



Survivor's Link

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Habits: Ready for a Change?

By Sabrina Griffin, CNRSW Navy Gold Star Coordinator

Whether they are good or bad, we all have a few habits we wish we didn't have. Cracking our knuckles when nervous, inhaling a six-layer chocolate cake when we're sad, or obsessively checking our Facebook newsfeed every 10 minutes may be habits we have developed that need to be readjusted. The truth is that habits are easily formed and difficult to kick.

By definition, habits are learned behaviors, actions we've become trained to do almost without thinking. When first learning to ride a bike, it may seem beyond our coordination level not to continuously slam the gears, fall over in the street or maneuver through complex turns. But eventually we stop skinning knees and begin to get the hang of it. Before we know it, we're popping wheelies down the street for all to see. Breaking when approaching a turn has become a habit; it's now something we've done so often that we hardly think about it anymore.

Habits are a part of our daily routine, from putting our shoes on to brushing our teeth, to driving a familiar route to work daily. These routine behaviors allow our brains to concentrate on more complex issues, sending certain things into autopilot. But with the good comes the inevitable — the other ones — the behaviors we would like to disown,

such as overeating, skipping breakfast, overspending, taking on more than we can handle, and procrastination. Sound familiar?

According to Charles Duhigg, author of "The Power of Habit," every habit has three components: a cue, a routine and a reward. The skim milk latte with a glazed donut multiple times a week turns into a repeated pattern, which eventually leads to the creation of a habit. The brain interprets coffee as a cue for restlessness and the donut is the reward for the cue. Good news: You can break the latte and donut pattern, relieving yourself of the 600-plus calorie indulgent behavior.

Change the reward once you receive the cue. Tired? Instead of rewarding the behaviors with a donut, reach for a banana or go for a quick walk. Stressed? Put on your running sneakers instead of exercising the credit card limit. Nervous? Focus on deep breaths instead of chewing your fingernails relentlessly.

Over a period of time, with commitment and self-control, you can form new habits. Granted, all habits are not created equal, nor will the process be for changing the reward from the cue; however, what we do know is that we all have the power to change our behaviors.

Gold Star Awareness Month

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Last year, the Navy Gold Star Program declared the month of May as Gold Star Awareness Month to help raise public awareness for Gold Star families, regardless of their service branch affiliation. The focus of Gold Star Awareness Month is to educate the military and civilian communities on what it means to be a Gold Star family, and to also honor Gold Star families by hosting events that pay tribute to the fallen and provide surviving family members with opportunities to connect with one another. This year, in addition to the program declaring May as Gold Star Awareness Month, we have asked state governors' offices to join us in proclaiming May as Gold Star Awareness Month. We would like all Gold Star families to know that our fallen heroes and their families will never be forgotten. If you are interested in finding out if your state is recognizing May as Gold Star Awareness Month, reach out to us via [Facebook](#).



Tragedy Into Triumph: A Survivor's Story

By Nicole Busey, Gold Star Wife

My name is Nicole Busey. This is my story of survival and how I turned tragedy into triumph. Monday, April 18, 2011, is a day that I will never forget. It is the day that my faith was tested, lost and regained, the day that showed me I am a fighter and an overcomer! It is the day my husband committed suicide.

I would never have imagined that this travesty would ever reach my doorstep. You hear about it happening, especially among military members, but I thought I was safe, I thought I was immune. When he died, a portion of me died with him and I wasn't sure if it could ever be revived. I was in a tailspin. At the time, my husband and I and our daughter lived in Virginia Beach. Neither of us had any family there, as we are originally from Washington, D.C. After his death, I decided to come back home and surround myself with family. I packed up the car my husband had just purchased for me and headed home, but home would never be what it used to be without my husband, who I affectionately called "Reese," short for Maurice.

My car was packed so far beyond capacity that my daughter hardly had any room, but I had to leave our former home where I had once known so much love and comfort. Looking back, I realize that the state of our car was symbolic of my emotional state; I wanted to pack and tuck away every emotion and every physical link to my husband — not in a callous way, but to keep me from emotionally unraveling (which happened anyway) and trying to preserve the "what was."

I don't think I have ever been as close to God as I was after the passing of my husband. Every day my prayer was: "Lord, please allow me to make it through the hour." I was so afraid of crying and breaking down that I was afraid to grieve. I thought I had to keep up this strong façade so no one knew how badly I was hurting. As I began to heal and dig deeper and deeper into my



faith, I realized it was totally fine for me to cry in sorrow for days. I went back and forth about what I could have done differently to save his life, what signs did I miss and so forth, but the truth was I loved as I should have and there was ultimately nothing I could have done differently.

