



March 2016

UNITED STATES ARMY
SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES

Illinois Connection for Families of the Fallen - Connections at the Museum

Illinois Connections for Families of the Fallen (ICFF) is a collaborative effort of representatives from over 25 different local and national agencies, in partnership with Illinois Survivor Outreach Services, dedicated to helping Illinois Families of Fallen Service Members.

This year they will be hosting their ICFF-Connections at the Museum event at the Children's Museum in Bloomington/Normal on April 17th.

The event is free for all Illinois Surviving family members. The event will run from 9am - 1pm and both breakfast and lunch will be provided. This is an excellent opportunity for children to come play and learn.

For more information about ICFF please visit their website at: <http://www.ilcff.org/> about

Save the Date

ILLINOIS CONNECTIONS FOR FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN (ICFF)
in partnership with Survivor Outreach Services

Connections at the Museum!
Part of our continuing series of events for Families of Fallen Service Members
Sunday, April 17, 2016 • 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Breakfast begins at 9:00 am

The Children's Discovery Museum
101 E Beaufort Street
Normal, IL 61761
Details Coming Soon!

For questions contact: (312) 265-9109 or ICFF@hdadvocates.org

HDA Health & Disability Advocates

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/ILCFF](https://www.facebook.com/ILCFF)
Visit us at www.ilcff.org



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Who's Your Hero Project

The Who's Your Hero Project is designed to show support for our military families and military personnel, past and present, who have sacrificed for our country. We intend to simply honor their service and their sacrifices one voice at a time. The Who's Your Hero Project is an opportunity for others to tell their story about who their heroes are. We ask that you share your stories through our website. Our goal is to compile these tributes into a book that will honor your heroes through your stories. We want to provide an opportunity for others whose hearts are thankful, appreciative, and in many instances, heavy, and to have an avenue to express those feelings of appreciation.

To share your heroes' story please visit: <http://www.thewhosyourheroproject.com/tell-your-story>

THE 2016 RIDE FOR HEROES

The 2016 Ride For Heroes will honor and pay tribute to three former students of ours who made the ultimate sacrifice. These men, from Fountain-Fort Carson High School , Fountain CO, are

SPC Ronald (Ronnie) Tucker	KIA - Iraq	30 April 2008
SGT Adam Wilkinson	KIA - Afghanistan	18 February 2007
CPT Ian Weikel	KIA - Iraq	18 April 2006

The 2016 Ride For Heroes is an opportunity for our community to honor these three Fountain Fort Carson High School students and their families who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. The 2016 Ride is also in honor of our military and their families, past and present for their sacrifices. The Ride will start at the gates of Fort Carson, CO (current home of the 4th Infantry Division) and end in section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA, the final resting place of Captain Weikel.

This tribute ride will commemorate the ten year anniversary of Captain Weikel' s death. The total distance is approximately 2200 biking miles.

SPC TUCKER



CPT WEIKEL



SGT WILKINSON



Riverboat Ride on the Ohio - Tickets still available!

On June 12, 2016 Survivor Outreach Services will host a riverboat cruise aboard the beautiful Belle of Cincinnati, located at 101 Riverboat Row, Newport, KY 41071. Boarding will begin at 12:00 PM and the cruise will start up the Ohio River at 1:00 PM. We will return to the dock at 3:30 PM. Meals will be provided by Cincinnati's Gold Star Chili at no cost to you while on the boat. The only cost for our guests will be for your drinks. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks will be available. There is a gift shop aboard the boat. Child Activities will also be available during the cruise.

B&B Riverboats has donated 1000 tickets for our Survivors and Family Members. After a long and cold winter, I believe this will be a great time to enjoy the warmth of "almost summer" weather and a relaxing time on the water. School should just be letting out and what a wonderful opportunity to get away for the day with Family and Friends.

This event will most likely fill up quickly, please look at your calendars to see if this is an event you would like to attend. Tickets will be given on a "first come, first serve" basis. Your request for tickets can be done through any of our SOS Coordinators. Please keep the number to no more than 8 tickets per Family. After all requests have been made and you need additional tickets, we will do our best to accommodate you at that time.

This will be the third annual Riverboat Ride on the Ohio B&B Riverboats has stated that they will continue to support the SOS Program and our Survivors. This was a well-attended and enjoyable event last year, so we only aim to make it bigger and better. We anticipate Survivors representing eight to nine states to attend.

