

ON THE MOVE[®]

the official magazine of  MCEC[®]

BACK TO SCHOOL

A brighter look
for 2021-2022

01. OUR MISSION

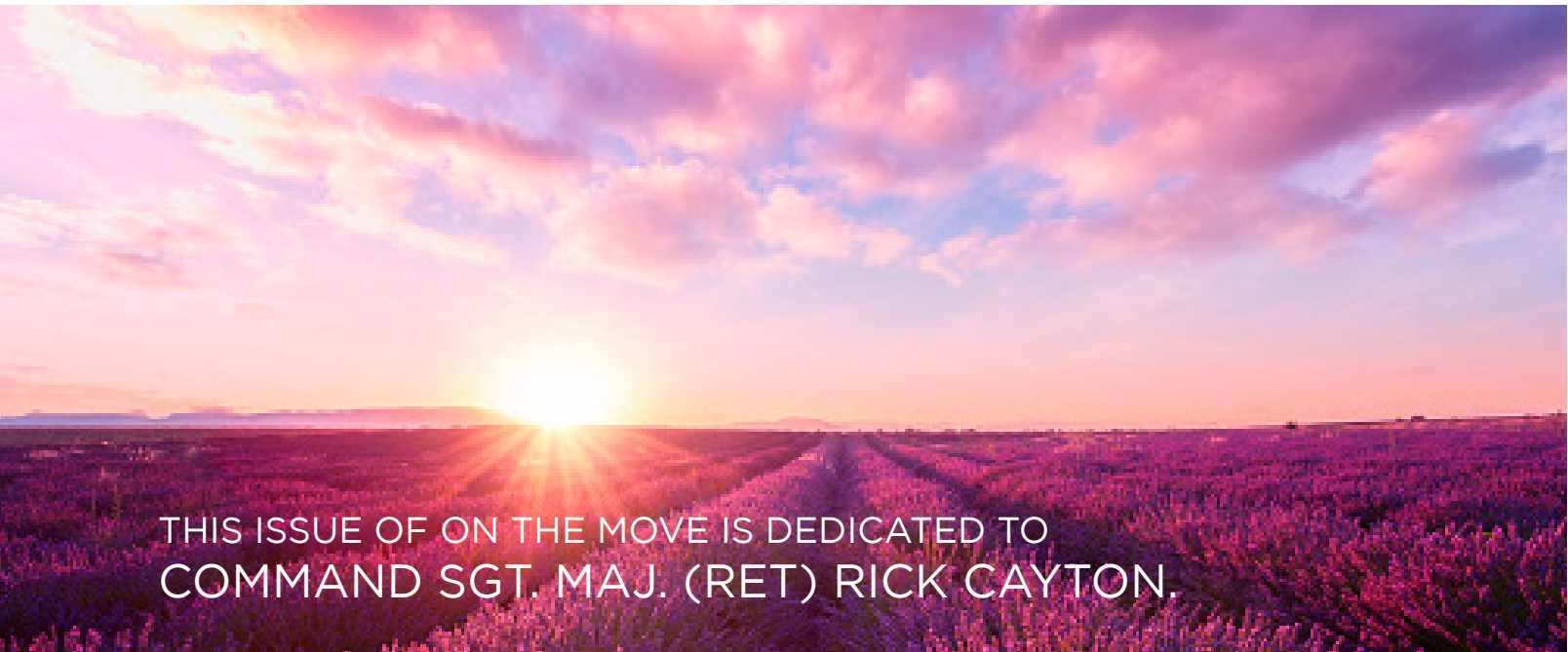
MCEC supports all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle.

02. OUR VISION

Every military-connected child is college-, work-, and life-ready.

03. OUR VALUES

MCEC remains committed to meeting our Mission and Vision through collaboration, integrity, relevance, and service.



THIS ISSUE OF ON THE MOVE IS DEDICATED TO
COMMAND SGT. MAJ. (RET) RICK CAYTON.



The MCEC family salutes Rick — a tireless MCEC supporter, volunteer, and family member — for his unwavering leadership, impeccable character, and unbreakable spirit that made us all honored to know him.

Rangers Lead the Way!

MARCH 9, 1951 – JULY 4, 2021

If you'd like to read the memorial or learn how to pay tribute to Rick, click [here](#).

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Military Child Education Coalition®

2021 Call for the Arts

VISUAL ARTS • CREATIVE WRITING • PERFORMANCE ART

WINNERS

The 19th annual MCEC® Call for the Arts competition continues to provide military-connected children from kindergarten through 12th grade with a safe, creative outlet to process their emotions through self-expression and reflection.

The 2021 theme: “The View from My Home” paid tribute to the diversity of places where military-connected children have traveled and allowed them to showcase their creativity through those experiences. MCEC is proud to feature this year’s winners in this issue of On the Move®, and include their work — along with nine other finalists — in the 2022 MCEC Calendar which will be released later this year.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR’S WINNERS:

ALISA - AGE 9

Granite Mountain Charter School
Ft. Irwin, Calif.

“I’ve lived in five states. My home is the whole world. The dandelion flower represents how military kids are spread out like dandelion seeds and can grow anywhere. The kids in the picture are me and my brothers, Ezra and Micah, and our dog, Dezi.”



VANESSA - AGE 12

Ellis D. Parker (DoDEA)
Ft. Rucker, Ala.

“My inspiration for this painting was all of the places I have traveled and all the states where I have been. I drew the birds and butterflies for my other inspiration, my family.”



AMIRA - AGE 15

Ramey Unit School (DoDEA), Puerto Rico

“The meaning of this piece is the perspective of the Soldier remembering their loved ones left at home. His heart glows with strength and determination and shows the strength the Soldier gets by remembering what he is fighting for.”

JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE MCEC BOARD CHAIR
AND THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Welcome to August and Back to School Month!

This time of the year always brings back such fond memories for us as children and parents of military-connected children.

Back to School is always a time to reconnect with friends, share summertime experiences, and look forward to the endless possibilities of what the new year has to offer. We also know that this time of the year often presents unknowns for our military-connected students who are arriving at new duty stations and seeing classmates and schools for the first time.

Every new experience is a perfect time to welcome opportunities to learn and grow. Our hope for you and your families is that the upcoming school year will be one to remember. We look forward to seeing new memories made and being part of your educational journey this year – and for many years to come!

Today, for the first time in 18 months, the majority of our schools are returning to in-class instruction. The lessons our country learned over the past year and a half reinforced our resiliency, adaptability, and commitment to making necessary changes and learning new ways to collectively meet challenges head on.

MCEC® learned a lot as well. In the spirit of our National Training Seminar last month, we stand ready to begin a new school year with all of you - the millions of military-connected students, parents, and education professions - by embracing the future for military-connected kids.