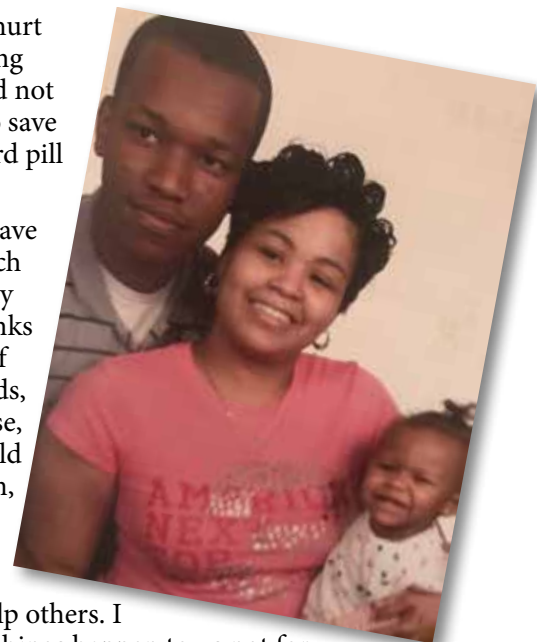
I think that hurt because loving someone and not being able to save them is a hard pill to swallow.

Now that I have come so much farther on my journey, thanks to the help of family, friends, and, of course, the Navy Gold Star Program, I feel that it is my duty to tell my story and help others. I

believe that things happen to us not for us, but for someone else. Not sharing my story would be a miscarriage of my faith and it does not help anyone to keep my journey to myself. I hope that my story gives someone else the strength to go on and keep fighting for life.

The Navy Gold Star Program was a tremendous resource for me and my daughter. I remember Ms. Patsy calling me about a year or two after my husband passed and informing me of the resources that were available to us. She asked me if I wanted to be a part of this community of Survivors (which is now an extended family). I remember telling her I wish this program was available at the time my husband passed, but I am glad it is available for others to get the support they need. The Navy Gold Star Program of NDW has been a tremendous help, both professionally and personally. The NGSP has introduced a community of support and love, from dining out events to meeting up with other survivors, to kid-friendly events such as camps, Breakfast with Santa, Gold Star Moms and Family Day, the White House Easter Egg Roll, and the most awesome of all events, the Chili Cook Off.

When the installation Navy Gold Star Coordinator, Ms. Patsy, reached out to me, I was doing well with my healing process, but Navy Gold Star has provided an extra boost to this process, as it's a constant process that has various stages. I am thankful to every one of its members for providing a place in the world that can provide so much light at the end of a dark tunnel, and for giving me a platform to share (most recently at the Suicide Aftermath as a speaker in Bethesda, Md.) not only my heartache and pain, but my story of hope and triumph! Thank you, Navy Gold Star, for continuing to be a part of our lives!



New Year, New Checklist

Part One of a Four-Part Series: Updating Your ID Cards

By the CNRSE Navy Gold Star Team

Each new year, we often start off with resolutions that we never quite accomplish. Sometimes these goals simply get pushed aside because we aren't sure what we need to do in order to make them happen. In 2017, we will be presenting a four-part series that will provide you with vital information to help save time and effort when updating your ID cards, obtaining a power of attorney and completing a will. We also will offer some helpful guidance on various financial topics of interest to Survivors.

In this article, we will outline what you need to do in order to keep your dependent IDs current.

Be sure to set a reminder on your calendar, phone, tablet, etc., at least 60 days prior to the expiration of your ID. You don't want to have a lapse in services or access because your ID card has expired!

Did you know that family members with a DS Logon can update their DEERS information on the RAPIDS Self-Service Portal? Visit <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/self-service> to find out how. You can also request a DS Logon if you don't already have one.

Did you know that you can make an appointment online to get a new ID card? Visit <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil> to find your closest ID card office and make an appointment.

In order to make the ID card renewal process as easy as possible, make sure you have the following documents when you arrive for your appointment:

- ✓ Two forms of ID that match the name as it appears in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

- One form of ID must be an unexpired state photo ID, driver's license or passport.
- The second form of ID may be a Social Security card, voter registration card or a certified copy of the birth certificate.

