

Military Family Advisory Network

Annual Report

2017



Military Family
Advisory Network

militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org

Letter from the MFAN Board of Directors

The Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) board of directors is pleased to present MFAN's 2017 Annual Report. MFAN had a busy year — bringing together military family community influencers, strengthening its programs, developing innovative new resources, and growing as an organization.

In 2017, we transitioned between advisory boards, bringing on our third cohort. The advisory board is the heart and soul of our organization, guiding it and driving what we do. We were thrilled that 146 military spouses applied to serve on MFAN's advisory board — a testament to MFAN's reputation and the impact it has in the military family community. Our board carefully reviewed each applicant and selected 12 military spouses representing the diversity of our community to serve as the next cohort. Consistent with former advisory boards, this cohort represents the active duty, Guard, and Reserve communities and all five branches of service. Members are stationed across the country, and each person brings a unique network and set of experiences. They have big shoes to fill, but we know they are up for the challenge!

MFAN has become the largest convener of military families. This past year, organizations, government agencies, and leaders requested meetings with the MFAN advisory board to access advisors' extensive professional and personal networks and hear directly from military families about their experiences.

A highlight of 2017 was our celebrating 20 military youths who earned the Congressional Award Gold Medal. We were honored to be joined at this celebration by second lady Karen Pence, who delivered the keynote remarks and presented awardees with their certificates of achievement.

In the fall, we conducted our second Military Family Support Programming Survey, which allowed military families to tell us what they value and need. Thanks to stellar outreach efforts by our advisory board and partners, 5,650 military family members completed this survey. We look forward to releasing our survey report at an innovative event in 2018.

As we look ahead to 2018, I can't help but reflect on the incredible growth of MFAN and the impact that our organization has made. I know we are proud of our work, and I can't wait to celebrate the organization's fifth birthday in 2018. I'd like to thank our partners, sponsors, and advisors for their generous involvement, as well as the military and veteran community for giving us the opportunity to serve them.

Sincerely,

Brenda Linnington

Chair, MFAN Board of Directors

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About MFAN

The Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) is a nonprofit with a simple mission: connect military and veteran families to resources designed to serve them. What makes us unique is how we do it.

We convene leaders and influencers in the military community to help us understand what military families need now, assist us in making families aware of the resources that are already out there, and support us in delivering solutions when there are gaps in support.

Our current advisory board consists of 12 military and veteran spouses representing all five branches of service including Guard and Reserve. Collectively they have lived at 46 duty stations worldwide.

By bringing the right people together in supporting our mission we're making a big difference for the military community, including:

- ★ **49,700 page views since 2017 to MilCents, an online financial education program we created.**
- ★ **5,650 active duty and veteran family respondents to MFAN's Military Family Support Programming Survey.**
- ★ **Thousands of vetted resources in MilMap, our user-generated resource locator map.**
- ★ **Hundreds of military kids working towards The Congressional Award, Congress' highest award for youths.**



MFAN Board of Directors and Executive Director

The board of directors is a diverse group of military spouses, former advisors, and civilian supporters who assume all of MFAN's official responsibilities and manage its expenses.

Shannon Razsadin, Executive Director

Shannon oversaw the founding and launch of MFAN and continues to manage the group's advisory board, which bridges the military-civilian divide and empowers military and veteran families. Through her years of distinguished work in partnership development and event management, Shannon has built relationships with vendors, community and federal leaders, national nonprofit organizations, and community agencies. She and her husband, Commander Aleksei Razsadin, U.S. Navy, live in Washington, D.C., with their children, Sophia and George.

Jack Benson

Jack is one of MFAN's co-founders as well as a partner at Reingold, a communications and marketing firm dedicated to important causes and campaigns that promote positive social change. Committed to supporting the military and veteran community, Reingold's partners saw an opportunity to raise awareness about programs and services for military families. Through Reingold's support, MFAN and its advisors are able to employ cutting-edge strategies to communicate effectively with military families. Jack directs several of Reingold's campaigns on behalf of service members and veterans, focusing especially on encouraging help-seeking for mental health issues. He is a member of the Executive Committee for the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the co-leader of its Public Education and Awareness Task Force. Jack is also a trustee of the Washington Waldorf School.