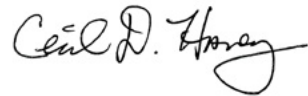
This issue of On the Move® introduces some exciting changes that reflect our commitment to you, with a resolute focus on supporting all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle.

Over the summer, we established the MCEC Education Services Department which will operationalize our national advocacy effort toward Purple Star Schools readiness and adoption nationwide. Additionally, Education Services will lead an enhanced focus, as we transition to more virtual delivery options, for the creation, presentation and evaluation of professional development, webinars, and student-focused resources through a best-practice instructional systems design process.

As we turn the page on a new chapter for this school year, we do so with eagerness and excitement. While it might sound cliché, we feel this is truly going to be the best year yet.

We're excited to be on this amazing journey and proud to serve the children of those who serve us all!

With deep appreciation and gratitude for you and your support,



Cecil Haney
Admiral, United States Navy
(Retired)
Board Chair, Military Child
Education Coalition



Dr. Becky Porter
President and Chief Executive
Officer, Military Child
Education Coalition



4 million reasons to join - SERVING THE CHILDREN OF THOSE WHO SERVE US ALL.

Membership in Military Child Education Coalition® (MCEC®) demonstrates your support of military and veteran-connected children!

Become a member and start your benefits today, using our secure website.



MOVE YOUR STUDENT TO THE
HEAD OF THE CLASS!

Our SchoolQuest™ resource has the tools to give military-connected parents peace of mind. Transitions are rough and impact education across all levels. Eliminate unknowns and keep your student on track when you register today.

And it's free forever.

Register your child today at SchoolQuest.MilitaryChild.org.



MCEC®
SchoolQuest™



COLLEGE STUDENTS PAY IT FORWARD to help Military Kids

BY ANDI JANOE



As more and more military-connected students begin their return to the classroom in-person, parents and professionals who work with those students have overwhelmingly realized the need for support in Social-Emotion Learning (SEL) gaps. A year of virtual learning, combined with educational and transition issues that have surfaced, created a demand for MCEC® to look at how we could support parents who are navigating these challenges alongside their children.

This need prompted a partnership with four undergraduate social work students at Texas State University in San Marcos to create a Social-Emotional Toolkit for parents. The students met with MCEC to get feedback on the types of issues parents were facing and created activities that all parents could do to support the SEL needs of their children. The intent was to design activities for inclusion in the parent workshops, presented in-person and virtually, and explore ways to adapt these options for student and

professional trainings as well. All four of the social work students were military children, service-members, and or spouses who have a passion for this project.

“Growing up as a military dependent afforded me amazing opportunities to travel the globe and meet people from different cultures; however, being a military dependent comes with its own set of stressors at home and school.”

Mariah Vickerstaff was the lead agent on her team through the collaboration. While attending high school in Mannheim, Germany, she was chosen to spearhead her school’s MCEC Student 2 Student® program. Being a part of the S2S™ program was the start of her love for helping others. When her mom decided to retire from the Army after 35 years, she followed her family to Texas. Mariah considers herself “the quintessential forever student,” currently pursuing her

third degree and ready to graduate in fall 2021. The next stop for her is graduate school with a focus on school social work and military social work. “Growing up as a military dependent afforded me amazing opportunities to travel the globe and meet people from different cultures; however, being a military dependent comes with its own set of stressors at home and school,” said Vickerstaff, who aspires to become a military-connected school social worker. “Thanks to my experiences as an AmeriCorps member, being assigned to Communities In Schools helped me gain first-hand knowledge as a school caseworker. Working closely with the school social worker helped me find my niche in the social work profession.”

Another valuable member of the student team was William Rosenthal. His passion lies in working with vulnerable populations and communities. He served in the U.S. Air Force, which he admitted fostered substantial personal growth and development and sparked his interest in working with LGBTQIA adolescents. This interest was inspired by personal experiences and recognizable needs identified through current events. As an Airman, he served for six years as a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) member, based out of Vilseck/Grafenwoehr, Germany, and Fort Polk, LA. In his spare time, William volunteers with the American Red Cross International Affairs department where he works on the Missing Maps Program, a program dedicated to providing tangible maps to vulnerable communities which, otherwise, are without. As an initial member of the program, William now leads workshops to teach the program to others.

Additionally, Cheryl Robinson was able to share the insight of a military child, parent, and spouse. Cheryl is a non-traditional, full time student. She started her college

food pantry for our homeless veterans and helped implement a program giving free individual and family counseling to veterans. Through the VSO I also work with a grant-funded organization, Hope 4 Hays, that helps to assist veterans living in Hays County with financial issues and homelessness. I am also employed as a Mental Health Tech with a residential substance abuse facility for veterans. I currently volunteer with the USO and advocate for veteran rights.” Her plans for the future include obtaining a master’s degree in social work with a certificate in military studies and to work with active duty military and their families.

The fourth member of the team, KeAirra Haynes, also served as a military-connected child with her grandfather, father, and step-father all being Army veterans. While also a student, KeAirra is giving her time serving as a Texas State Senator At-Large.

Her plans after graduation are to attend graduate school in London, England. She wants to stretch her legs in the international social work field to gain a better understanding for communities in different countries.

MCEC is proud to have collaborated with these budding social work students to create tangible resources to help military-connected parents, students, and professionals navigate these new challenges they are facing as a result of the deficits created by COVID-19.



DODEA EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY PILOT PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

BY AARON TALLEY

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is accepting applications for a new program aimed at expanding eligibility for dependents of active-duty members of the armed forces to register for the DoDEA Virtual High School (DVHS). The Expanded Eligibility Pilot Program, which will begin in school year 2021-22, was authorized as part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, providing expansion of eligibility for DVHS to stateside active-duty military dependents in grades 9-12 who are currently ineligible for the DVHS.

Choose from **30+**
online courses, including
Advanced Placement,
World Language and Career
Tech Ed courses.

Classes start August 23,
so apply today!

In order to be eligible for the pilot program, students must be the dependents of active-duty military members who are serving in remote locations that do not have a DoDEA brick-and-mortar high school. The program will be limited to 400 enrollments, split evenly among the four military services, with priority given to students in the 12th grade. Students who participate in the pilot program can take up to two courses per academic year.

“For many of our new students, access to Advanced Placement courses may help them gain college credits,” said Kline. “Our world language classes will allow students who have started a foreign language program to continue, even if their parents or guardians move to a school that doesn’t offer that language. It can also be used to supplement a homeschool program. We think this will be a great benefit to all students who take advantage of this program.”

“Our world language classes will allow students who have started a foreign language program to continue, even if their parents or guardians move to a school that doesn’t offer that language.”

The initial pilot program will target school districts serving remote installations in stateside locations, but applications will be accepted from all students that are eligible. Students registering in the DVHS as part of the pilot program must obtain the approval of their local school system.