✓ DD Form 1300 to update DEERS.

How can a dependent child be added to DEERS after the death of his/her service member parent?

- ✓ The Survivor must have a birth certificate which shows the deceased service member's name on it and the Social Security card for the newborn.
- If the service member has a new child after death, then the spouse will provide the birth certificate with the deceased service member's name on it.
- If the service member is not married, then the mother of the child must provide an original/certified copy of the judicial paternity documents when a sponsor is deceased.
- Must have the hospital's live birth worksheet (good for 60 days). If more than 60 days, a birth certificate and Social Security card are required.

Please contact the ID card section at your local Personnel Support Detachment (PSD), Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC), Air National Guard unit, or the military activity nearest you if you have any additional questions.

Note: The next article will focus on understanding a power of attorney.

Navy Celebrates Gold Star Spouses Day

By Lisa Bauch, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Since 2010, Congress has passed an annual resolution recognizing April 5 as "Gold Star Wives Day" to pay tribute to the contributions of individuals belonging to the Gold Star Wives of America, a non-profit organization established in 1945 that was made up of women who lost their husbands in service to our country. The Survivor support community has adopted this date as a way to acknowledge the sacrifices of and say "thank you" to all Gold Star spouses, in addition to those who belong to this organization.

As the military has evolved over the years, the role and demographics of the military spouse have too. The Gold Star Wives of America organization has amended their membership requirements to include husbands as a reflection of these changes. We recognize that the origins of this day are steeped in history and want to honor that past, but we also understand the evolution of today's military culture. Therefore, this year we are acknowledging April 5, 2017, as "Gold Star Spouses Day." For details on how the Navy Gold Star Program is honoring Gold Star spouses in your area, be sure to connect with your closest coordinator. Visit www.navygoldstar.com/locations for more information.



Chaplain's Corner: Sometimes There Are No Words

By CNIC Force Chaplain's Office

The Bible provides an account of a rich man named Job who had everything. He was considered a success by anyone's standards. He had seven sons and three daughters, owned thousands of farm animals and had many servants. He was considered "the greatest man among all the people of the east." Then one day, sequential calamity hit. One messenger after another arrived at Job's house with negative reports. Job learned his 10 adult children died, thieves violated his property line and stole his livestock, and everything that defined him as a success went by the wayside as quickly as mist on a hot July morning (Job chapter 1).

When tragedy arrives at our doorsteps, there simply are no words.

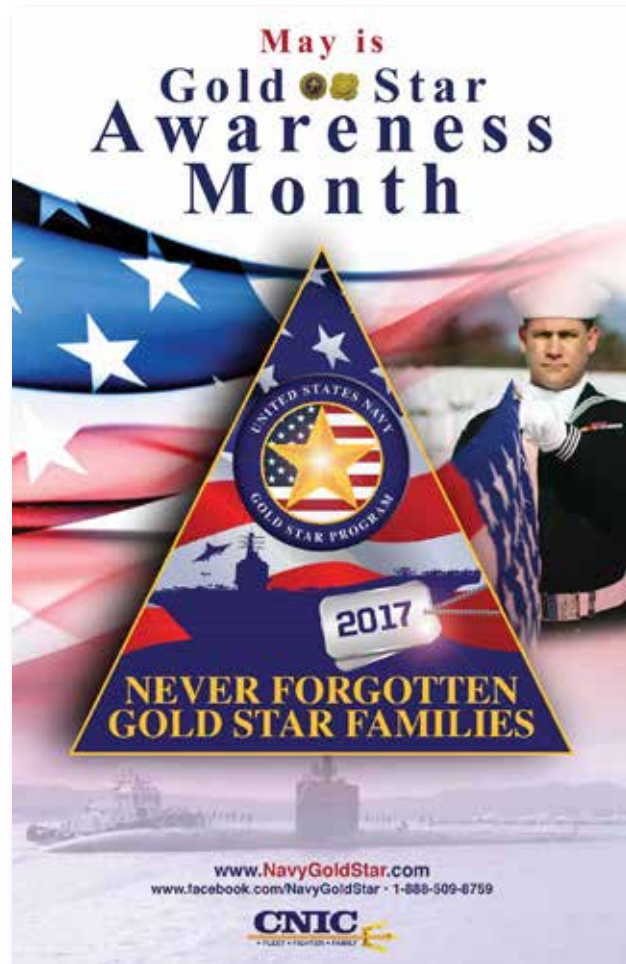
In the second chapter of Job, the most noteworthy event occurred. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, upon hearing of Job's significant emotional trauma due to loss, came to visit. Their mission was to comfort him, cry with him, and identify with his grief. Instead of carrying out their noble agenda, in sighting Job, the three friends were taken aback at his appearance. They barely recognized him! Instead of carrying out their original plan of care, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar tore their clothes, sprinkled themselves with ashes and sat in silence with him. No one said a word because they saw how greatly he was suffering (Job 2:13).

