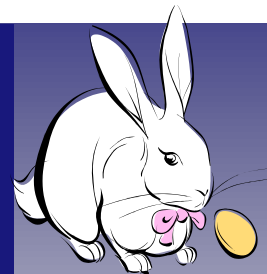




Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.



UNITED WE STAND

Easter Bags for Veterans By: Linda Richardson

Special points of interest:

- YEARBOOK INFO.
- VAVS CONFERENCE
- BIG DIPPER FUN NIGHT 2013



Blue Star Mothers of Louisiana Chapter 5 and the classes of Emmanuel Baptist Daycare worked together to honor our veterans with Easter Bags.

The classes of Mrs. Monica's preschool and Mrs. Angela's after school kids at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ruston La. worked hard on drawing and coloring and putting stickers on lunch bags. Some of them wrote Thank you for your service on their bags!! They drew flowers, put egg stickers on them and drew grass and trees. They did a wonderful job of decorating the bags for our veterans at the Veter-

ans Home in Monroe, LA. The teachers build a lesson plan around teaching the children that people of all ages have made sacrifices for our freedom.

Blue Star Mothers LA5 stuffed these bags with fruit, Easter eggs, crackers, candy and girl scout cookies. On Saturday the 23 of March we delivered these bags to our Heroes at the Veterans Home. We had such a good time with the veterans, visiting with them and handing out Easter goodies.

Thank You to all these parents and teachers for teaching our young



generation about the sacrifices Heroes of all ages have made for our freedom.

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Blue Star Mothers Massachusetts Chapter 1

BSM MA CH 1 hosted the Red Sox Foundation & Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program, at the Leominster Veterans' Center, for a panel discussion of Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans and Families. The Red Sox Foundation & MGH Home Base Program serves returning veterans and their military families affected by the "invisible

wounds of war" – post traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. The community at large was invited as well as members of veterans groups and BSM's. The March 3rd event, coordinated by Co-Presidents Susan Hall and Maureen O'Gorman, attracted an audience of over 50 people including members from all three MA BSM Chapters.

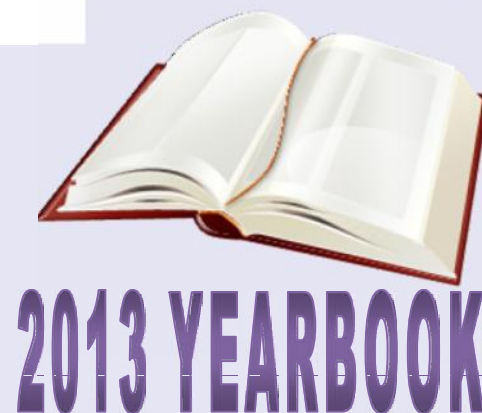
The panel was comprised of Massachusetts Army National Guard Lt. Col. Tom Stewart and his wife, Meg Stewart, U.S. Marine Corps veteran Tommy Furlong, Home Base psychologist Dr. Stefan Schmertz, Jacquie Francona, a family outreach specialist at the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program and Sharon Bouchard,

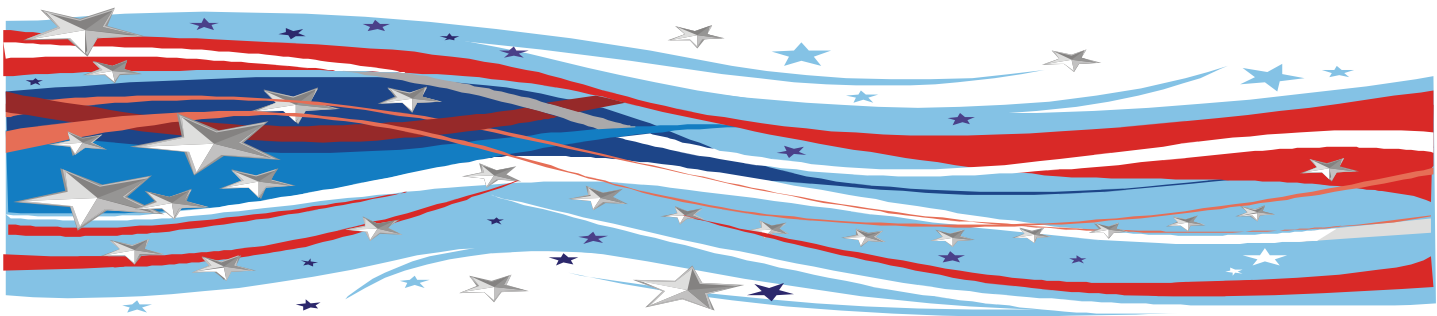
The Home Base Program provides clinical care, offers community education and conducts research to improve the understanding and treatment of PTSD and TBI. They collaborate with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Guard, the Department of Defense, and state and local veterans organizations throughout New England. For more information please go to www.homebaseprogram.org Sharon Bouchard, 1st VP