DoDEA Chief of Technology and Innovation, C. Michael Kline, said that the Expanded Eligibility Pilot Program is designed to supplement educational opportunities for stateside military-connected students in remote locations. “We think this program will help students by allowing them to take courses that might not be offered at their local schools and will be of great value as they pursue future educational opportunities,” said Kline.

Homeschooled students who are compliant with state laws can also register for the Expanded Eligibility Pilot Program. The program will offer students the chance to take up to two courses from a selection of more than 30 courses already offered by the DVHS. These courses include Advanced Placement courses, world languages, and career and technical education.

Kline further added that while the initial pilot program authorization is for four years, if there is enough interest, it may become a permanent part of the DVHS. “We look forward to developing partnerships with local schools who support our military-connected students,” Kline said.

Registration for the Expanded Eligibility Pilot Program is now open. Applications will be accepted until the program fills or the new school year starts, whichever comes first.

The DVHS is a fully accredited high school providing supplemental courses for DoDEA eligible high school students in grades 9-12. DVHS averages 2,500 course registrations per semester, with the majority of students taking either one or two courses per semester.

For more information on the Expanded Eligibility Pilot Program, please visit: www.dodea.edu/dvs/e2p2.cfm.



THE CHARACTER CORNER

BY MICHAEL D. MATTHEWS



The COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges for us all, and children were no exception. With little notice, in March 2020, the world shut down. Suddenly, children pivoted to remote learning. They were socially isolated from schoolmates, friends, and often beloved family members like grandparents. Many experienced the severe illness of a family member, and some suffered the death of a parent or a member of their extended family. Fear and anxiety were natural consequences of this dire situation.

With the advent of the COVID-19 vaccine, conditions are beginning to improve. In the United States and many other nations, the vaccine is readily available for all adults and for children as young as 12. The vaccine may soon be approved for even younger children. Children will likely be back in school when classes commence in the fall. Sports, clubs, and other activities will return.

How will children respond as life begins to normalize? Parents, teachers, and others who influence children should certainly be attentive to possible adverse psychological reactions to the long stress of the pandemic and be ready to intervene when necessary. But history tells us that even in the direst of times, most children prove to be resilient. Perhaps even more so than adults, they seem to rebound in response to adversity.

Character plays an important role in our response to adversity. Children and adults who possess strong positive character attributes tend to adapt and even flourish despite harsh conditions. Moreover, enduring adversity and overcoming it often reinforces existing strengths of character, and may occasion growth in previously weaker attributes. My own research shows that American combat leaders, at the

height of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, reported growth in the character strengths of teamwork, capacity to love, bravery, gratitude, and honesty following a combat deployment (lasting 12 to 15 months). They were more thankful for the small daily blessings of life, were less fazed by life's inevitable challenges, and appreciated their families more than ever.

As we emerge from the pandemic, those who nurture and develop children should look for evidence of positive character growth. When a child is more grateful, brave, or loving, parents, teachers, and caregivers should recognize and reward this change. Take time to observe the way children cope, adapt, and build on strengths while at the same time being vigilant for any negative psychological reactions. Be a role model for children. Showing them how you use character strengths to overcome adversity will help them be resilient.

You may even ask children (ages 7 to 17) to complete the [Values-in-Action Inventory Strengths Survey](#). The results will provide you and the child a rank ordered list of their 24 character strengths. Age-appropriate discussions with the child may build his or her understanding of positive character and how to use it now and in the future to adapt and excel.



The Character Corner is a regular feature in *On the Move*. Dr. Michael D. Matthews, Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership, U.S. Military Academy and MCEC Science Advisory Board member, is the editor of the Character Corner. Each issue, Dr. Matthews or a guest contributor discusses character from different perspectives, with a focus on children in grades K to 12. For more insights on character, see Dr. Matthews's most recent book, cowritten with Lieutenant General Robert Caslen (Ret): *The Character Edge: Leading and Winning with Integrity* (St. Martin's Press, 2020).

Meet the Walkers!



Military kids and authors of *The Wilson's Family Adventure*, Drayton and Lauryn Walker, share their perspective about moving. Learn more about how their experiences writing a book in their own voice helped them not feel alone when experiencing continuous transitions. You'll also meet their parents, Darrell and Youlanda, both retired officers, who share their parenting philosophy about building a new community family at each new duty station and making their kids part of the process to facilitate smoother transitions.



NEW EPISODES AVAILABLE EVERY THURSDAY.

Listen live and explore archived episodes of the MCEC Podcast to see the diverse selections of guests, topics, and available resources tailored to military-connected students, parents, and educators.

Military Student Consultants make a Difference

The launch of the MCEC® Military Student Consultant program this year has been an overwhelming success. Thanks to our partnership with USAA®, Sue Lopez and Mark Patton have become the reliable, go-to resource for military-connected parents, students, and professionals around the world. Here are a few real-world examples of cases Mark and Sue have supported and the impact of their coordinated efforts within the military-connected community.

BY SUE LOPEZ AND MARK PATTON

“Oh my gosh. Where did you come from? We are so lost in this process and new to the area.”



FROM MARK:

Imagine **learning your 3-year-old child** is autistic while you are preparing for a PCS. Following an information event for families with autistic children, I approached a military family after I saw them struggling getting kids in the car to offer some assistance. After hearing their story, I shared who I was and offered to help. The mother said, “Oh my gosh. Where did you come from? We are so lost in this process and new to the area.” I received their contact information and was able to follow up with information for the area as well as the MCEC-designed training called Autism Speaks. After following up with the family, the mother stated, “You have given us such a relief in helping our son; we are so grateful for you.”

Education benefits are critical for military-connected families. I received a call in the spring from the spouse of a retiree who was concerned their **GI Bill only had 18 months left**, and they wanted to help their daughter meet the financial requirements for her education. We arranged for a video meeting, and I passed on the VA Chapter 35 Dependents’ Application for VA Education Benefits and the Department of Military Affairs Dependent Tuition Scholarship information. The next week, I learned their daughter had received a 100% tuition grant from the state and the Chapter 35 Certificate of Eligibility confirming her stipend. During our conversation, I was able to connect them to the school Veteran Support Office for financial aid, and during a follow-up they shared that they didn’t even have to touch the GI Bill!

FROM SUE:

I received a call from an Active Duty parent who was worried that isolation due to COVID-19 had exacerbated her **child’s mental health** and the child was apprehensive about returning to school. The family and I worked immediately on a risk assessment and I suggested they contact their primary care manager and request a referral for behavioral health as soon as possible. During my follow-up with the family, I learned the child received the behavioral health referral and assessments, and the child was receiving support through counseling services. The family expressed that the MSC provided, “Caring, meaningful and professional advice.” The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available toll free at (800) -273-8255 and non-medical counseling is also available from Military One Source.

