



Survivor's Link

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



A Peaceful Home with Routines

By Jamie Bather, NAS Jacksonville Gold Star Coordinator, and Susanna Del Llano, NAS Gold Star Coordinator

Children, chores, pets, back to school, military life, oh my! Is your world hectic? Know that you are not alone. One thing that may help the most is having routines. The case for routines and approximate schedules is now backed by both research and parenting experts. Approximate schedules and routines establish normalcy, a way to get things done, and a sense of security. Some positive things that result from establishing routines and schedules include:

1. Kids know exactly what to expect.
2. Kids cooperate more.
3. Everyone gets better quality sleep.
4. Everyone sleeps longer.
5. Behavior is better.
6. Parents can count on children acting more predictably.
7. Kids feel more secure and confident.
8. Kids are able to complete more tasks independently.
9. Kids experience less stress.



10. Repetition and predictability of routines fosters learning in children.

This list is not all inclusive and can be changed according to what works best for your household. Having a routine brings comfort and consistency to your child's life. Routines also create an external structure that children need while their internal structure is still developing. With a new school year fast approaching, routines may make preparations and completion of tasks more automatic,

helping your child to become more independent and able to get things done with little to no direction. In turn, this will help make your family life easier and more peaceful.

With all the changes that come with a loss in the family, the consistency you incorporate into the situation will help your kids feel safe and know what to expect. The key to making good habits stick is to do them regularly, so pick a new routine

and stick with it. Be sure to keep it simple and make it fun – this will help your child develop better behavior and a sense of personal control. Create those routines for a great school year.

Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Since 1936, the last Sunday in September has been designated as Gold Star Mother's Day to recognize and honor those who have lost a child while serving our country in the United States Armed Forces. In 2009, fallen service members' families were officially recognized and added by presidential proclamation, renaming the observance to Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day.

Members of our armed forces do not serve alone. Standing with each service member are parents, spouses, children and siblings providing support and love. This year, when the president signs the proclamation observing Sept. 30, 2018, as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day - we, as a nation, have the opportunity to let the families who have suffered the unimaginable pain of losing a loved one while in active service to our nation know that we will not forget them or their hero.

The Navy is committed to helping foster resiliency for the families of our fallen service members, regardless of how they died. The Navy Gold Star Program honors our Gold Star families throughout the year by hosting events that pay tribute to their lost loved ones, and by providing resources and opportunities to connect with one another.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program in your area, please call 888-509-8759, or visit www.facebook.com/navygoldstar or www.navygoldstar.com.



Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Navy installations across the country will participate in the 3rd Annual Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members ceremony on Sept. 27 to honor those who died while on active duty. For centuries, bells have been used by the Navy for timekeeping, safety and communication, to sound alarms, in ceremonies and events, and to signal the presence of important persons. During these memorial events, the bells rung will not signal anyone's presence; instead, they will toll in their absence.

The primary focus and mission of the Navy Gold Star Program is to provide an unprecedented level of service and commitment to Gold Star families. Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members is one way the Navy recognizes the sacrifices of our fallen heroes and their Gold Star families left behind. The ceremonies are held in association with Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, which is celebrated each year on the last Sunday in September, to honor, remember and support the parents, spouses and children of our fallen heroes.

Contact your closest Navy Gold Star coordinator to learn more about the ceremonies nearest you at 888-509-8759, or visit www.facebook.com/navygoldstar or www.navygoldstar.com.



The Meaning Behind Service Flags, Gold and Blue Stars

By Ray Cunnikin, CNRMA Gold Star Coordinator

As a Navy veteran with several deployments, I never understood the meaning behind the gold and blue star service flags. It blows my mind that so many Americans have never heard of, learned about, or understand the momentous meaning behind the service flags. What does a flag represent that has two blue stars, and what does it mean when the flag on a mother's pin has one blue star and one gold star, and another simply has one gold star?

The service flag was designed and patented by U.S. Army Capt. Robert L. Queissner, of the 5th Ohio Infantry, whose two sons were serving on the front line in World War I. The flag was designed to be displayed in the front window of people's homes to indicate the number of family members serving the war effort as members of the U.S. Armed Services.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson approved a request from the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense that allowed mothers who had lost a child serving in the war to wear a gold gilt star on their traditional black mourning band. This practice led to the blue star on the

service flag being covered with a gold star to indicate that the service member had been killed.