YEARBOOK UPDATES

The photo's are coming in, Please continue to send in your Chapter photos as well as your Children's photo's. The DEADLINE FOR ALL PHOTOS IS JUNE 1st. So please don't miss out on this years yearbook, which will be available for purchase at CONVENTION. On the following page is an application for BOOSTERS. Show your support of our mission by adding your name to our Booster pages. Send your photos to: BLUESTARMOTHERSYEARBOOK2013@gmail.com





APPLICATION FOR YEARBOOK BOOSTER PAGES

NAME: _____

TOWN & STATE: _____

BOOSTER FEE \$10.00 A SPONSOR

ADD YOUR NAME, CHAPTERS, AND SPONSORS AS A PROUD SUPPORTER OF BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA MISSION STATEMENT.

Make checks payable to: Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

Mail completed form & check to:
Kathryn Venable, Financial Secretary

Blue Star Mothers of America

P. O. Box 1808

Vista, CA 92084



OFFICE USE:

VAVS CONFERENCE MARCH 5 AND 6, 2013



Robin Barnes-McCarthy and Anne Parker recently represented BSMA at the VAVS conference. VAVS stands for Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services. This is the part of each VA Hospital that administers volunteer efforts in each facility. BSMA as well as many VSO's and other organizations (such as Knights of Columbus, for example) certify representatives (called Rep's) and deputy representatives (called Dep's).

The VAVS representative for BSMA certifies the representative of each chapter and encourages them to appoint a deputy. The requirement for the representative and/or her deputy is that they attend all four quarterly meetings at the facility where they are certified. The representative and deputy should be a member in good standing of each chapter and be able to attend these meetings and coordinate the chapter's members' volunteering at the facility.

Each facility has unique volunteer operations. At the conference, a variety of volunteer opportunities (aside from the traditional ones) include:

- A. Collecting personal care items, magazines, and DVD's for the patients.
- B. Reading and visiting with patients.
- C. Organizing bingo and other games for patients.
- D. Serving coffee in outpatient areas as well as offering magazines.
- E. Administrative work including confirming patient appointments and filing.
- F. Helping with homeless Stand downs usually held yearly at local VA hospitals. These provides services and clothes to the homeless veterans
- G. Van drivers to transport veterans to appointments and golf cart drivers at some facilities to take veterans from outlying parking areas.
- H. Valentines for veterans
- I. National cemeteries – guides and clerical

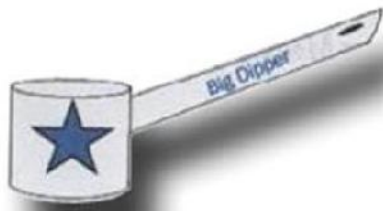
There are innovative programs like "No Veteran Dies Alone" where volunteers sit with Veterans during their last hour; modified sporting events for handicapped veterans; youth volunteers (units can sponsor volunteers for the summer), and My HealthVet website for veterans to communicate with the VA medical providers.

My HealthVet is the VA's online personal health record. It was designed for Veterans, active duty Service members, their dependents and caregivers. My HealthVet helps veterans partner with their health care team. It provides veterans opportunities and tools to make informed decisions and manage their health care.