Our Vision is to ensure military-connected children are college-, work-, and life-ready. We know that’s the goal of parents, too, so when a recent homeschool graduate experienced difficulty in applying to college due to her homeschool records, the family was distraught over the impact this could have to her dream of **applying for college and earning her nursing degree**. I worked with the family to request an exception to policy and spoke with the school admissions officer to discuss common military lifestyle challenges, home of record, and state homeschool laws. The young lady was able to test and was accepted into her nursing program. She moved on campus over the summer and is taking her first classes this fall. The feedback we received from this Air Force family was humbling. “Sue Lopez was helpful, caring, and empathetic to our situation. She gave her time, energy and heart to us. I cannot express the gratitude I feel to Sue for her help during an extremely stressful situation. I will definitely recommend the MSC to other military families.”



“She gave her time, energy and heart to us. I cannot express the gratitude I feel to Sue for her help during an extremely stressful situation.”

Sue and Mark stand ready to support all military-connected parents, students, and professionals, no matter the situation or duty location. Learn more about the MSC team and how they can work with you on the official **MSC webpage**.





SUPPORTING MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

BY MINDY HUGHES

Teachers and staff from Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC) School in Newport News, Virginia, recently received training sponsored by The Barry Robinson Center (BRC) to help them support military children's education.

BRC joined with the Military Child Education Coalition® (MCEC®) to sponsor this customized training. This is a continuation of a BRC initiative that brings training to private schools, including Catholic schools in southeastern Virginia. BRC has long-standing connections with the Catholic community and these schools where many military families enroll children.

"We're excited about helping MCEC to facilitate this much-needed training in our Catholic schools," Rob McCartney, BRC's CEO, said. "We've served alongside MCEC for nearly a decade and really value the essential work they do to support military families and children."

OLMC is one of several Purple Star schools in the Catholic

Diocese of Richmond (Virginia). A Purple Star school has made a strong commitment to support military-connected children as they relocate to new schools due to a parent's change in duty station.

"Our mission is to help military-connected children experience a seamless transition in education. We work with both sending and receiving schools when their families move," said Kathy McKenna, OLMC's admissions coordinator and military liaison.

OLMC enrolls students from military families stationed at several installations, including Fort Eustis, Langley Air Force Base, U.S. Coast Guard Station Portsmouth, U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown and Yorktown Naval Weapons Station.

"Our school community is so blessed to have nearly a third of our families connected with the military. So often we go about our daily work and forget all that impacts



from a six-hour program about social and emotional learning for children from military families. More than 20 people participated in the training.

"Faculty who are completely new to serving military children were grateful for the opportunity to learn more. Others in administration were happy to receive affirmation of the good things that we are already doing to serve these particular families," said McKenna. "We are excited about future collaborations with both BRC and MCEC."

BRC's decision to support MCEC's training stems from the center's experience providing residential behavioral and mental health treatment to children from military-connected families. Working with military families gives BRC staff insights into both parents' and education professionals' unique needs for support.

"The Barry Robinson Center's passion and commitment in support of educational opportunities for military-connected children around the world is unmatched," said MCEC President and CEO Dr. Becky Porter. "Our work with this amazing partner led to immediate success with Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and we look forward to working with BRC to deliver the highest quality training to the entire Diocese this fall!"

MCEC's mission is to ensure inclusive, quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected

"We look to experts in a variety of fields to educate us so that we can best serve those who we're called to educate."

our relationships with students and their families," explained Sister Anna Joseph, O.P., principal of OLMC.

"We look to experts in a variety of fields to educate us so that we can best serve those who we're called to educate. Partnering with BRC and MCEC to provide professional development for our faculty on the strengths and challenges that come with the military family life has deepened our understanding and appreciation for these families we serve, thus equipping us to fulfill our mission in partnering with parents to provide a Christ-centered education for their children."

MCEC provided a one-hour training session, customized

by mobility, transition, deployments and family separation. As part of this mission, MCEC provides a wide range of training for parents, guardians and professionals who work with military children and families. MCEC's support for private schools is growing, estimated at more than 10 percent of the schools they serve.

"Community and Service are two of OLMC School's Four Pillars," McKenna said. "A collaboration with stellar institutions in the greater community like BRC and MCEC in an effort to better serve members of our school community who dedicate themselves to the service of our nation is a WIN x4!"

Do the Math...

When you **Do the Math** for this active-duty Marine family, you get 51 education challenges! Their 3 boys have experienced 3 moves, 5 deployments, 7 schools, and 2 years of homeschooling. Your donation to MCEC translates to 24/7 education support and innovative tools and resources for the families of those who serve us all.

3 moves
+ 7 schools
+ 2 years home schooling
+ 5 deployments
× 3 kids

51 CHALLENGES

YOU can be the solution to the challenges military kids face. Your donation provides free resources, training, and support for more than 1.2 million military-connected children around the world.

Your generous gift helps our kids get back to building their future!

Be the solution.

SERVING THE CHILDREN
OF THOSE
WHO SERVE US ALL...

Thanks to support like yours, MCEC provides, free of charge:

- **SchoolQuest:** an academic tracking tool for students and parents
- **Military Student Consultants:** one-on-one help with education obstacles and challenges
- **Resources:** webinars, trainings, and literature for students, parents, and professionals

Over **82¢**
of every dollar MCEC
spends supports military-
connected student
educational programs
and services.



MCEC®

an eye **TOWARD** the **FUTURE**

FRESH OFF THE NATIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR and with a focus on Embracing the Future for MilKids, MCEC has launched the Education Services Department, which reflects a new direction for our programs and curriculum service options. Leading this new branch is Amanda Woodyard who has been promoted to the position of vice president.

With an eye toward the future, the evolution of the Education Services Department, created from the PADDIE+M model of instructional design, reinforces our commitment to being one step ahead of the evolving educational needs of military-connected students, parents, and professionals.

"This is an exciting time for MCEC and our military-connected community."

AMANDA WOODYARD
M.S. in Family and Human Development
Vice President – Education Services

I'm honored to be selected to lead this new endeavor for MCEC, and I'm inspired by our amazing team. Their knowledge, passion, and commitment are undeniable and will be instrumental as we work together to shape the look of Education Services and the creation, assessment, and delivery of critical resources to support all military-connected students, parents, and professionals around the world. This is an exciting time for MCEC and our military-connected community. I'm proud to introduce you to the three directors who will be instrumental in our mission to educate, advocate, and collaborate to resolve the education challenges associated with the military lifestyle.