This practice became much more widespread during World War II when organizations and families took great pride and displayed banners indicating the number of members of the organization, or family, serving in the war.

Between World War II and today, the practice of wearing or displaying service flags or gold stars is still as significant as it was 100 years ago. Each time you see a blue service star, you should be aware that the person displaying it has a loved one - possibly in harm's way - supporting the freedoms we enjoy every day. A gold service star indicates that someone in that person's family has lost their life while serving our armed forces and our nation.

Please take a moment, when appropriate, to thank the bearer of the star. A simple "I appreciate your family member's service" or "My sympathies for your loss" is all it takes to remind the bearer that the service or sacrifice of their loved one means something.



Surviving Suicide

By Elizabeth Walther, LCSW, NAS Whidbey Island FFSC

It goes without saying that suicide takes a toll on those left behind. For every suicide, it is estimated that at least six people are affected. These include family members, coworkers, neighbors, classmates and close friends. Beyond grief and the fruitless search for answers, survivors of suicide also grapple with crippling emotions.

Shock – Most survivors of suicide feel shock as an immediate reaction, along with physical and emotional numbness. This reaction is a temporary way for the person to screen out the pain of what just happened, to allow time to comprehend the facts, and take things in smaller and more manageable steps.

Anger – Loved ones and family members often express anger, or suppress it, at the waste of human life. Anger is another grief response, and may be directed toward the person who died by suicide, to themselves, another family member, or a therapist.

Guilt – Following death by suicide, surviving family members rack their brains trying to think of what clues they missed, how they may have been able to prevent the suicide. This self-blame includes things they said (or didn't say), their failure to express love or concern, things they planned to do (but never got around to), and anything and everything in a never-ending kaleidoscope.

Fear – If one family member committed suicide, perhaps another will make an attempt. The surviving family member may even fear he or she is in jeopardy.

Relief – When the deceased died by suicide after a protracted illness filled with intense physical pain, a long decline into self-destructive behavior or ongoing mental anguish, surviving family members may feel a sense of relief. Finally, the loved one's suffering is over.

Depression – Nothing seems worth an effort anymore to many suicide survivors. This manifests itself in sleeplessness or disturbed sleep, changes in appetite, fatigue, and loss of joy in life.

Grief experts say that most of these intense feelings will diminish over time, although there may be some residual feelings that may never truly go away. In addition, some questions may forever remain unanswered.

Surviving Suicide

You can survive suicide. It is, however, a long and often painful (and painfully difficult) journey. Here are some strategies to help individuals survive suicide:

Stay connected with other family members. The last thing you need is to be isolated and alone. You need other people at this time more than any other. Contact with others is particularly important in the first six months following a loved one's suicide. For others, maintaining contact with others will take longer, almost as a lifeline of support.

In any case, other family members are in most need of contact, even if they express a wish to be left alone. Not everyone grieves in the same way. Some people are unable to open themselves up and say what they feel. They may need more time to be able to offer you any consolation, but this doesn't mean they don't desperately need it themselves. Talk openly with other family members about your feelings about the suicide and ask them for help. But only do so if you feel ready to speak about it.

Give children special attention. Children, especially, may have a more difficult time with the intense emotions they are experiencing. It is important to remind them that these are normal grief reactions. They need, above all, to know that you still love them and will be there for them always. Share how you feel with them, and encourage them to speak from their heart when they are ready.

Holidays are stressful times. Be aware that holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and other special days are very stressful times for suicide survivors. Plan to meet the family's emotional needs – as well as your own – during these times.



How do you Survive Suicide?

Beyond staying connected with other family members, it's important that suicide survivors reach out and get help. There's only so much an individual can work out in his or her head without professional help. Fortunately, help is available in a number of ways. These include psychological grief counseling, individual or group meetings, self-help groups, books and literature. Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs) offer counseling and classes to support loved ones through the grieving process. Your Navy Gold Star coordinator can also provide additional resources.

Note: This article was adapted from Elements Behavioral Health.