There are many attractions in and around the Newport/Cincinnati area. We are working with vendors to see what might be available at discount prices or possibly donated. A few organizations have already offered free or discounted tickets for our guests. We will put together a master list and send it out as we get closer to June 12th. We are also trying to get the best room rates at a hotel in the area for those wanting to spend the night and make this a weekend get-away.

Please make your plans early and get back with us as soon as possible. We look forward to seeing you for an exciting trip on the river.

For Illinois Survivors please RSVP to Breanna Lehman at breanna.p.lehman.ctr@mail.mil

Tax Returns May Be Needed For Minor Children - Mark Dunlop

Often we come across situations where the child is receiving Social Security as well as, for the active duty deaths, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Additionally, some children are receiving interest and dividends on the investments of SGLI and or the DG (See footnote) as well as other income.

There is some information that is a surprise for many of the guardians or parents of the children, and there is the potential that a Local, State and Federal tax return may be advisable to file on behalf of the minor child. Being a minor child does not immune the child from tax reporting if they are earning over a certain amount. Likewise, just because a return was not needed in a prior year, does not mean that a return is not needed for the current year. It may be advisable to have a tax preparer review the current situation. While many survivors may use the tax center on post or local Vita tax center, some families use other preparers. Whoever you use to do the taxes, there are three suggestions that the preparer may want to be sensitive to.

First of all, be sure your tax preparer has the latest Federal references including IRS Pub 3 (Armed Forces' Tax Guide), IRS Pub 17 (Your Federal Income Tax), and IRS Pub 559 (Survivors, Executors, and Administrators). If your preparer does not do returns for military families and survivors regularly, the preparer may welcome a gentle suggestion to have the publications accessible.

Second, be sure your preparer is aware of some of the principals of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). SBP is often paid for active duty deaths. It is different the familiar Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) which is paid by the Veterans Administration (and is a non-taxable benefit) in that the SBP is a taxable annuity payment.

The SBP can go to a surviving spouse or the spouse can elect (thru the military service) to choose child only SBP. In this case, the spouse would receive DIC and the child would receive SBP up until the age of 23 (longer if the child is mentally or physically disabled and unable to care for themselves). If a child is receiving SBP it is potentially taxable on the child's return. It is not interest or dividend income that can be claimed on the parent's or guardian's return. Especially in cases where there is a sole child, this benefit may be enough to trigger a tax due on a Local, State or Federal level.

Third, be sure that the preparer has information on the Social Security Survivor Benefits that was paid since other the deceased's child under the age of 18 (or any age if disabled before the age of 22) receive SS Survivor Benefits. Social Security benefits may be taxable. Generally, SS benefits for singles are not taxable on the Federal Level if the individuals income is under \$25,000, but that does not always hold true for State and Local taxes. The child is the one who could have to be taxed since the child is the person who has the legal right to receive the benefits. It is important to double check to see if the child is the person who has the legal right to receive the benefits. It is important to double check to see if the child receiving the SS benefits owes taxes on this which is on top of being potentially taxed on the SBP (and any other income, interest, dividend, trust income, etc.). In summary, the parent or guardian may also want to be mindful that the child may have taxable SS benefits if they are also receiving SBP and/or other income.

Footnote: For Survivors who are within the 365 days of receiving the DG or SGLI, there are some potentially favorable Tax provisions contained in the HEROES (HEART) Act. Your SOS office will be able to provide you with resources to gain more information on this.

Camp Erin - The Moyer Foundation

Camp Erin, created and funded by The Moyer Foundation, is the largest nationwide network of free bereavement camps for children and teens ages 6-17 who have experienced the death of someone close to them.

It is a weekend-long experience filled with traditional, fun, camp activities combined with grief education and emotional support - facilitated by grief professionals and trained volunteers.

At Camp Erin, children are comforted knowing that there are other children who have had similar grief and loss experiences and feelings. Campers have an opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings and memorialize their loved ones. They are provided with the tools and resources needed during and after camp, including memories and friendships that last long after camp is complete.

