



**THE  
MISSION  
CONTINUES**

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





**INTRODUCTION** | Veterans possess the drive and desire to serve others, but without access to the tools needed, their potential to make a meaningful impact at the local level remains untapped. On the other end of the spectrum, growing numbers of communities in this country are under-resourced and being left behind. The Mission Continues bridges this gap.

**OUR MISSION** | We're on a mission to connect veterans with under-resourced communities. Our programs deploy veteran volunteers to work alongside nonprofit partners and community leaders to improve educational resources, tackle food insecurity, foster neighborhood identity, and more.

**OUR VISION** | Our vision is for all veterans with a desire to continue their service to be part of a movement to transform communities.

**CORE VALUES** | Our core values are the set of principles that guide our choices as individuals and as an organization. Having a unified, clear view of our values helps ensure we are living out our promise every day, in every location, and to the absolute best of our abilities. As such, we expect and encourage all volunteers, staff members, and program participants to embody the following values as representatives of The Mission Continues: Collaboration, Compassion, Inclusiveness, Integrity, and Growth Through Learning. Work Hard, Trust, Learn and Grow, Respect, and Have Fun.

# Cultivating Mission-Driven Community Leaders

Despite the challenges that in-person programming face in 2021 with the continual issues related to COVID-19, our Service Leadership Corps (SLC) found a way to press on and continue the curriculum, offering veterans new ways to serve their communities. SLC prepares veterans to lead tangible impact in their communities through a complement of rigorous programs that teach leadership skills, including community-based leadership methods, cultural competence, effective communication, and project management. Upon the completion of coursework and practicums, Corps members stand equipped to lead a team of volunteers as a platoon leader in their home city. And despite the challenges presented in this new COVID world, the Fourth Cohort of SLC saw 55 veterans complete the training and graduate from the program. A special thanks goes out to those responsible for generously supporting this program – A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation, Acorn Hill Foundation, CarMax, and Robert R. McCormick Foundation.



# Empowering Women Veterans to Become Authentic Leaders



Having recently identified an opportunity to bridge the gap between the limitless leadership potential of women veterans and the additional challenges that our women veterans face, The Mission Continues moved forward with this incredible program once again in 2021.

And like other in-person programming that are vital to our mission to the veterans the communities, this did not come without its share of challenges in the COVID world that we found ourselves in during this period.

Nonetheless, thanks to the generous support of the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation, BAE Systems, CarMax, Coca-Cola Foundation, Wounded Warrior Project and Prudential Financial, our WVLP mission carried on, and with some wins worth celebrating. Between Cohorts 2 & 3, 90 women veterans graduated from the program, continuing their journeys as women veteran leaders now more equipped to handle challenges with confidence and determination.



# Operation Enduring Service

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With your support, we remembered the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and kicked off the next 20 years of veteran service through impactful community service projects, thought leadership events, and stories of enduring service.

Marking the 20th Anniversary of 9/11, 2021 saw the launch of The Mission Continues' Operation Enduring Service (OES) Campaign, and it was a tremendous success of service across the country. In addition to hosting service projects in 40 cities nationwide, we held larger scale service efforts in five signature cities – Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas/Fort Worth, Washington DC, and New York City – that provided community support in eight communities with nearly 500 volunteers.

In total, Operation Enduring Service produced nearly 1,600 volunteers at 109 service events in honor of the 20th Anniversary of September 11th.

Additionally, highlighting the importance and impact of that day, we held a Conversation Series focused on thought leadership and veteran-related issues surrounding 9/11 and featured an impressive roster of expert guests (see below if we want to make a graphic that lists out all our speakers) in our 5-part series. The culmination of this Conversation Series was an in-person round table discussion with fellow leaders in the Veteran Service Organization space, followed by a live Q&A with VA Secretary Denis McDonough, which took place in Washington DC with a majority of our veteran volunteer leaders from all across the country in attendance.