When you cast your eyes on a situation of suffering, sometimes there simply are no words.

The caring imperative in this account is elegantly simple. Whether it is Job's story or ours, there are times when the best company we can receive is from those who have no words. Few are those who simply desire to sit with us in our pain. No commentary. No analysis of the life situation or advice. No speculation. Simply sit with those who suffer and be a listening presence of care in the calamity of life.

Sometimes there are no words.

Disclaimer: It is the mission of the Navy Gold Star Program to provide Survivors with information on resources available to them. Survivor's Link is one of several tools used to accomplish that mission and from time to time will include information (including phone numbers and websites) for various non-governmental resources. The Department of the Navy does not warrant or endorse these entities, products or services.



Bereavement Camps: An Opportunity to Grieve and Heal

By Military OneSource

Grieving can be a lonely experience. The pain may feel intense and overwhelming at times. Being with others who are grieving can reassure you that what you're feeling is normal and OK. Bereavement camps, seminars and retreats offer opportunities for you to connect with people who understand and help you move forward in your grief journey.

Bereavement camps, seminars and retreats provide a safe place to grieve for adults, teens and children. You can tell your story and express your feelings if you want, as well as come away with tools and resources to help you face the world. You may also make long-lasting friendships with people who understand what you're going through.

Grief professionals and trained volunteers run the camps, providing grief education and emotional support after a loss. Because grants and donations often support the camps, they may be available at little or no cost to families. Camps for adults and children are often conducted separately, but each provides a safe place for surviving family members to both express and take a break from their grief.

Camps for Children and Teens

Children and teens grieve differently from adults. At an age when these kids are trying to fit in with their peers, their grief may make them feel alone and different. Bereavement camps, also called grief camps, give children and teens a way to cope with their pain and a place where they can talk openly and connect with other children who suffered a loss. They learn healthy ways to grieve and honor their deceased loved one.

Depending on the program, a weekend camp may include grief sessions that encourage children to share their experiences and their memories in age-appropriate ways. Although the sessions can be intense, they're mixed with physical activities and social events, which can help relieve some of the powerful emotions. Games, swimming, hiking and sports can also be outlets for some of the stress these children often experience.

Programs offering camps for children and teens include:

Good Grief Camps — A program of the [Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors](#), these camps are offered at different locations throughout the United States.

Comfort Zone Camp — This nonprofit program has camps nationwide.

Camp Erin — The nonprofit Moyer Foundation created this bereavement camp for children grieving a significant loss.

Project Common Bond — A program of Tuesday's Children, the project provides camps and retreats for teens who lost a family member because of an act of terrorism.

Programs for Adults

Like children and teens, adults may find comfort in sharing their experiences with people who can truly understand what they're feeling. Retreats and seminars specifically for adults focus on connecting people who've lost loved ones and teaching them skills that may help them cope with their sadness. The programs often have a different meaning for each participant, depending on where the participant is in his or her own personal grief journey.

The [Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors](#) provides adult seminars and retreats, along with Good Grief Camps, for children and teens. The adult programs use different methods for reaching out to those who are grieving.

An internet search may help you find other nonprofit organizations in your area that sponsor free retreats, camps, seminars, and other programs for surviving family members grieving the loss of a loved one.

Remember, it's important to reach out for help if you need it.

www.navygoldstar.com

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7 "Rituals" for Spring Renewal: How to Re-Group, Re-Prioritize, and Re-Invent yourself spiritually

By Abigail Brenner, MD

After a very long winter, spring has officially arrived. The spring or vernal equinox is the day of the year when light and dark are balanced. True or not, it's said that on this day you can balance an egg on its end. And by the way, the egg is the universal symbol of rebirth.

Although we still have a little way to go to really enjoy the warmth and light that spring brings, we can begin to think about what we can do to renew ourselves and to better balance our lives. What better time than spring to re-group and re-prioritize, and even re-invent ourselves, and the lives we find ourselves living? Here are some spring "rituals" to help you get started.