Northern Illinois Camp Location

Chicago, IL - Camp Manitoqua

August 26-28, 2016

Contact Laura Cottrell

(630) 856-6985

laura.cottrell@ahss.org

Southern Illinois Camp Location

St. Louis, MO - Camp Wartburg

June 13-17, 2016

Contact Kylie McCarver

(314) 965-5015

kyliem@annieshope.org

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Military One Source:

www.militaryonesource.com/MOS/Tools.aspx
or 800-342-9647

American Widow Project:

americanwidowproject.org/

National Alliance for Grieving Children:

www.childrengrieve.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

www.afsp.org

Gold Star Mother:

www.goldstarmoms.com

Gold Star Dads:

www.goldstardads.org

Gold Star Wives:

www.goldstarwives.org

Survivor Outreach of Illinois Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Survivor-Outreach-Services-of-Illinois-154933114669947/>

Army Survivor Outreach Services Official Site:

<http://www.sos.army.mil>

Gold Star Pins:

www.goldstarpins.org

SBP Pay Inquires: 1-888-332-7411 option 1 or

<http://www.dfas.mil>

VA Benefits - DIC: 1-800-827-1000 or

<http://va.gov>

Education Corner

To pay tribute to military families who have made the ultimate sacrifice, many organizations provide scholarships and grants to children and spouses of service members killed in the line of duty. Below is a small sample of what is available. Please visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/> for the full list.

- **Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation** - This foundation provides scholarships to the children of military personnel who died on active duty or died as a result of a service-connected injury or illness.
- **Heroes' Legacy Scholarship** - This scholarship fund, established through the Fisher House Foundation. Is for the children of fallen and disabled service members to honor those who have fallen in battle or who have died or become disabled through their active-duty service since Sept. 11, 2001.
- **American Legion Legacy Scholarship** - This scholarship fund offers scholarships to children of military members who have died while on active duty since Sept. 11, 2001.
- **ThanksUSA Scholarship Program** - ThanksUSA offers more than a thousand scholarships for military spouses and children totaling over \$3.5 million.
- **Folds of Honor Foundation** - The Folds of Honor Children's Scholarship Fund broadens the mentorship of children whose parent has been killed or disabled while serving in a combat zone in Iraq or Afghanistan. This program provides support for their future growth through scholarships to subsidize the costs of tuition, approved tutoring, school uniforms, schoolbooks, fees, after school educational programs and approved educational summer camps.
- **Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program** - Surviving spouses are eligible for educational benefits for up to 20 years after the date of the service member's death. Children are normally eligible to use their educational benefits between the ages of 18 and 26. This benefit may be used to pursue an associate, bachelor's or graduate degree, courses leading to certification, technical or vocational school, apprenticeships and various other educational programs. If a child is eligible for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, he or she may be eligible for the VA Dependents Educational Assistance Program. Although the benefits cannot be used at the same time, a child may be eligible for up to 48 months of benefits between the two programs.
- **Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship** - Children or spouses of those who died in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2011, are potentially eligible to receive the Fry Scholarship. Eligible candidates are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level.

Upcoming Events

April

5th: Gold Star Spouse's Day

17th: ICFF Connection at the Museum, Bloomington/Normal Children's Museum

May

14th: Fallen Heroes Memorial, Camp Lincoln, Springfield

21st: Willow Creek Church Gold Star Family Memorial Breakfast, Barrington

28th: Memorial Day Ceremony/Parade, Chicago

June

12th: Gold Star Family River Boat Ride on the Ohio River, Cincinnati, Ohio

18th: Illinois Motorcycle Freedom Run, Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial, Marseilles

August

28th: ICFF Connections at the Zoo, Brookfield Zoo

September

30-02 Oct: 2nd Annual Illinois SOS Resiliency Retreat, Camp Ondessonk, Ozark, IL

Financial Counselors for Illinois

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(573) 596-0153

10460 Replacement Ave

Building 486, Room 136

Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473

Kevin Berce

email: kevin.e.berce.ctr@mail.mil

(630) 739-7290

10S100 S Frontage Road

Darien, IL 60561



SOS was created to embrace and reassure Survivors that they are continually linked to the Army Family through a unified support program that enables them to remain an important part of the Army for as long as they desire.

The SOS program continuously strives to provide the highest quality of services to surviving Family members of fallen Warriors. As such, we want to provide you with information on the SOS program in your area. We stand ready to serve you and answer your questions.

Services Available

Never Forgotten...Never Alone

Provide Expertise on State & Federal Survivor benefit

Arrange for estate and financial advice

Connect Survivors with mental health support/counseling

Provide assistance in obtaining military reports

Provide Survivors with resource referrals for:

Peer Support

Bereavement Counseling

Emergency Financial Services

Military Legal Assistance

TRICARE

Educational Benefits

Benefits Assistance

Illinois Survivor Outreach Services Coordinators

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