



**THE
MISSION
CONTINUES**

2020 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

The Mission Continues is on a mission to deploy veterans to volunteer in under-resourced communities alongside nonprofit partners and local leaders, serving as a catalyst for meaningful change. We let communities tell us what they need, and commit to a wide variety of service projects to reach long-term community goals. We tackle growing food insecurity by adding capacity to meal distribution and urban garden harvesting; we instill students' pride in their schools through school beautification and library builds; we improve access to parks and make neighborhoods safer and more livable with murals, community gathering places, landscaping, cleanup projects, and more.

OUR VISION

The Mission Continues' vision is for all veterans with a desire to continue their service to be part of a nationwide movement to transform communities.

IMPACT

Since 2007, The Mission Continues has engaged **80,000** veterans and community members in over **7,000** service projects.

The Mission Continues operates in more than **40** cities nationwide.

97% of Platoon Leaders feel they have the ability to make a difference in their community.



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 each day, in each location, to the absolute best of our abilities. As such, we expect and actively encourage all program participants, volunteers, and staff members to embody the following values: Work Hard, Trust, Learn and Grow, Respect, and Have Fun.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

We value the diversity of identities, lived experiences, and perspectives that veterans and local partners bring to our work, and we appreciate that it is a privilege to make a difference in, with, and for the communities we serve. There is more work to do as we strive to be a place where all people can belong, contribute, succeed, and grow.





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A Message From Our President

As the world shifted under our feet in 2020, the veterans of The Mission Continues once again rose to the occasion. As social isolation and food insecurity emerged as two of the most pressing and urgent challenges in our communities, veterans did what they do best, and went where they were needed most. They once again demonstrated a powerful resourcefulness by fusing their desire to serve alongside each other with the opportunity to take on a new mission here at home.

Throughout the year, our veterans and team faced the uncertainty, challenge, and personal discomfort brought on by COVID-19, and still, our mission continued. We held more than 1,000 in-person and virtual service events; we successfully launched the first cohort of our Women Veterans Leadership Program; we moved all of our leadership programs to a remote learning environment; and we reimagined our Mass Deployment as a hyper-local event—all of which created new and engaging opportunities for veterans across the country to lead, connect, and safely serve in any way they could.

As we close the book on 2020 and look toward the upcoming 20th anniversary of 9/11, we are excited about the opportunity to bring more veterans into this movement. In the coming years we will reinforce our effort to put volunteer veteran leadership at the center of all that we do, knowing that our investment in our veteran leadership programs will impact both veterans and the communities in which they serve. We remain inspired by our vision of ensuring that all veterans with a desire to continue their service will have an opportunity to do so with The Mission Continues.

Charlie Mike,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB Bruggeman', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Mary Beth Bruggeman,
President, The Mission Continues



THE MISSION CONTINUES SERVICE LEADERSHIP CORPS

In 2020, despite the challenging conditions due to COVID-19, The Mission Continues activated more than 5,000 veterans and volunteers in service.

ALUMNI SPEAKER SERIES

We debuted the virtual Alumni Speaker Series in 2020, as an opportunity for program alumni to continue their professional development and strengthen their connection with The Mission Continues community during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. In this exciting new initiative, veterans were able to tap into each other's expertise through relevant seminars on "Financial Literacy," "Leading Through Adversity," and "Storytelling" in addition to community-oriented gatherings such as a "Pride and Honor" celebration around LGBTQ+ Pride Month, "Comedy Night," "Alumni Town Hall", and "Suicide Prevention."

Cultivating Mission-Driven Community Leaders

The Mission Continues offers an unparalleled opportunity for service-centric veterans eager to contribute to their country in new ways. We prepare 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. These invaluable skills are infused into every one of our programs, including the Service Leadership Corps. 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. In 2020, the Service Leadership Corps was generously supported by the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation alongside The Marcus Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and the Acorn Hill Foundation.

“I was trying to fake-it-till-you-make-it, looking for my next place to belong.”

Angel Carter completed the Service Leadership Corps program and is now a Platoon Leader in Dallas-Fort Worth. “One day I was a Marine, and the next I was not. I was trying to fake-it-till-you-make-it, looking for my next place to belong.”

Through volunteering, I was able to overcome my obstacles. It opened up a world of opportunity, and now it keeps me off the couch and out of my head. I know I’m doing something outside myself for others, and to me, that’s what this life is about.”

The Service Leadership Corps helped Angel hone her leadership and organizational skills, allowing her to have a greater impact in the lives of others with her effervescent energy. “I learned how to leverage the other volunteer organizations in my network to grow the wider veteran volunteer network and get more accomplished together.”

