MAPPING LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR MILITARY CAREGIVERS & THEIR FAMILIES

Steve Schwab, Executive Director
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Senator Elizabeth Dole launched the Elizabeth Dole Foundation in 2012 after witnessing caregivers’ lived experiences and hardships firsthand at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Today, the Foundation is the preeminent organization empowering, supporting, and honoring our nation’s military caregivers who voluntarily care for America’s wounded, ill, or injured veterans at home.
Senator Dole’s top priority after forming the Foundation was to commission the RAND Corporation to develop the first comprehensive, evidence-based national study of military and veteran caregivers.

This two-year study examined the needs of these caregivers, as well as gaps in services and recommendations for filling those gaps. The study revealed a societal crisis requiring a holistic national response.
The RAND study found that there are 5.5 million military and veteran caregivers serving across the nation. These spouses, family members, and other loved ones experience great physical, emotional, and family strain, and far too often face these challenges alone.

Many caregivers are frequently the sole breadwinner for their families, and most are balancing the responsibilities of managing a household, childcare, legal and financial challenges, and complex medical conditions of their care recipients. This results in higher rates of anxiety and depression, and deteriorating health for caregivers themselves.
MISSION

Strengthen and empower American military caregivers and their families by raising public awareness, driving research, championing policy, and leading collaborations that make a significant impact on their lives.

VISION

An America where military caregivers are empowered, appreciated, and recognized for their service to our nation.
FOUNDATION STRATEGIC GOALS

**ADVOCATE**

Champion policy and legislation, identify research gaps, and educate the American public on the sacrifices, obstacles, and successes of this deserving population

Hidden Heroes Congressional Caucus
- Evidence-Based Research
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Government Agencies, and Administration

**EMPOWER**

Inspire caregivers to self-identify and build an interactive caregiver community

Fellows Program • HiddenHeroes.org
- Hidden Heroes Caregiver Community
- Regional Caregiver Events

**MOBILIZE**

Rally community support to deliver resource and service solutions in support of military caregivers

Hidden Heroes Campaign • Hidden Heroes Cities Program • Hidden Heroes Fund
- National Convenings • National Coalition and Resources

**STRENGTHEN**

Optimize the Foundation’s infrastructure through targeted strategy and fundraising efforts

Grant Program • Fundraising Plan
- Partnerships • Communication

**EDF STRATEGY**

EDF’s strategy and activities are intricately linked to the journey each caregiver faces, and is focused on four core goals – Advocate, Empower, Mobilize, and Strengthen
Eight core programs and projects drive the mission of the Foundation:

1. Dole Caregiver Fellows
2. HiddenHeroes.org/Hidden Heroes Caregiver Community (HHCC)
3. Hidden Heroes Cities
4. Hidden Heroes Fund
5. Campaign for Inclusive Care
6. Policy/Advocacy
7. Impact Forum
8. Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map
• Collaboration between EDF, Philips, and the Department of Veterans Affairs

• Effort to chart the major milestones that caregivers experience.

• By mapping out key points where the right people, organizations, and service providers can step in and support caregivers as they adapt to their new way of life, we’ll help achieve better outcomes for our veterans and our hidden heroes.
The baseline map was created from data points pulled from two of the Foundation-commissioned RAND studies, Hidden Heroes: America’s Military Caregivers (2014), and Improving Support for America’s Hidden Heroes (2017).

From there, we brought together several key partners to engage with and add to the map, using an innovative “co-create” approach created by Philips.

Through a series of collaborative design sessions throughout 2017 and 2018, the core working team helped develop the framework for the journey map, defined personas, populated the maps, and appended them with key research data.
Welcome

Military and veteran organizations provide invaluable service to the country. Many help veterans and their families. This can be frustrating for those who have not served. For example, they may not be aware of all the resources available to them. This can be especially difficult for those who are not in the military or have not served in the military. Our goal is to provide information and resources that can help veterans and their families.

Our Objectives:

- Understand these challenges, including the different stages and the various factors involved.
- Recognize these challenges early, and provide clear guidance for veterans and their families.
- Improve the services and resources available to veterans and their families.
- Improve the quality of life for veterans and their families.

Onboarding

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Onboarding orients the viewer with the map, and explains the key features of the map itself.

Welcome

Military and veteran caregivers provide an invaluable service to this country — ensuring that our service members and their families receive the care they need for their health, safety, and well-being. For some, that means helping them navigate medical appointments, for others it may mean providing support and care in their homes.

In order to empower these hidden heroes and connect them to the critical resources and support networks that matter most to caregivers, the eighteen cities of the Caregiver City Network (CCN), with the support of the Silver Star Service Organization, have embarked on a journey to develop and deliver a comprehensive orientation program specifically designed to empower caregivers in the most meaningful and effective way.

Our Objectives:

- Understand the caregiver’s journey, including the different stages and landmarks along the way.
- Recognize the unique needs and challenges that caregivers face.
- Engage the community and celebrate the caregivers doing the work.
- Identify key points along the journey where we can provide additional support and resources.
- Help caregivers to navigate and plan for the journey in front of them.

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The Key serves as a high level overview of the framework that underpins the Military & Veteran Caregiver Experience Map.

**COMPONENTS**

**ORIENTATION**

Welcome

Military and veteran caregivers provide an invaluable service to this country—navigating the healthcare system, ensuring that veterans and their families access the care they need, and supporting them through the challenges they face. The Key serves as a high level overview of the framework that underpins the Military & Veteran Caregiver Experience Map.

In order to empower these hidden heroes and connect them to critical services and support networks, The Key offers a detailed map of the Military & Veteran Caregiver Experience. By providing a roadmap that highlights the key points along the journey, organizations and caregivers can more effectively support caregivers as they navigate the challenges of their role.

Our Objectives:

1. To understand the caregiver journey, including the different steps and landmark events.
2. To document the caregiver’s views on the experience and reduce the sense of isolation that many caregivers feel.
3. To reduce the burden and community support of the caregivers during their journey.
4. To identify gaps in support during the journey where service providers can offer support and resources.
5. To help caregivers to recognize and plan for the journey in front of them.
Stages of the Journey provide a framework for common stages people go through several states as they adapt to the challenges and changes of caring for a loved one.
The Route helps identify day-to-day actions, events or emotions that are easily recognizable to help orient oneself within the journey.
Landmarks help identify significant events that are easily recognizable to help orient oneself within the journey.
Components

Needs

Needs illustrate the most common needs caregivers and their families face during each stage of the journey.
Emotions highlight what common thoughts and feelings caregivers can expect as they navigate their own unique journey.
In July 2018, EDF partnered with NMFA and MCEC on an event to explore the effects of caregiving on military children. Our goals were to understand the key issues facing the children of military caregivers today, and to develop a plan for collecting further information and advancing support for these hidden helpers.
In the coming weeks and months, EDF and NMFA will take the ideas and comments of the Forum and use them to develop a strategic plan of action for supporting this underserved population in the areas of research, policy, and programming.
THANK YOU