GEORGIA MCKOWN
M.S.Ed. in Elementary Education
Director of Planning, Analysis, and Evaluation

I am excited to continue to align MCEC initiatives with existing and ongoing research through partnerships with other military service organizations and scholars. My interest in supporting military-connected children and the teachers who serve them began in my own classroom. As a teacher, I quickly learned that I needed to bolster my knowledge of the military lifestyle to effectively support my students. This led me to MCEC programs as a program participant and then ultimately back to graduate school. In that time, I studied learning sciences and educational research practices in order to evaluate programming and learning experiences. I am thrilled to work with the other education services team members to evaluate and refine our programs and services to make sure our military-connected children have the best and most supportive educational experiences.



ANDI JANOE
M.Ed. in School Counseling
Director of Implementation

I am thrilled to be part of the way forward with MCEC in delivering the incredible products and resources to students, parents, and educators who serve military-connected children. As an active duty military spouse and parent to two military children myself, the information I have learned while working for MCEC for the past four years has been invaluable. As an educator and school counselor with over ten years of experience in five different school systems, the information MCEC provides to educators is something I would want all my colleagues to know about and have access to. I am committed to leading the way forward so when a parent or educator thinks about academic and social-emotional transition issues for military children, they think of the Military Child Education Coalition as their go-to organization for resources, education, and support.

"I value the importance of providing impactful, sustainable resources to children because I've seen the impact they can have on the academic success for my children."

TARA GLEASON
M.Ed. in Human Services
Director of Design, Development and Maintenance

It's a privilege to lead a new team and work together to elevate the resources and support for military-connected children around the world. My passion stems from my role as a wife and military-connected parent of two children. I value the importance of providing impactful, sustainable resources to children because I've seen the impact they can have on the academic success for my children. As we move forward, this team is excited about exploring new and exciting ways to create and enhance viable resources that will address educational concerns and provide the support needed to ensure every military-connected child succeeds academically.



Reflections on the Anniversary of the 9/11 Attack on the Pentagon



Service members, including then-Maj. Becky Porter (far right), care for injured personnel following the attack on the Pentagon, Sept. 11, 2001.

BY DR. BECKY PORTER



EVERY SEPTEMBER 11TH SINCE 2001, I have paused like so many other Americans to reflect on the events of that day. I was working in the Pentagon when the lives of Americans and so many others in the world would be forever changed. Every year I think about the people I was serving with and the people that I would never see again. My experiences have been captured by the US Army Center of Military History, and the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs documented some of the actions that I took, along with many others who were collectively impacted. Serving in my current role as the President and CEO of the Military Child Education Coalition® (MCEC®), I am prompted to consider what military-connected children experienced on September 11, 2001, and the ensuing days and months. As we approach the twentieth anniversary of the attacks, the children who experienced that day as family members of those who would serve the nation in its longest war are now in their twenties and thirties. I talked with a few of them about what they remember.

ELI IS A 36-YEAR-OLD SON OF AN ARMY OFFICER. He was 16 on the day of the attacks, and his father was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia in a Ranger unit. One of four children in the family, Eli was at the dentist's office with his mother on the morning of the attacks. He recalls waiting in the dentist's chair while his mother and other adults gathered in an adjacent room to get any information they could from the news. He returned to school after his dentist appointment and completed the school day, which included teachers wheeling televisions into the classrooms so that they and students could take in what was happening in New York; Washington, DC; and Pennsylvania. It did not impact Eli directly until later in the day when his father grabbed his "go bags" and left for a deployment that would last several months. I asked if Eli was scared by the events and his father's obvious duty to respond. His recollection was that the situation did not seem all that different from the numerous deployments his father had gone on in the past. Eli went on to earn a commission in the Infantry and deployed three times in service of the same conflict before leaving active duty.

ROBERT IS A 26-YEAR-OLD SON OF AN ARMY OFFICER. He was just six years old that day. His dad was stationed in Washington, DC, and he recalls teachers in his first grade class telling the students that Washington, DC was under attack. Many of the students in the school had parents in the military or who worked in Washington, DC. Robert recalls all of the students in his classroom sitting quietly, waiting to hear what would happen next. What strikes him now is how unusual it was for a room of first graders to sit quietly. Robert remembers the adults in his life trying to remain calm and composed when there was clearly something horrible happening. He said that despite his parents' best efforts, he saw images on television of people jumping from skyscrapers to their deaths. He shared with his mother that he was afraid a plane would crash into the roof of their home near Washington Reagan National Airport. When his mother assured him that the flight patterns had been changed, he countered with the prediction that people would eventually let down their guard. Clearly, Robert's feelings of safety and his confidence in adults had been shaken. While Robert expresses deep appreciation and respect for those who serve, he has never had a desire to join the military.

MICHELLE IS A 30-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF DUAL MILITARY PARENTS who were stationed in Washington, DC on September 11, 2001. Her mother worked at the Pentagon, and her father had just changed positions from one in the Pentagon to one in a leased building that overlooked Washington, DC and the Pentagon. She was ten years old on the day of the attacks. Attending school in Northern Virginia, she remembers sitting at her desk and waiting for her name to be called to go outside to the carpool lane. This was a departure from the normal procedure of assembling in their carpool groups in the hallway. She did not know who would be picking her up that day. It turned out that the mother of friends in their carpool picked her up because her parents could not be reached. That mother had been shopping at the commissary at Fort Myer, Virginia when the shoppers heard the plane crash into the Pentagon three miles away. Michelle recalls getting home that day and waiting with the au pair for her parents to come home. While she doesn't remember exactly what was going through her mind, she recalls standing in the bathroom, at the tender age of 10, staring into the mirror and crying. She says now that the emotion and her tearful response felt like something that someone much older should have experienced. Later, when she was in high school and in her third school since the attacks, her mother deployed just after a move to a new state and a new school. Michelle went on to earn a commission in the Medical Service Corps and serve in the Army Reserves.

These are only three stories of military-connected children whose parents were serving on active duty on September 11, 2001. They were between the ages of 6 and 16 at the time of the attacks, living in different parts of the country. Thousands more adults can reflect back on that day during their childhood when our world changed forever. Some children lost their parents that day; many more would lose them in a conflict spanning two decades. The 20th anniversary of the attacks that day is a time for us to remember not only those who lost their lives, but the children of so many Americans who lived through events that would continue to impact our place in the world during their formative years.

Meet America's HIDDEN HELPERS

Military Caregiving Youth Provide an Unseen, Unrecognized and Unsupported National Service.

SUBMITTED BY THE ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION

THE ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION brings vital attention to the untold stories of military caregivers who care for a wounded, ill, or injured service member or veteran, and provides solutions to the toughest challenges facing these hidden heroes. We include the children of military caregivers in our mission, as they play an unacknowledged, but essential secondary caregiver role in their families.