After completing the Service Leadership Corps program, Angel hit the ground running as a platoon leader. In 2020, Angel and her fellow service platoon members made an impact in Dallas-Fort Worth through distributing food at weekly mobile pantry events. Angel said, “I’m motivated, I’m inspired, and I’m challenged. As a platoon leader, I can connect with people in a way that will inspire them too. We’re making a difference in the lives of those that we serve, and giving them hope. Every time we do something, there’s going to be that memorable moment that just makes my heart explode with joy.”

“...Every time we do something, there’s going to be that memorable moment that just makes my heart explode with joy.”



In 2020, we held **236** events and engaged more than **1,900** veterans and volunteers through Operation Nourish.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our volunteers sent notes of support and gratitude to **50+** frontline community partners, and we conducted **2,800+** virtual buddy check-ins with veterans across our network.

Nourishing Communities in Crisis



OPERATION NOURISH

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

“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.”

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 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.



Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, recently joined the Platoon to pack meal kits alongside veteran volunteers.





Empowering Women Veterans to Become Authentic Leaders

The Mission Continues sees a gap between the vast leadership potential of women veterans and the added challenges that women veterans face. As more than 30% of our overall program participants are women, we have witnessed first-hand that women veterans navigate challenges with communication, identity, and confidence, all of which make their journey to leadership roles more difficult.

We launched our Women Veterans Leadership Program in 2020, to empower women veterans to find belonging and lead with authenticity. With a strategic investment from the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation, this five-month professional training program guides women veterans in determining their own unique path to leadership while actively developing the knowledge, skills and resources they need to achieve that path. We are proud to recognize The Boeing Company, BAE Systems Inc. and CarMax as supporters for the program's inaugural cohort.

One such woman veteran who found her voice—and a way to help others—through the Women Veterans Leadership Program is **JeQuetta “J-Can-Do” Canady**. After separating from the military, JeQuetta said, “I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur, knew I wanted to reach more of the community, but I didn’t have the right connections or support to get it done. But after returning home from the first WVLP convening I felt a sense of confidence that I didn’t have before.

“Since the first WVLP cohort convening,” JeQuetta said, “I have launched my brand ‘If J-Can-Do, So Can You,’ a ministry-based business whose mission is to guide and encourage youth and young adults as they find and share their purpose in the world through entrepreneurship. The network of connections, mentors, and friends I met along the way have definitely been a huge support throughout the rest of my journey thus far, making this experience one that continues to deliver value and encouragement. I didn’t just go through training—I had a transformational learning experience with a family of sisters in arms that I will take with me wherever my journey leads me next.”

More than 30% of current TMC participants are women veterans. As compared to the US military, The Mission Continues is over-represented in veterans of color, women veterans and veterans that identify as LGBTQ+, according to self-reporting in our 2020 Annual Survey.



Opportunities to Join Us In Service

The Mission Continues leads days of service in cities from coast to coast to bolster the work we do, bring people together, and inspire others to serve.



Martin Luther King Jr. National Day Of Service

For Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service, our veteran-led service platoons organized service events across the country that honored Dr. King's legacy. In Dr. King's hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, the Atlanta 3rd Service Platoon celebrated a new partnership with the Fulton Leadership Academy charter school in Atlanta's southside, a school that specializes in civic leadership. The day of service engaged its students in a project to beautify their indoor and outdoor spaces, creating a brighter and more welcoming learning environment. Our MLK Campaign is made possible thanks to dedicated partners like Wounded Warrior Project, The Marcus Foundation, Citi Foundation and BAE Systems.

September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance

Our nation's youngest generation of veterans were greatly impacted by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001—which changed the course of their lives in an instant. This day carries deep personal weight to many, both military servicemembers and civilians alike, and we honor it annually through our United In Service campaign. In 2020, many service projects supported communities devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic—yet another national crisis. In Richmond, Virginia, the Richmond Service Platoon served at American Legion Post 186, where they assembled meal kits to support their partner organization's effort to address the increase in local food insecurity triggered by the pandemic. Our United in Service campaign is powered by unwavering partners like Veterans United Foundation, JPMorgan Chase and Starbucks.



Opportunities to Join Us In Service

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Earth Day In celebration of Earth Day, The Mission Continues focused on empowering people to contribute to a better tomorrow. The Mission Continues invited volunteers to pledge an act of service and share their efforts on social media or join service platoons' virtual service events, which guided and supported volunteers from home. This effort garnered nearly 400 pledges for activities including self-directed park and trail cleanups, planting and fostering vegetable seedlings for local community gardens, building a home composting bin, and more. On April 22, 2020, the San Antonio Service Platoon worked with its partner organization Gardopia Gardens to provide garden kits and fruit trees to volunteers and host a virtual planting experience.