Specific features in My HealthVet are available to veterans based on their account type. All users who have a [Basic](#) account are able to view their self-entered information. If the veteran is a VA patient, they can upgrade their account to [Advanced](#) or [Premium](#).

Among the newest features available to Veterans with a Premium Account are VA Notes. These are clinical notes that their health care team records during their appointments or hospital stays. Also available are VA Immunization records, more detailed lab reports and a list of current medical issues. These features are in addition to prescription refills, VA Appointments and Secure Messaging – all very popular with Veterans!





Stardust

Big Dipper Newsletter
Auxiliary of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

Big Dipper Has Announced a Theme for Fun Night 2013!

As of the January 30th, the Big Dipper board could not pass up the idea of a "Beach Blanket Bingo by the Golden Gate" theme for Fun Night at the 2013 convention in San Francisco, CA. Each year Fun Night is hosted by Big Dipper. The main goal is to raise money for the Josephine Colenda Education Assistance Fund. And while doing that we will be having a great time! Among the activities held during Fun Night is an excellent silent auction with a variety of items. Also this year will be beach games, raffles and a photo booth. So get out those flip-flops and join us.

Big Dipper is also challenging chapters to have a fund-raiser specifically to donate the proceeds to the education assistance fund. The chapter with the highest donation will receive special recognition at convention.

As a national auxiliary of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., Big Dipper awards educational assistance to veterans, active duty service members, children/ grandchildren of Blue Star Mothers or veterans and blue star mothers. Last year Big Dipper was able to give out awards to 17 recipients.

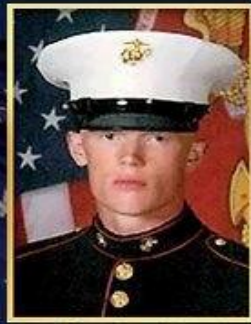
Since 1951, Big Dipper has given out tens of thousands of dollars for education assistance. Check out the Big Dipper page at bluestarmothers.org/big-dipper. Join today, for the price of a \$5 latte you can make a difference in the life of a veteran and military family.

Now is the time to "Educate Our Veterans and Military Families"!



Membership for Big Dipper is \$5 per year and open to members of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

IN HONOR OF OUR FALLEN



LANCE CPL.
JOSH TAYLOR



CORPORAL
AARON RIPPERDA



LANCE CPL.
DAVID FENN



LANCE CPL.
WILLIAM WILD



LANCE CPL.
MASON VANDERWORK



LANCE CPL.
ROGER MUCHNICK



PRIVATE FIRST CLASS
JOSH MARTINO

Freedom Isn't Free ~ Honor Our Heroes

FB.com/FIF.HOH

Our sympathies, our thoughts and our prayers are with the families and loved ones of the fallen Marines, lost when a mortar exploded during a live-fire training exercise in the Nevada desert.

21-year-old Lance Cpl. Josh Taylor of Marietta, Ohio died. His grandfather says he was engaged to be married in May.

19-year-old Private First Class Josh Martino of Clearfield, Pennsylvania also died. He was preparing for deployment to Afghanistan.

23-year-old Lance Cpl. Roger Muchnick had served in the Marines for about three years. He was from Fairfield, Connecticut. He'd been to Afghanistan and was thinking about returning to college after enlistment ended.

26-year-old Corporal Aaron Ripperda was a football player in high school in Highland, Illinois. His former assistant principal says he was respectful and hardworking.

20-year-old Lance Cpl. David Fenn of Polk City, Florida joined the Marines in 2010. He received several awards including the Combat Action Ribbon and National Defense Service Medal.

21-year-old Lance Cpl. Mason Vanderwork of Hickory, North Carolina also joined the Marines in 2010. He was most recently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2011. He also had several awards while serving.

21-year-old Lance Cpl. William Wild of Anne Arundel, Maryland was also deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom in 2011. He had several awards including the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal among others.

Photos and biographical information: usnews.nbcnews.com