Operation Enduring Service was made possible by NFL-BWF Salute to Service, Raytheon Technologies, Starbucks, BAE Systems, CarMax.





# Nourishing Communities in Crisis



Inspired by the grassroots efforts of our veteran service leaders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Mission Continues formally launched Operation Nourish in June 2020—an initiative powered by The Boeing Company that unified our highly trained volunteer force across the country in service of a singular issue: food insecurity.

The communities in which we serve were being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic—lines of cars snaking for miles to pick up food from local pantries, food banks, and schools, became commonplace. The Mission Continues was uniquely positioned to tackle this issue head on.

Another issue made worse by the pandemic was veteran loneliness, social isolation, and job insecurity—all taking a huge toll on veterans’ mental health. In our COVID Veteran Network Survey, conducted in May 2020, 40% of respondents shared they were concerned about feeling depressed, and 35% were concerned about feeling isolated. We know that continued service and peer support are proven approaches to mitigating the negative factors impacting mental health of veterans, and our work is designed to offer exactly those kinds of opportunities.

To see these dual benefits of Operation Nourish in action, you don’t have to look further than Los Angeles Platoon Leader **Sherman**

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**“It gives me an outlet to get back out in the community, to meet people that I know need me on their side—I need them too.”**

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**Watson**, a US Marine Corps veteran who calls Compton home. After achieving his dream to be a Marine, with three combat deployments and three Purple Hearts, he realized that the small-unit leadership he had learned and refined overseas had enormous potential to make an impact if translated into community-based work. After leaving the military, Sherman turned this passion for service into a career in supporting veterans and their housing needs—while also co-founding a veteran non-profit and becoming a Platoon Leader with The Mission Continues. Sherman serves

the South Central community in Los Angeles, California, and pivoted his efforts to help with weekly food distribution events during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because of Sherman’s skill in bringing volunteers, veterans groups, and community organizations together, their collective effort resulted in 15,000 meal kits distributed to Compton residents, over 50,000 cooked meals served to Watts residents, and 800 meal kits distributed to homeless veterans across Los Angeles in 2020. While volunteering amid the pandemic, Sherman said, “I have now realized how the people that I serve rely heavily on the work that I do.”

In addition to The Boeing Company, the impactful service of Sherman and volunteers like him across the country was fueled by The Segal Foundation, CarMax, Carlson Family Foundation, and Target.

# Opportunities to Join Us in Service



## **LEGACY OF SERVICE |** On **MARTIN LUTHER**

**KING JR. DAY** we serve together to salute our fellow countrymen who fought for civil rights in the face of racial inequality, and to proudly recognize that our country is continuously shaped and improved by the activism of its citizens.

## **ROOTED IN SERVICE |** On **EARTH DAY**

veterans gather to conserve the land they once swore to protect by caring for our country's national parks, and supporting green spaces and sustainable solutions in urban landscapes.

## **VETERANS DAY |** As our veterans and volunteers took to their

local platoons all across the country in honor of **VETERANS DAY** all November, there was a lot of impact made from coast to coast. In total, more than 780 volunteers, nearly half of which were veterans, supported 62 service projects, leading to more than 3,300 hours of service.

# Our Financials

## 2021 TOTAL\*

### REVENUES\*\*

\$7,913,087

### EXPENSES

Programs \$6,849,806

Fundraising \$1,053,209

Admin \$1,669,128

**Total \$9,572,143**

## 5 YEAR TOTAL\*

### EXPENDITURES

Programs \$42,455,037

Fundraising \$5,906,704

Admin \$10,036,947

**Total \$58,398,688**

## TOTAL CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURES 2018-2022\*

73% PROGRAMS

17% ADMIN

10% FUNDRAISING

\*IRS Form 990 basis.





**HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED • Volunteer with your local service platoon  
Apply to be part of our leadership programs • Donate to support our vital work in communities**



The Mission Continues



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