My Survivor Story — From Tragedy to Resilience

By Lois Drury, Gold Star Mother

My name is Lois Drury and my husband's name is John "Chip" Drury. We are Gold Star parents. Our son, Patrick Hunt Drury, went to Bishop High School in Alexandria, Virginia. He attended Virginia Tech and then entered the U.S. Naval Academy Class of 2011. Patrick followed in his dad's footsteps. Chip was a 1968 graduate of the Naval Academy and a naval aviator. When Patrick died, he was 25 years and 10 months old. He was a lieutenant junior grade in flight training, and in just two months, he would have had his "wings of gold." Then he was going to go to F/A-18 school.

Tragedy

On June 16, 2013, my husband Chip was spraying the backyard for weeds and I was upstairs changing my clothes in preparation for a get together with good friends for Father's Day. As I looked out the window, I saw two men in white Navy uniforms. I thought our son Patrick had surprised us with a visit for Father's Day, so I hurried downstairs and was met by the men and Chip. By the look on my husband's face, I knew something was very wrong and it had to do with Patrick. I looked into the eyes of the CACO and chaplain, and the CACO said, "Patrick has been killed in an automobile mishap." My wailing and shrieking went on and on until I was calm enough to suggest we go inside the house.



As the details of Patrick's death were fed to us, my heart was longing to hear Patrick's voice and touch his face. The CACO and chaplain stayed with us for as long as we needed them. Our daughter Allison was with us when the news was delivered, but Heather, our other daughter, was at work. She had to be told in person before she arrived at our friend's house. How would I tell Heather? Please God, give me the words.

We drove down the parkway to D.C., and I looked out at the Potomac River. How beautiful the sunshine was as it sparkled on the water! This reminded me of when I used to drive Patrick to football practice (twice a day) when he was in school. In the early morning, the sun would be rising. Such a quiet and majestic greeting! Patrick and I would chat about lessons learned of not eating cereal and milk fast before practice because he would throw up at rigorous practices. He and I would marvel at the sunrise, a great beginning to a new day.

As I continued to watch the water on the way to D.C., my anxiety was relentless - I had knots in my stomach, a dry mouth, and adrenaline pulsed through my body. Then I felt a warmth in my chest and a sense of calm pour over my body. God was with me and erased my anxiety and fear (fear of giving Heather this pain). God was near. We pulled up to Heather's workplace and delivered the news, as she melted in tears. We gathered ourselves and went our friend's home. Our two families became friends when Patrick was playing football. We were stadium parents and friends. Their



son, Mike, and Patrick were best friends. Their reaction of grief was immediate and they were inconsolable.

At the memorial service on NAS Meridian, both Patrick and Kyle McArthur (who was also killed in the mishap) were eulogized and posthumously "winged." As the captain gave Chip the paperwork, he handed me Patrick's wings and said, "These are your son's wings." I said, "What shall I do with them? May I wear them in his honor?" He said, "Yes, you should." I wear his wings because he never got the chance to wear them. His wings represent loyalty, love for the Navy and his country. I wear Patrick's wings to honor his life.

Resilience

The capacity to adapt in the face of trauma, tragedy, stress ... the ability to recover from tragedy, trauma, stress ... find a new mission that renews your passion and creates meaning in your life.

My husband and I spent the first year after Patrick's death always together. We were surviving on a reduced speed. Our days were spent resting, crying and eating ice cream, searching for Patrick and searching for why this happened. We attend Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, Virginia, but we were even examining our faith. Faith knowledge brought more answers than questions.

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If You See Something, Say Something

By CNIC Force Chaplain's Office

"If you see something, say something." These words have become a common mantra in public places worldwide since the terrorist attacks on our homeland on Sept. 11, 2001, in New York City and Washington, D.C.

"If you see something, say something." Perhaps in a different context these words are just as important. When we greet someone with "How are you?" do we take the time to wait on a response? Do we take the time to weigh the response with a probing, yet caring, follow-up question? A question such as: "Although you said you are fine, your frown tells me otherwise. Are you OK?"

I know an elderly woman who was a master at "seeing something and saying something." Mama Hattie was in her seventh decade of living. She was renowned in her neighborhood as a trusted confidant. She was a safe person and one could talk to her about anything. Children and adults alike came to visit her "to talk." Topics ranged from God to sex, and from school and career choices, to pre-marriage and marriage issues. She was an embodiment of caring and affirming wisdom.