Shelley Kimball

Shelley joined MFAN's board of directors after serving a two-year term on the advisory board. She has a doctorate in mass communication with a specialization in media law and teaches at The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs. Shelley was selected as the 2013 AFI Coast Guard Spouse of the Year and writes "From the Homefront," a twice-monthly column about military family issues. She also serves as MFAN's research director.

Brenda Linnington, Chair of the MFAN Board of Directors

Brenda, a West Point graduate, Army veteran, spouse of a 35-year Army retiree, and mother of a soldier, is an advisor on military and veteran financial education. She most recently served as the director of the Council of Better Business Bureaus' Military and Veterans Initiative, which included BBB Military Line, a national program providing consumer education and advocacy for the military community. Brenda has worked on numerous Department of Defense military family programs, including the U.S. Army's Respite Child Care expansion project and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program. She is a recipient of the Department of the Army Exceptional Public Service Award Medal.

Kevin Miller

Kevin is an MFAN co-founder and partner at Reingold who directs national outreach and education campaigns focused on service members, veterans, and their families. Kevin previously led Operation Smile's multimillion-dollar promotions, its cause marketing campaigns, and its co-marketing efforts with a variety of Fortune 500 companies — producing a 300 percent increase in corporate and foundation support and adding tens of thousands of new donors. Kevin is chairman of the Operation Smile Board of Directors and serves on the boards of the Center for Public Safety Excellence and End Slavery Now.

*Tammy Moore,
Vice Chair of the
MFAN Board
of Directors*

Tammy joined the board of directors after two years as an advisory board member. She advises the president and CEO of the American Red Cross on policy, strategy, and operational matters related to the armed forces. An Army spouse, Tammy is a two-time recipient of the Commander's Award for Public Service, and her work with the American Red Cross has been highlighted by several publications and media outlets.

Joseph Ney

Joseph is an MFAN co-founder and a partner and creative director at Reingold. He provides strategic and creative oversight for numerous outreach campaigns to support members of the military and veteran communities. Joseph is a member of The One Club, the world's foremost nonprofit dedicated to promoting excellence in advertising and design in all its forms. He is also a member of the Art Directors Club of Metropolitan Washington and AIGA, the professional association for design.

Erin Ward

Erin joined MFAN's board after serving on the advisory board for the past two years. She is the executive director of the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network and operations manager for Corporate America Supports You. Her experience in broadcasting, administration, and marketing has made her a successful advocate for military families as a part of MFAN and in her full-time work.



Key MFAN Initiatives

MilCents

In the fall of 2015, MFAN launched MilCents, a free online financial education program designed specifically for military families. In developing the program, MFAN recruited financial experts from the Better Business Bureau Military and Veterans Initiative, the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, and the National Foundation for Credit Counseling. The MFAN team works with subject matter experts to regularly update MilCents' content and delivery methods to make sure MilCents resonates with and reaches as many military families as possible.



MilCents saw substantial growth in 2017, thanks to MFAN's partnership with the American Red Cross and the generous support of the USAA Educational Foundation. In 2017, 8,548 unique users participated in MilCents. Their active engagement on our discussion board reinforced the idea that social learning works: participants asked questions, expressed support for one another, and shared what financial planning strategies have worked for them. The camaraderie we have seen on the discussion board is heartening.

Later this year, we look forward to adding a smart investing module that will teach participants the do's and don'ts of investing — something that discussion board participants expressed interest in.

2017 Military Family Support Programming Survey

In the fall of 2017 — three years after the inaugural survey — MFAN conducted the second Military Family Support Programming Survey. The survey included qualitative questions from the 2014 survey as well as new questions that reflect challenges facing today's military families — all vetted by the 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 advisory boards.

