in the Army. My wife deals with PTSD, depression, anxiety, TBI, MST. We have 3 wonderful children. I'm also a caregiver to my mother in law. When I'm not taking care of my family I love to volunteer. I've been President of my daughter's PTO for 3 years, I've been bowling with Special Olympics where I was Vice President and League Secretary for a few years before becoming the Treasurer for more than 10 years now. I volunteer at my church and the school's athletic sports combine every spring and fall. I grew up as a military brat, moving around every couple of years even going overseas. In my free time I'm learning to work with leather and I like to do craft projects in multiple mediums with my family. Also I am a jokester. I like to have fun.



# HOMEFRONT HANGOUT



The Homefront Hangout program will serve children who are living in homes with a veteran who has mental and/or physical disabilities. Our mentorship program is conducted virtually for ten weeks and then followed up by an in-person program in Kansas City, Missouri. The Homefront Hangout program is provided by licensed master social workers who are also veteran family caregivers. These staff members have been providing mental health programming to veteran family caregivers since 2016.

This is a peer mentorship program that focuses on the five C's of positive youth development which are competence, confidence, connection, character, and compassion.

## PARENT FEEDBACK:

"I love that this program was created for the youth of wounded warriors. I think it is support that is needed and has been mostly overlooked. I felt like she enjoyed her interaction with her teen."

"This program has helped my daughter so much. I've seen improvement in some of her issues with anxiety from the beginning of the program."

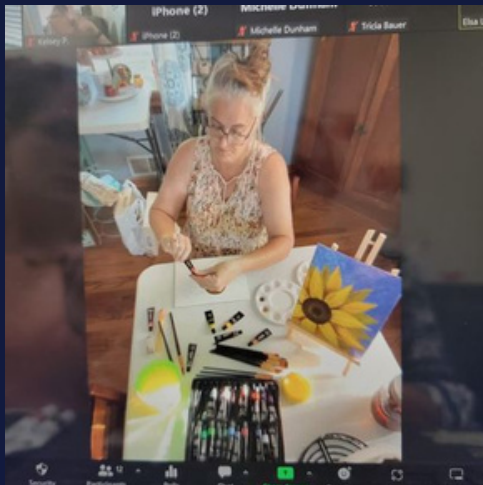
"My daughter really looks forward to her time with her teen mentor. I have no idea what they discussed during their meetings, but I know she is always in a more cheerful mood afterwards."



*Supporting America's Hidden Helpers*



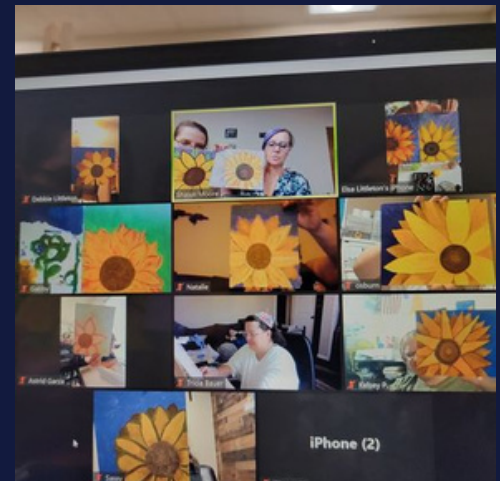
# ART ON THE HOMEFRONT



Elsa Littleton,  
Art Teacher

13 Workshops

189 Participants



WE ARE A  
**CREATIVE FORCES**  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
GRANT RECIPIENT

ONE OF 26 ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE U.S.  
AWARDED A GRANT FOR 2022-2023 PROGRAMMING



MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE

[CREATIVEFORCESNRC.ARTS.GOV](https://creativeforcesnrc.arts.gov)

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
for the  
**ARTS**  
CREATIVE  
FORCES



# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



"I was able to open up about my current caregiver situation and touch on a lot of issues I had to deal with as a child, as it seems my life is going full circle. This week opened up some hidden issues and feelings that needed airing out, knowing my strengths also helped me in dealing with all of it. I found out that I am not the only person who has these emotions and problems-that right there was the best support I could have ever asked for. Thank you for making this weekend happen."