As a master of the pregnant pause, Mama Hattie allowed your question to hang in the air like a leaf on an autumn day, floating aimlessly toward the ground. To visit her meant enjoying her undivided attention. Visits with her also meant enduring the scrutiny of Mama Hattie's habit of patiently taking on your every word - including your body language. It could be unsettling at times, especially when it would appear that she was also "hearing" what your body language was transmitting.

This kind woman was a master of "seeing something and saying something." She left the indelible imprint of what is most important in relationships: Be kind to yourself. Be kind to others. Take time to smell the roses. Enjoy life as a journey.

My Survivor Story *continued from previous page*

We had to honor Patrick's life by doing something positive - as he had in his life. In spite of our deep depression and sorrow, life must go on. I was not ready to go on. Through faith, friends, family, the Arlington Ladies and the Navy Gold Star Program, we are able to continue to honor and remember Patrick and continue to heal.

The Arlington Ladies give me an opportunity to serve other families who experience a death and have loved ones buried at Arlington. I represent the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral and Mrs. Richardson, extending their condolences to the next of kin during funeral services. I have a connection with other Gold Star moms through this program and love being able to give back.

The Navy Gold Star Program has provided so many opportunities for Chip and I to honor Patrick, engage with other families and volunteer. We attend the annual chili cook-off in February, and I won the contest in 2018. It was such a fun event. Attending the Annual Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day events, Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members, baseball games and picnics have been a part of the resiliency road. The Navy Gold Star Program and Arlington Ladies have been so compassionate and caring, and keep us sane.

My journey has opened my mind, my eyes, my heart and my arms to be compassionate. My faith journey is continuing to be enriched by daily prayer. Focusing on gratitude and for the blessings of new beginnings helps me to recover.

Frances de Sales said, "Do what you can, right where you are, and do it well." Mother Theresa said, "Do little things." Philippians 1:3: "I thank my God every time I remember you."

With that all said, I am doing what I can, doing little things that mean a lot of always remembering.



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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.

Creating Memories Through Cooking

By Sabrina Griffin, CNRSW Gold Star Coordinator

Some of my fondest memories are those of times spent around the dinner table eating, preparing food, laughing and reminiscing about the past that we all hold dear to our hearts. The kitchen is often referred to as the heart of the house, and within its heartbeat, we experience years of laughter, tears of joy and sorrow, and, most importantly, family.

There is something about grandma's pie at Thanksgiving, or mom's omelets on Sunday mornings that brings a sense of connection and completeness - the feeling of home. Whether we have our loved ones still with us to share the correct measurements to complete the family cake recipe, or we pull out a handwritten note passed down through the years listing all the ingredients and directions, we meet together in the kitchen to create and share. The end result is a feeling of home, a memory created through reflections of the past.

From Me to You: Sharing One of My Family Recipes

Grandma Maime's Southern Bundt Cake

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of all-purpose flour (sifted twice)
- 3 cups of white sugar
- 6 large eggs
- 3 sticks of unsalted butter
- 3 cups of whole milk
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons of butter flavor
- Zest of a lemon (enough to make sense)
- Pinch of salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325 F
2. Grease and flour a Bundt pan; set aside
3. In a large bowl, whisk together sifted flour and salt; set aside
4. In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar
5. Mix in eggs, one at a time, mixing thoroughly after each egg
6. Mix in vanilla extract, lemon extract and butter flavoring (if using)
8. Add dry ingredients into wet ingredients, alternating with the milk
9. Mix until batter is fluffy - don't overmix
10. Spoon batter into prepared pan and shake the pan to even out the top and release any air bubbles
11. Bake for 1 hour and 20 minutes (check it at the 1-hour mark; do not overbake, as cake will continue to cook as it cools)
12. Remove from oven and let the cake sit in the pan for about 10 minutes
13. Remove the cake from pan and place on a cooling rack to finish cooling
14. Slice and serve!



Want to share your family recipe with us? Contact your Gold Star coordinator to find out how.

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
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SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	425-304-3721	SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX 13910 45TH AVE NE SUITE 857 MARYSVILLE WA 98271
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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
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NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON REGIONAL COORDINATOR	202-433-3059	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	410-293-9345	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
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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
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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.