Generations of children and youth have witnessed first-hand the physical and emotional effects of war. Before becoming adults, they have seen more stress, anxiety, frustration, and heartache than most of us will see in our lifetimes. They have been forced to grow up fast and live a different 'normal' than most of their peers, even within the military community itself. Like their caregiver moms and dads, these special kids are proud to be a part of their family, but the load they carry is often heavier than any our nation should let them bear.

The goal of the research is to better understand the impact of caregiving on children and the specific programmatic interventions that would be most empowering for these kids.

To shine a light on the children who serve in the shadows, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation has created Hidden Helpers, a new initiative designed to provide supportive programming for the children of America's 5.5 million military caregivers. The Foundation is teaming with Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) and the Biden Administration's Joining Forces to build the Hidden Helpers Coalition which will call on partners to pledge to take action that fills the



gaps in support and services for military caregiver kids and youth. More than 40 organizations in the military and veteran arena, including the Military Child Education Coalition®, have pledged their support to America's youngest heroes.

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation commissioned a research blueprint, conducted by the RAND Corporation in 2017, which revealed that no published studies exist exploring the impact of caregiving on children, despite an overwhelming number of caregivers, advocates, and experts reporting that these kids were struggling. As the first project under Hidden Helpers, the Foundation addressed this critical gap head-on by initiating a first-of-its-kind study with research firm Mathematica. The study, funded by WWP, will be released in September 2021.

With this research in hand, Hidden Helpers will help children growing up in military caregiving households self-identify and recognize the power of their roles. It will offer them an opportunity to reflect upon their unique upbringings and give them the strength and abilities to face their challenges. As these children and youth continue to grow into their roles as hidden helpers, they will make connections with other caregiver kids and better understand that they are part of a special community.

Meet Hidden Helpers Across the Nation

NOAH

State: California

Age: 19

Branch: Marine Corps, Retired

Noah Stephens is 19 years old and lives with his family in southern California. His father, John, is a combat wounded veteran of the Marine Corps who has post-traumatic stress (PTS) and severe epilepsy, caused by a traumatic brain injury (TBI) he suffered while deployed to Iraq. His mom Nikki is his father's caregiver. Noah has four siblings, and is the oldest one living at home, along with his 15-year-old sister and twin 8-year-old brothers.

Noah has never thought of himself as a "caregiver kid." He just thought he was someone who happened to have a dad who was injured, and a mom who cared for him, and that he helped them both, because he was their son, and they love each other.

He helps his family in many ways, assisting his mom with his siblings, running errands, taking on his dad's chores, and so much more. Noah sometimes struggles with taking on these additional responsibilities, but he never questions stepping

up. The toughest times are when his dad has seizures. Noah now knows what to do when his dad experiences a seizure; it's one of those skills you only pick up as a caregiver kid. He still gets scared in those moments but being able to help his dad is reassuring and empowering.

Noah is preparing to return to college this fall to study film production. He turns to television and film to help relax from the daily stress of being a caregiver kid. A particular film Noah loves is *Good Will Hunting*. He relates to the main character Will, who also experienced trauma as a kid. And just like Will, Noah knows he will have to work to overcome the challenges he faced, and he'll find strength in the experience.



ABIGAIL & KATE

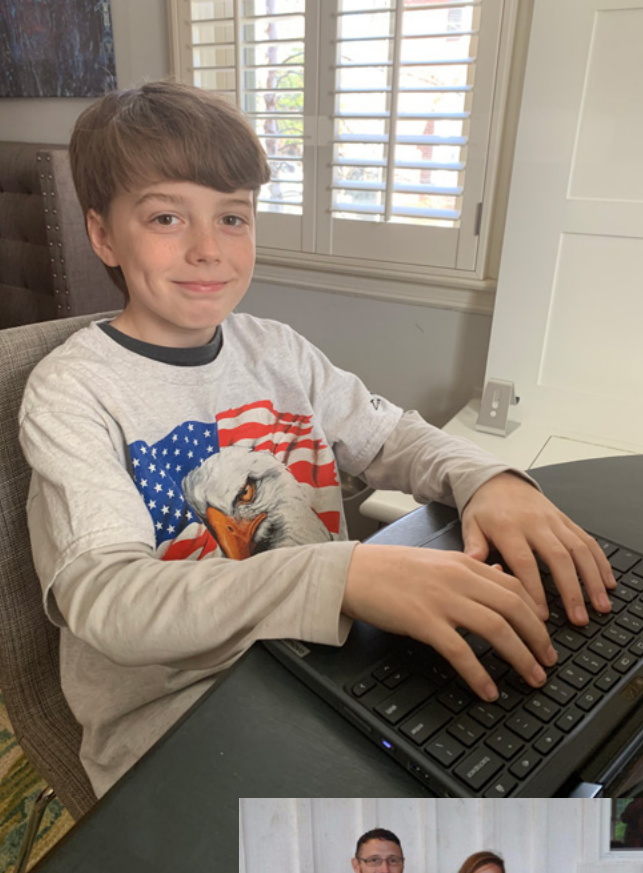
State: South Carolina

Ages: 11

Branch: Army, Retired

Abigail & Kate describe themselves as helpful, kind and dedicated hidden helpers. They love to learn and are homeschooled by their mom who cares for their dad, who experiences symptoms of toxic exposure as a result of his service in Afghanistan. When their dad is having trouble getting out of bed, they bring him meals and help their mom with chores. As military children, they see the strength behind their actions and how they make a difference in their family's lives each and every day.





CHARLIE

State: Maryland

Age: 10

Branch: Marine Corps, Retired

Charlie is a 10-year-old rising fourth grader from Maryland. He lives with his family, and has one 17-year-old brother, and twin 14-year-old sisters. His father, Chuck, was wounded by an IED blast while deployed to Afghanistan and has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Charlie's mom, Liz, is his father's caregiver and serves as the Dole Caregiver Fellows Program Manager at the Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

Growing up in a military family, Charlie and his siblings have a deep appreciation for those who served in the Armed Forces. Every time they see a veteran, they tell them, "Thank you for your service." Since he was a toddler, Charlie was fascinated by the military. He would pretend to be a sniper with his Nerf toy gun. Charlie also enjoys watching military movies and learning about the military history, so he can better understand the traditions and legacy tied to his dad's own military service. He can also understand what has happened to wounded warriors, like his father, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Charlie has previously expressed his hopes to enlist as well, but right now he enjoys playing soccer and having his dad help coach his travel baseball team.

Charlie is excited to start at a new school this fall, where he looks forward to smaller class sizes, daily gym class, and hands-on learning. He hopes to try out for lacrosse, baseball, and football when he goes to middle school in a few short years.