Our restorative weekends focus on educational workshops, therapeutic activities, peer support, and partnerships with community partners.

These weekend retreats utilize a holistic approach to prioritize and empower the caregiver.



Three Restorative Weekends

70 Caregivers Served

*Supporting America's Hidden Heroes*



# OPERATION HONOR KC



**50+ VOLUNTEERS**

**400 FAMILIES FED**

**40,000 POUNDS OF**

**CHICKEN**



# WILL YOU WALK WITH ME FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

On June 18th, 2022 Caregivers on the Homefront hosted its fourth annual "Will You Walk with Me" 5k to start the conversation about suicide prevention. We have been supported every year by Murphy's Marchers, a group whose loved one, Murphy Wells, died by suicide. We are honored to continue to be a place to gather in his name. This year, another family faced the heartache of losing their loved one to suicide. Vito Mazzara, police officer and brother of our board member, Michele Gregg, lost his life in February. Michele spoke about her brother at the walk. Sharing her story, touching our hearts, and destigmatizing mental health is the epitome of the "Will You Walk with Me" 5K. Let's Start a Conversation!

We are grateful to each one of you who came out to support these families, your families, and our families at COH. Many family members struggle behind closed doors to often. We will continue to advocate for suicide prevention measures and awareness.

This year we will continue to highlight the awareness with an emphasis on PTSD. June is PTSD Awareness month. We hope to continue to see you!



## TOTAL RAISED

# \$7,421

**SAVE THE DATE. 2023 PTSD AWARENESS WALK, JUNE 17, 2023**



# Poker Fundraiser



March 25th, 2022, Caregivers on the Homefront held its second poker fundraiser. Belvoir Winery and Inn in Liberty, Missouri donated the luxurious space to play and win. This year we will be at the same venue but upstairs as we have outgrown the space!



## TOTAL RAISED

# \$4,220



Save the Date!  
March 25th, 2023



# 5 Year Celebration Gala



We made it to 5 years! No small feat in the non-profit world. We are so blessed to have been able to celebrate with our caregivers, old friends and new ones! Thank you so much to each of you. Without you, we wouldn't be here.

## TOTAL RAISED

# \$13,623





# OTHER NOTABLE ITEMS



On November 9th we were highlighted as the KMBC Community Days partner. If you missed the segment, [click here to watch](#)



## ROYALS CHARITIES

Thanks to a grant and partnership with the Royals Charities we were able to bring caregivers and their families to the K to catch a ballgame. Our Executive Director, Shawn Moore, delivered the game ball to the mound! We are grateful to have been awarded a second grant for 2023!



For the second year in a row we were awarded a PhillyKC award. This year our intern, Jordan Shockley, revamped our one pager and the marketing experts liked it enough to win GOLD!



Natasha and Shawn attended the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's 10th Year Anniversary Gala in Washington, DC in October. Senator Elizabeth Dole's efforts have put a spotlight on veteran family caregivers and we are grateful to get to be a part of it!

# 2022 SUPPORTERS

We are grateful for each and every one of our grantors, sponsors, monthly donors, and individuals who believed in our mission to support the 5.5 million military and veteran caregivers and the 2.3 million children in veteran caregiver homes. We could not continue to do our work without the kindness from each of you.

## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS!

### FINANCES

#### 2022 REVENUE

EVENTS  
30.1%

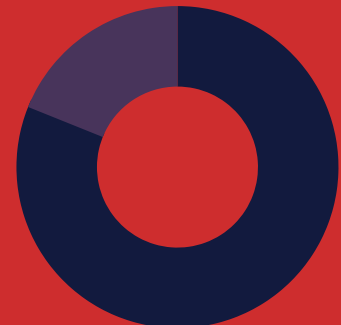


GRANTS  
35.4%

DONATIONS  
34.6%

#### 2022 EXPENSES

ADMINISTRATIVE  
18.9%



MISSION  
81.1%





## EXECUTIVE TEAM

**SHAWN MOORE**

Executive Director

**NATASHA SWAYZE**

Program Director

**KELLY RAI PHILLIPS**

Program Coordinator

### **CAREGIVERS ON THE HOMEFRONT**

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