(1) De-clutter your living space.

- Get rid of anything you no longer need. Here's the rule of thumb: If you haven't worn it (or used it) for two years, out it goes. Donate clothing and household items that are in reasonably good condition to an organization or charity and books to your local library or hospital.
- Clear out kitchen cabinets of items that have been lying around since you can't remember when or whose expiration date has long passed. Dispose of medications and first aid products beyond their expiration date.

(2) Clear out mental and emotional clutter.

When we think of renewal we often think of rebirth; something old dies and something new is born. Why not use this season of renewal as a reminder to get rid of things that are weighing you down and sapping your energy?

- Allow yourself to let go of the past to make room for new things to come into your life.
- Commit to making decisions you've been putting off.
- Challenge limiting beliefs about yourself and about how things should be.
- Think positively. Recent research has shown that we can actually change the circuitry of our brains. When something negative comes up, pair it with something positive and stay with that feeling.

(3) Start a practice.

A new discipline will ensure that you invite mindfulness into your life. A daily practice affords you a "time-out" from your everyday routine. This is a gift to yourself; a promise to honor who you are.

- A spiritual practice such as yoga, meditation or chi gong are easy to find almost anywhere and relatively affordable.
- Another practice that you can do on your own is researching and reading sacred texts from many cultures and traditions. Read them with an eye on universal themes — those things that connect all of us.



- Walking is a wonderful way to help your body while clearing your mind. Walk instead of drive. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. And remember to change your route! We all are so programmed to do the same routine every day. Change the scenery, change your perspective!

(4) Begin something brand new.

Focus on spring as a time of new beginnings and resolve to do something you've always wanted to do but never felt you had the time.

- Assess your health. Maybe it's time to begin taking care of yourself? It's far better to change the way you live, beginning now, instead of waiting for things to get out of your control. Create an inventory of your health including diet, exercise, genetics, and stress level. Begin slowly, one change at a time, eventually incorporating others.
- Explore your creativity. Learn a new language, take piano lessons, awaken the diva within, take a computer class, or go back to school. It's never too late to fulfill a dream.
- Volunteer your time. Teach reading to those who want to learn, become a mentor, or help clean up your community; there are so many ways to give of yourself.

(5) Spend time outdoors.

- Plant a garden. If you have no outdoor space, plant an herb garden in your kitchen or plant pots of flowers to bring the outside into your home.
- Plant a tree with your child and watch it grow together.
- Build a birdhouse with your child and watch the inhabitants come and go from year to year. This provides connection to the earth and continuity in the life.

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(6) Take a trip.

This is something to look forward to annually, especially if you live in a place that experiences the extremes of winter. These could include:

- A personal retreat away or a weekend that you give to yourself every year to reflect on your life, the past year, and what new things you may want to incorporate into your life moving forward.
- A family reunion, to meet extended family at different destinations each year, allows people to stay connected and affords a sense of belonging and continuity for younger family members.
- A family vacation can do the same thing for the immediate members of your family. Camping, hiking or fishing, or visiting a historic site or a part of the country that's very different from your own, can help family members bond and reconnect from their busy, daily lives.

(7) Simplify your life.

- Slow down. As life moves so quickly, surrounding us with the constant stimulation of the information stream, we need to find a way to quiet our minds and make quality time for ourselves.
- “Downshift”, or streamline your life however you can in order to “upshift” the overall quality of your life. Reorganize your highest priorities and re-evaluate your commitments. What do you value most in your life? How much quality time do you spend with the people and the things you care about the most? What is the best way to use your time to create the life you want to have?

Hopefully, these seven rituals for renewal will set you on course for a life that is not only fulfilling and meaningful — but fully your own.

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Another Item to Add to Your To-Do List: Self-Care

By Tina Soukup, NAVSTA Everett Navy Gold Star Support Coordinator and Judith Wright, Life Skills Educator

Self-care is a term some of us are unfamiliar with. We tread through each day working, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of others. Eventually we begin to notice our bodies feeling tired, our focus becoming blurry, or our motivations lessening, yet somehow we continue to carry on with the tasks that are standing in line in front of us. But sometimes we find ourselves facing burnout from these daily trudges, and, if unmanaged, that can lead to more serious issues such as depression or worry.