KAITLYN

State: New York

Age: 9

Branch: Army National Guard, Active-Duty

Since her father deployed, eight-year-old Kaitlyn has made it her mission to help other children of service members whose parents serve overseas. Kaitlyn has helped connect other military kids by taking part in yellow ribbon ceremonies, creating a big buddy program, and serving as Little Miss Military Star New York 2020! Her philanthropic work supports the families of military kids who make the ultimate sacrifice. Though she misses her father when he's deployed, she is proud of his service and what it means to be a military child. Kaitlyn hopes to follow in her father's footsteps and serve in the Army one day.



To learn more about the Hidden Helpers initiative, go to hiddenheroes.org/hiddenhelpers.

STATES GO PURPLE STAR for Military-Connected Students

BY TIM FARRELL

This year we have seen a surge of legislation, support, and adoption toward the Purple Star School (PSS) Designation Program across the country.

As we collectively move forward, embracing the future for military-connected children, there's no doubt that PSS is an essential cornerstone of our efforts to support all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle.

MCEC® is proud to be the national advocate of PSS and serve as the nation's most complete resource for states seeking to start their programs. Our advocacy would not be possible without Pete Lupiba, who presented this concept for Ohio several years ago. Through his efforts and the advocacy of so many, legislators and education leaders, there are currently 26 states who have gone purple in support of military-connected children, and an additional six states have introduced legislation.

When Pete Lupiba presented the concept of PSS, he believed that it was incumbent upon schools to reflect their support of military-connected children through their readiness and day-to-day actions. He believed there should be a list of requirements that would resonate with military families:

- A designated school staff as a point of contact or liaison for military students and families.

- Mandatory professional development for staff-assigned liaisons on military-connected student issues.
- A designated page on its website featuring resources and information for military families.
- One supplemental activity that reflects a military-friendly culture.

What state educators learned over the years is that family PCS moves and transitions often present barriers to ensuring consistency for their children's academic success. Military-connected children face the same challenges non-military children face; however, the high frequency

of moves disrupts the consistency children need to thrive and presents parents with real-world concerns about finding schools and districts who are postured to provide the social-emotional support that caters to the needs of military-connected children and families.

Our goal as the national advocate is to support the adoption of PSS in every state and then work with state legislators and education leaders to ensure that every school achieves and maintains their accreditation across the country. Learn more about the impact of PSS, our national advocacy efforts, and how we can work together to bring PSS to your school here.

26
states

6
states

★ PSS Adopted

☆ PSS Legislation Pending

Learn how to start a PSS Program at your school or within your district, see the requirements, read more about the impact Purple Star Schools has on students, parents, and educators, and find out how Purple Star Schools meet state obligations on our official website at MilitaryChild.org/PurpleStarSchools.

COLLEGE-, WORK-, & LIFE-READY EMBRACING THE FUTURE FOR #MILKIDS

NATIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR | JULY 19-21, 2021

The 23rd annual MCEC® National Training Seminar proved to be an amazing success!

From July 19-21, more than 1,700 attendees joined online for the our first virtual NTS. Since 1998, the NTS has been the pinnacle event for military-connected students, parents, and education professionals. Highlighted by three general sessions, distinguished lectures, and master classes, this year's NTS focused on ways to Embrace the Future for #MilKids.

WE WANT TO THANK OUR AMAZING SPONSORS WHO MADE THIS YEAR'S NTS POSSIBLE:



Access all the videos and relive the best moments from the 2021 NTS on the [MCEC NTS Recap Page](#).

SAVE THE DATE

MCEC National Training Seminar
RETURNS to Washington D.C.
JULY 18-20, 2022



A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

TEAMS OF THE YEAR



"Military kids like you serve and sacrifice, and you inspire us all. As we go back to school, students of all backgrounds will have to adapt and adjust, and we need the voices and leadership of our military-connected students now, more than ever. I know your future is bright, and I can't wait to hear more about the wonderful things you do this year."

First Lady Dr. Jill Biden

The MCEC® Student 2 Student™ Teams of the Year reflect the outstanding S2S™ teams around the world who have made significant impacts over the previous year within their schools and throughout their communities. Winners are selected for the elementary, middle, and high school levels, along with an overall award for Elite Team of the Year.

WE CONGRATULATE ALL S2S PROGRAMS for their tireless efforts during a challenging year and salute the sponsors, educators, and parents for their leadership and unwavering support. Learn more about Student Achievement opportunities including: S2S, the Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program, webinars, and our upcoming Student Advisory Council on our [website](#).



2021 MCEC S2S ELITE TEAM OF THE YEAR

Whiteman Elementary School
Whiteman Air Force Base, Knob Noster, Missouri



2021 MCEC S2S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEAM OF THE YEAR

Clements Parsons Elementary
Copperas Cove ISD, Copperas Cove, Texas



2021 MCEC S2S MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM OF THE YEAR

Rocky Mountain Classical Academy Middle School
District 49, Colorado Springs, Colorado



2021 MCEC S2S HIGH SCHOOL TEAM OF THE YEAR

North Augusta High School
Aiken County Public Schools, North Augusta, South Carolina



2021 MCEC S2S FINALISTS

Rocky Mountain Classical Academy Elementary
District 49, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Robert G. Cole Middle School
Fort Sam Houston ISD, San Antonio, Texas

Nimitz Middle School
North East ISD, San Antonio, Texas

Burkburnett High School
Burkburnett ISD, Burkburnett, Texas

Union Pines High School
Moore County Schools, Cameron, North Carolina

THE 2021 LTG (RET) H.G. "PETE" TAYLOR PARTNERSHIP OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

"GOODNESS HAPPENS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL."

Beginning in 2004, the Lt. Gen. H. G. "Pete" Taylor awards have been an opportunity to reflect individual and community partnerships formed between military installations and school districts that serve military-connected children. Winners reflect Lt. Gen. Taylor's belief that "goodness starts at the local level." We congratulate this year's finalists and winners for their initiatives and teamwork in building successful opportunities within their communities that celebrate the military-connected child in exceptional and sustainable ways.



OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP Community Partnerships During COVID

Partners:

- Fort Sam Houston Independent School District
- Fort Sam Houston Elementary School
- Joint Base San Antonio
- JBSA Fort Sam Houston School Liaison Office
- Army Environmental Command
- Lincoln Military Housing
- Yoga Day Nonprofit

Community Partnerships During COVID collaborated with the School Liaison Office to host a drive thru "Back to School Bash" in August and distributed school supplies to nearly 200 families thanks to our partnership with our campus staff, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, the Child Development Center, and Youth Services staff.

In the spring, they hosted a Purple-up wave parade honoring more than 250 military-connected families, and partnered with the Army Environmental Command to host a Nature Walk for 140 kindergartners that included seven STEM-based stations.