5,650 military and veteran families responded to the survey, sharing candid feedback about what they like about the military and what they think could be improved. Themes that surfaced repeatedly include personal finances, the high costs of PCS, food insecurity, and health care frustrations. One of the key takeaways from the survey is that military families reported positive interactions with civilians and feel supported by their communities.

Full results of the Military Family Support Programming Survey will be released later in 2018.

Advisory Board

The 2015–2017 advisory board members accomplished an incredible amount during their term: launching MilCents, laying the foundation for the new MilYou and MilMap programs, guiding the 2017 Military Family Support Programming Survey, and informing civic leaders about challenges military families face.

In 2017, MFAN successfully transitioned to its third advisory board cohort. The board of directors reviewed 146 applications for the 2017–2019 advisory board and identified a diverse group of military spouses to convene for the new cohort. The 2017–2019 board hit the ground running by weighing in on the Military Family Support Programming Survey and survey outreach, providing program input for organizations like the USO and AUSA, and identifying opportunities for collaboration with other organizations.

MFAN's current and former advisory boards are its greatest strength; we have truly become the preeminent advocate for military families, and the continued engagement of our former advisors speaks to their passion for serving military families.



MilYou

It's important for everyone to maintain their physical and mental health, as well as healthy interpersonal relationships. That is why MFAN is creating MilYou, a free online wellness program that will empower military families to live their best lives in three focus areas: physical health, emotional and mental health, and relationships. During the program, MFAN will host events, share physical and mental health resources designed for military families, and take what participants do online and bring it into their communities. In 2017, MFAN developed the MilYou web platform and continued to refine the MilYou content so it accurately reflects the needs of today's military families. MilYou will launch in summer 2018.

MilMap

MFAN has consistently heard that when military families move, they have a hard time making connections, including getting involved at a new duty station. That's why we created MilMap, a user-generated resource locator that helps military families find organizations in their area that can offer support and camaraderie. All they have to do is put in their ZIP code or duty station. Military families can also add their own trusted resources. MilMap launched in March 2018.

The Congressional Award

MFAN established a partnership with the Congressional Award in 2015 to benefit military youths, who often have an itinerant lifestyle. The program can be completed anywhere in the world. In 2016, MFAN continued its support for the program by posting about it on social media and promoting the Military Youth Toolkit.

In June 2017, MFAN hosted a reception in Washington, D.C., honoring 20 Congressional Award Gold Medal recipients affiliated with the military. The keynote speaker for the event was second lady of the United States, Karen Pence.



Looking Ahead

MilCents

Thanks to the generous support of the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, MFAN will add a smart investing section to MilCents. The new section will provide critical information for getting started in investing, packaged in a way that makes it easy to understand.

The smart investing section will launch in summer 2018.



2017 Military Family Support Programming Survey Results Release Event

The results of the 2017 Military Family Support Programming Survey will be released at an event in winter 2018. The release event will include a live webcast based in Washington, D.C., with panelists at satellite locations in Colorado Springs, Colorado; Houston; and Norfolk, Virginia. Full results of the Military Family Support Programming Survey will be released later in 2018.

Five-Year Anniversary

MFAN launched in summer 2013 and will celebrate its fifth anniversary in August 2018. In honor of the event, MFAN is organizing a day-long brain trust of past and present advisory board members to solve some of today's most pressing military family issues.

MilYou

MFAN will launch MilYou in summer 2018. The program provides information on physical and mental health, as well as healthy relationships, and its launch will be marked by live events and promoted on social media and at in-person meetings and events.

Financial Statement

	Convening Families	Educating Families	Support Expenses
Subscriptions	N/A	N/A	\$1,974.00
Travel and meals	\$22,363.00	N/A	N/A
Legal, banking, and accounting fees	N/A	N/A	\$585.00
Postage and mailing	N/A	N/A	\$1,681.00
Program development and outreach	\$355,171.50	\$429,319.50	\$314.00
Total category expenses	\$377,534.50	\$429,319.50	\$4,554.00

2017 Total Expenses: **\$811,408.00**

MFAN is grateful for our amazing partners. Thank you for your commitment to military families and MFAN's mission.

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