Veterans Day At The Mission Continues, Veterans Day is an opportunity for veterans to demonstrate what it means to extend their legacy beyond their military service. In honor of Veterans Day, we partnered with Navy Federal Credit Union to execute 28 socially-distanced service events across 17 cities throughout the month of November. In Chicago, Illinois, the Chicago Service Platoon returned to a community garden in Little Village to clear debris, build new garden beds, install fencing, and improve landscaping. Other platoons across the country carried out projects, including packing and distributing meals, building capacity for frontline community resources, and engaging in virtual mental health check-ins for fellow veterans.

We're grateful to our partners at USAA for engaging their staff and customers in amplifying our mission across the country, providing financial support and volunteering at our Veterans Day service projects, as well as our partnership with Lowe's Home Improvement, who produced limited edition "military buckets" to honor Veterans Day along with a generous gift to The Mission Continues.



Operation Bayou City Blitz



In November 2020, we executed our fifth annual Mass Deployment in Houston, Texas—a project made possible with the support of our Mass Deployment partners, including the Bob Woodruff Foundation and The Qatar Harvey Fund, The USAA Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., and Lowe's. While it looked different this year, our veterans were resolute in their support of under-resourced areas of Houston, which, three years later, were still recovering from Hurricane Harvey. Local veterans and partners safely met to beautify and revitalize schools, increase growing capacity for a charitable community garden, restore key outdoor community spaces, and re-establish full operational capacity to a local veterans' center. The work accomplished and the connections made in the face of the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the Houston Service Platoon's impact, strengthened its local partnerships, and enhanced its potential for further impact.



Board of Directors

As of December 31, 2020

In December of 2020, we were pleased to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors; Admiral William H. McRaven, U.S. Navy (Ret.), a recognized authority on U.S. foreign policy, and the former Chancellor of the University of Texas System; and Sally Chan, a seasoned Corporate Social Responsibility executive with over 20 years of experience in social impact marketing, multi-stakeholder engagement, supply chain management, sustainability, philanthropy and reporting. McRaven and Chan join a Board of Directors composed of leaders in fields as varied as defense, finance, and education—all of whom are committed to empowering veteran-led impact in communities nationwide.

Nana Adae

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Director | Executive Director, Morgan Stanley
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Our Financials

2020 Total*



Revenues*

\$11,529,509

Expenses

Programs \$8,229,205

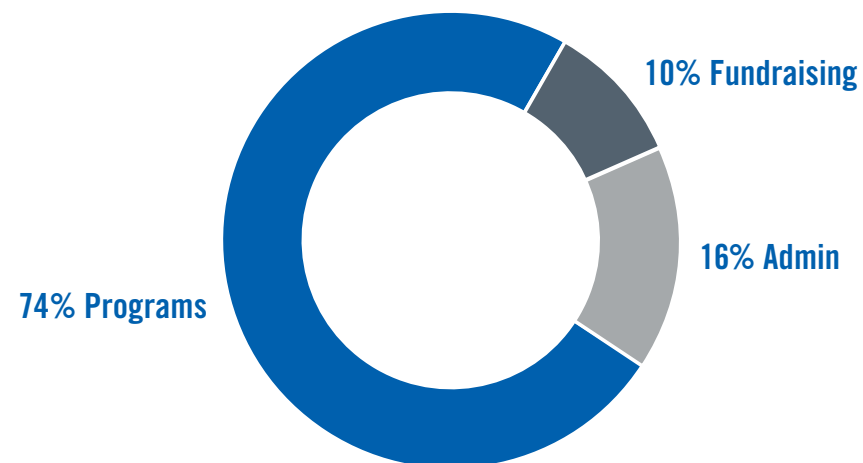
Fundraising \$1,103,087

Admin \$1,739,207

Total \$11,071,499

*2020 revenue includes \$1,446,243 in proceeds from the "Paycheck Protection Program"

Total 2020 Expenditures



Thank You to Our 2020 Donors

\$1,000,000+

A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation
The Boeing Company

\$500,000+

Lowe's Companies, Inc.
The Marcus Foundation
Raytheon Technologies

\$250,000+

Citi Foundation
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Starbucks Corporation
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Apply to be part of our leadership programs • Donate to support our vital work in communities



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