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM/ PROJECT

Hands-on Education and the Preservation of Aerospace History

Partners:

- Utah Military Academy
- Hill Air Force Base
- Hill Aerospace Museum

The Hands-on Education and the Preservation of Aerospace History partnership between the Utah Military Academy (UMA) and Hill Air Force Base fostered opportunities to volunteer and earn internships with the museum. This partnership blossomed into an amazing relationship that resulted in opportunities for UMA cadets, thousands of hours of support to the museum, and a program that benefits the local community.



EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Project PARTNERS (Preparing Adolescents for Relevant Training: Nurturing Early Responsibility and Success)

Partners:

- Knob Noster R-VIII Public Schools
- Whiteman Air Force Base
- Whiteman Air Force Base Exceptional Family Member Program
- Stars and Strikes
- Whiteman Inn
- Whiteman Library

EXEMPLARY INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM/ PROJECT

Readiness & Resiliency (R2): Military Dependent Students Are Ready to Learn

Partners:

- Fort Wainwright School Liaison Office
- Eielson Air Force Base School Liaison Office
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Military Student Support Coordinator



RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Connecting Families, Communities and Schools; Student- Focused Partnerships Driven for New Mexico

Partners:

- Cannon Air Force Base
- Holloman Air Force Base
- Kirtland Air Force Base
- Public Education Department
- New Mexico Office of Military Base Planning and Support
- New Mexico Commissioner for the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission
- New Mexico Military Children's Education Council

RECOGNIZED INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM/ PROJECT

Spread Hope, Not Germs

Partners:

- Sigonella Naval Air Station
- Sigonella Middle High School
- Sigonella Middle High School MCEC® Student 2 Student® program

Read more about this year's winners at [MilitaryChild.org](https://militarychild.org)



Joining this year's winners as finalists are:

- Bay Area Education Alliance
- Lawton Public Schools and Ft. Sill (Purple Star)
- U.S. Navy Nimitz Middle School Coalition

PAE – Growing Young Leaders through Student 2 Student (S2S)

LEADERSHIP is a much considered and debated topic. The impact of a leader is significant, course-changing in fact, and whether leadership is effective or not can mean the difference between success and failure of any organization. PAE recognizes this and, since 2019, has sponsored the MCEC® Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program, held twice a year at the United States Military Academy West Point and the United States Air Force Academy.

Since 2006, students from around the globe have competed for selection to attend a week-long leadership training program hosted by cadets who will serve in the country's Armed Forces. The experience, named for one of our nation's most respected voices on leadership, affords students the opportunity to build critical skills: team building, decision-making, and communication to name a few. The program also emphasizes character development through personal and group sessions led by a host of distinguished speakers.

PAE President and CEO, John Heller, a West Point graduate, Army Veteran, and father, acknowledged the importance of supporting programs that enrich the lives of military-connected students and ensure they have every opportunity to lead in a variety of settings.

Because of the support from PAE, hundreds of students gather each year to learn leadership acumen from emerging leaders and each other. Jiemyjoyce Reduque, a Hesselbein scholar, said it best: "The experiences and memories you'll make with your group won't ever be forgotten. You all will realize your possibilities for yourself, not just as a member of your S2S, but as a part of an international organization with so many people supporting you."

Thank you, PAE, for making this program possible for students like Jiemyjoyce and so many like her!

MCEC FRANCES HESSELBEIN STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Returns in-person to West Point this fall

October 18-22, 2021

For high school S2S™ students

Generously funded by:

PAE

APPLY NOW!

Applications are available on the MCEC Student 2 Student® webpage at MilitaryChild.org/programs/student-2-student



MCEC®

student 2 student™

A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

SHOP the MCEC STORE!

Affordable Resources
for Military Families
store.MilitaryChild.org



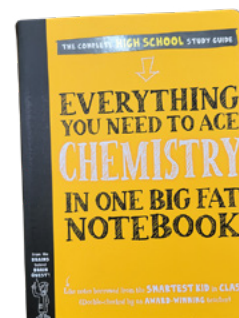
Brain Quest \$8.75 each

Summer may be over, but kids can learn all year long with this personalized, interactive pack featuring all-new material from Brain Quest, America's #1 educational bestseller. Begin with a map that guides you through a workbook jam-packed with activities based on reading comprehension, writing opinions, ancient history, fractions, exponents, climate, and more. When your child completes each activity, they are awarded with a sticker to track their progress on the map. These packs include bonus challenges, a reading list, and Brain Quest mini deck. Written by experts and vetted by award-winning teachers.



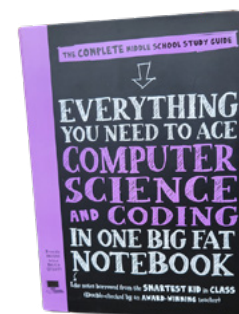
MCEC Mystery Bundle \$24.95 a \$45 value!

Each MCEC store Mystery Bundle contains a surprise assortment of goodies, including current store items and a T-shirt (colors vary). Sizes are limited, so please specify your size and whether you need an adult or youth T-shirt in the comments section of your order. This is a \$45.00 value available for only \$24.95. Please be aware when ordering multiple boxes, some items may be duplicated. Grab your Mystery Box while supplies last.



BIG FAT NOTEBOOKS \$11.95 each

This BIG FAT NOTEBOOK covers everything you need to know during a year of high school chemistry. Coverage includes atoms, elements, compounds and mixtures. The Periodic Table, quantum theory, bonding the mole, chemical reactions, calculations, gas laws, solubility, pH scale, titrations, Le Chatelier's Principle, and more!



This BIG FAT NOTEBOOK makes all the stuff you learn in school "sink in" with key concepts, mnemonic devices, definitions, diagrams, and doodles to help you understand computer science. This includes computing systems, binary code, algorithms, computational thinking, loops, events, procedures, and programming in Scratch and Python, Boolean expressions, web development, cybersecurity, HTML, CSS, and more!

Sprout Pencils \$2.50 Spruce tree \$2.30 All other plants

Sprout is the original sustainable pencil that you can plant after use and grow into herbs, vegetables or flowers. We have personalized the Sprout pencils with the MCEC logo. What an excellent gift for inspiration to complete homework (using the pencil until it is ready to plant), stocking stuffer, classroom science experiment, teacher prize gifts, or for anyone who has an outdoor or windowsill garden. If you are looking for a unique gift that shows our MCEC pride, the Sprout pencil is an excellent choice! Five varieties available.

This is a Picea Abies Norway Spruce.

NOTE: Supervise young children. The seed is in soft capsule on top of pencil!



VISIT [store.MilitaryChild.org!](https://store.MilitaryChild.org)

YOU CAN BE THE **FACE OF CHANGE**



Starts Wednesday September 1.



MCEC[®]
CFC # **10261**



CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, raising millions of dollars each year. Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.