It becomes imperative that we find ways to care for ourselves. If we can't take care of ourselves, we lessen our ability to take care of all those other tasks and people we find important in our lives.

Think of yourself as a container. It's filled with dozens of pebbles. Each pebble represents your energy level, your resilience, and your positive outlooks on life. These pebbles help keep you grounded and able to combat and bounce back from stress.

When we face little, everyday stressors in our lives (kids, grocery shopping, car issues, those daily trudges we mentioned above), we give up a pebble from our container. We lose a little more of our ability to be resilient, a little more of our energy, a little more of our positive outlooks. When faced with a big life stressor, we can lose a lot of pebbles. To continue with this analogy, this leaves us floating and feeling unable to ground ourselves. Feelings such as being lost, overwhelmed, and even feeling anxious can begin to grow prevalent. Our container, if not replenished, can become empty of our resilience pebbles that ground us, and it can begin to fill with things like doubts, worries and anxieties.

Throughout our lives, we experience losses, gains, trials, or changes. We have no control over those experiences; they happen whether we are ready to face them or not. The only consistent element in these events is you. So it's truly important to fill your container (your life) with as many resiliency pebbles as possible. Take a walk, watch the sunset, make something, go out, stay in, and stop what you're doing and concentrate on your breaths for a few moments each day. Find the pebbles to fill up your container; make it full again.

Be consistent in taking care of yourself. Be successful in the steps to become a better version of you, to find your purpose and to see your worth. Work in something for yourself each day, when possible. Set up a routine that allows you to decompress. Take care of yourself and the work you do for others will be better than before!



Kid's Korner

Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. H₂O, a drink
2. Heat from the sun
3. Energy derived from the sun
4. Arises from behavior of electrons and protons

Down

1. A day to celebrate our Earth and learn how to help save our planet (2 words)
2. The star at the center of our solar system

Word Bank

Earth Day

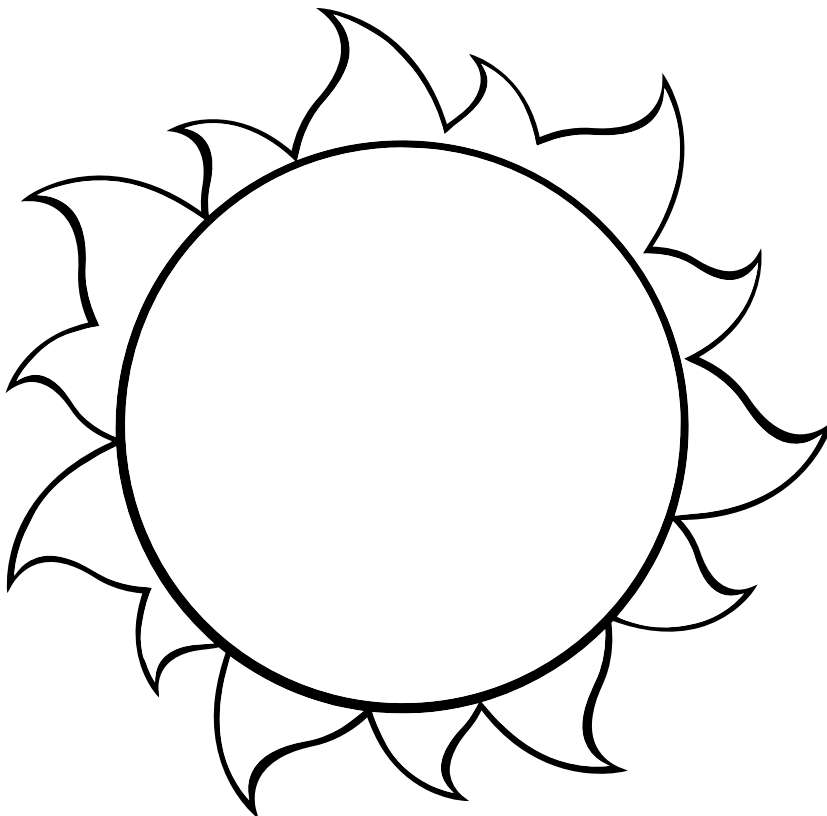
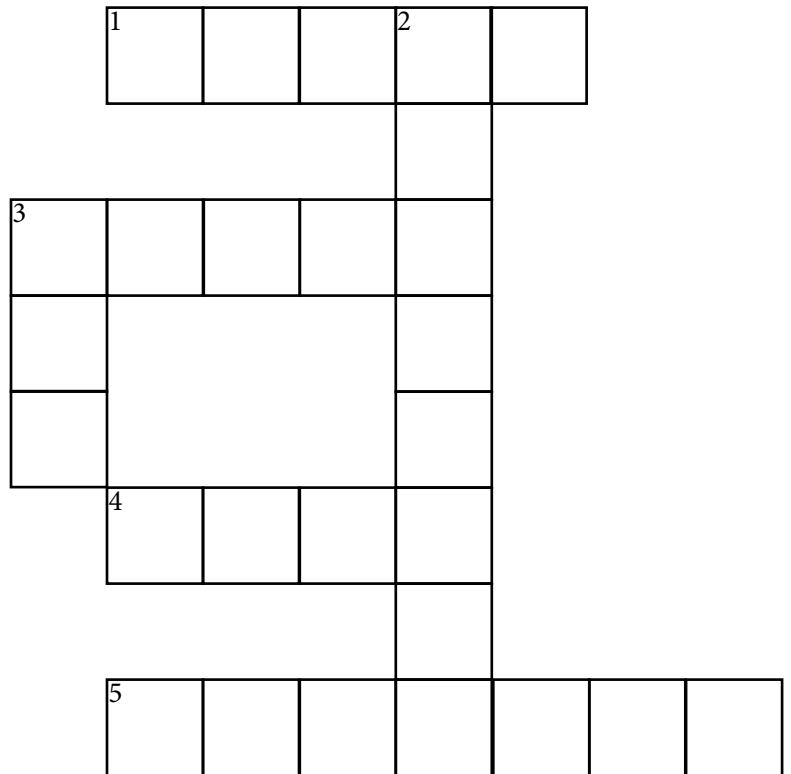
wind

sun

water

recycle

solar



Navy Gold Star Program Directory

Name	Phone	Address*
NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	619-532-2886	FFSP / 937 N HARBOR DR BOX 53 SAN DIEGO CA 92132-0058
NB VENTURA COUNTY INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	805-982-6018	FFSC / 1000 23RD AVE BLDG 1169 CODE N91 PORT HUENEME CA 93041
NAVBASE CORONADO INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	619-767-7225	FFSC / BUILDING G SAUFLEY RD SAN DIEGO CA 92135-7138
NB SAN DIEGO INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	619-556-2190	NB SAN DIEGO FFSC 3005 CORBINA ALLEY STE 1 BLDG 259 SAN DIEGO CA 92136-5190
NAVY REGION NORTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	360-396-2708	FFSC / 610 DOWELL ST BLDG 35 KEYPORT WA 98345
SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	425-304-3721	SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX 13910 45TH AVE NE SUITE 857 MARYSVILLE WA 98271
NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	904-542-5712	FFSC / BLDG 919 LANGLEY ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212-0102
NAS JACKSONVILLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	904-542-5706	FFSC / 554 CHILD ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212
NSA MID-SOUTH INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	901-874-5017	FFSC / 5722 INTEGRITY DR BLDG 456 MILLINGTON TN 38054-5045
NCBC GULFPORT INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	228-871-4569	FFSC / 5301 SNEAD ST GULFPORT MS 39501-5001
NAS CORPUS CHRISTI INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	361-961-1675	FFSC / 11001 D ST CORPUS CHRISTI TX 78419-5021
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON REGIONAL COORDINATOR	202-433-3059	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
NSA ANNAPOLIS INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	410-714-4040	FFSC / 168 BENNION RD ANNAPOLIS MD 21402
NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COORDINATOR	757-445-3073	FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 209 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219
NWS EARLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	732-866-2110	FFSC / 201 RT 34 BLDG C59 COLTS NECK NJ 07722
NAVSTA GREAT LAKES INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	847-688-3603 ext 127	FFSC / 525 FARRAGUT AVE STE 300 BLDG 26 GREAT LAKES IL 60088
NB NORFOLK INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	757-322-9182	FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 102 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219
SUBASE NEW LONDON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	860-694-1257	FFSC / BLDG 83 BOX 93 GROTON CT 06349-5093
NAS OCEANA INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	757-492-8282	FFSC / 1896 LASER RD STE 120 VIRGINIA BEACH VA 23460-2281

*When communicating with your coordinator via mail, please add NAVY GOLD STAR PROGRAM and contact column info to all mailing addresses to ensure delivery.