

POINTS OF LIGHT



AMERICA JOINS FORCES WITH MILITARY FAMILIES WHITE OAK II SUMMARY REPORT

White Oak Conference Center
February 24–26, 2012



Compiled by Blue Star Families' Department of Research and Policy

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Background

The White Oak Summit series, “America Joins Forces for Military Families,” was conceived to bring together senior government and non-governmental (NGO) leaders to address concerns about America’s service members and their families. These two-day long summits, held at the White Oak Plantation in Jacksonville, Florida, allow attendees to identify inefficiencies, gaps and redundancies in the military family community and provide the collaborative platform for innovative and constructive recommendations.

The White Oak I Summit was held in January, 2010 where up to 55 participants from key military family and government organizations. Conveners included the Blue Star Families, American Red Cross, United Service Organizations, Service Nation, Veterans Innovation Center, and the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Other key participants were Office of the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council and the Senate Armed Services Committee and others -- convened to build partnerships and discuss innovative public-private strategies to meet the needs of military families. Together these diverse entities discussed opportunities for joint initiatives and a common approach going forward.

The White House was briefed on the results and consequently several initiatives, including the First Lady’s “**Joining Forces**” and the Military Community Blueprint were supported or were developed as a result of the information gathered at the White Oak Summit. “**Joining Forces**” works to inform and inspire the America public to support veterans and military families through employment, education and wellness. Through the **Joining Forces Initiative**, the framework was laid for the President’s directive **PSD-9: Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America’s Commitment**, requiring government agencies to assist military families through a variety of means and approaches.

The second White Oak Summit (White Oak II) was held February 24-26, 2012. Conveners included Blue Star Families, The Chamber of Commerce, Points of Light Institute, Armed Forces Services Corporation, with advisors from the White House and Department of Defense. The objective of this second Summit was to identify strategies and recommendations (long and short term) to address the remaining gaps in support for military families and highlight where the private sector can have the greatest impact. This Summit provided opportunities to review current research, policy initiatives, and responses to the challenges facing military families. Since White

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Oak I, a number of well-coordinated efforts and initiatives have been launched to support military families. Although many of these initiatives provide excellent resources, there are still areas where support needs to be initiated or re-directed.

As Part of White Oak II, participants acknowledged the **unique** role of military service and the joint obligation of both government agency and the larger society's obligation to assist with the many challenges that arise from that service. Cooperation across the public and private sectors, however, has been difficult and, often, services and advocacy for military members, their families, and transitioning veterans lies in disparate places—from various federal and state government agencies to the military services themselves, to an array of hundreds (if not thousands) of non-profit and private sector organizations. Both government and nongovernmental representatives cited miscommunication, confusing messaging, and on-going barriers to accessing military community populations as the main hurdles to collaboration across sectors.

White Oak II aimed to identify concrete actions to address these problems. The overall recommendations and next steps include developing a comprehensive list of services available to military families in education, employment and wellness, and forming an umbrella group or association for NGOs as a vetting body (a key problem inhibiting public-private collaboration) that would track lessons learned and efficient practices, coordinate messaging, and incubate new organizations. Specifically attendees recognized the following as ongoing problems, identified at White Oak I, but yet to be solved:

- More clarity is needed to identify 'who does what' and what services are available to service members and their families.

“The America Joins Forces retreats have been an essential part in America's collective effort to support our troops. Several major national initiatives, and countless tactical collaborations have been borne from these discussions. They have become the most sought after "ticket" in DC and beyond, for government and non-government leaders within the military service community.”

—Geoffrey J. Deutsch, President and CEO
Armed Forces Services Corporation

- Public-private cooperation requires a neutral vetting process or 'Good Housekeeping seal of approval' for private/non-profit organizations operating in this space in order for government agencies to collaborate. This may be accomplished through collecting 'best practices' and self-help among non-profits.
- Most service members, families, and transitioning vets continue to need services at the local community level, facilitated by some sort of guide—a 'community blueprint'—to help localities develop in ways that support

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their military families. Much progress has been made on the Community Blueprint since White Oak I, but the organizations present need to continue to collaborate to ensure its success.

The White Oak Summit series has presented opportunities for participants to build trust with one other, initiate strategic partnership, and look for opportunities to leverage resources. Over the course of the two days, participants engaged in breakout workshops and left the discussions with a renewed sense of commitment, knowledge, awareness, and energy.

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Participants included senior leadership from the below organizations. See the Appendix B for the complete list of attendees.

Participating Non-Profit Organizations Included:

American Red Cross	TAPS
Blue Star Families	Chamber of Commerce
Council on Foundations	National Guard Bureau
Bush Institute	Student Veterans Association
National League of Cities	Outserve
Military Child Education Coalition	Operation Homefront
Purdue Military Family Research Center	Service Nation
Wounded Warrior Project	National Military Family Association
American Legion Auxiliary	Military Officer Association of America
Give an Hour	Points of Light
Armed Forces Services Corporation	

Participating Government Agencies Included:

Senate Armed Services Committee	Department of Veterans Affairs
Military Community and Family Policy,	Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Wounded Warrior Care and	White House Public Affairs
Transition Policy, from	Office of the First Lady
the Office of the Secretary of Defense	Corporation for National and Community Service

Planning Committee

The summit was organized by Blue Star Families, Points of Light, The US Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes Initiative, and The Armed Forces Services Corporation.

Design of Summit Program

The program was designed in such as way to facilitate an open and thoughtful dialogue among the key constituents engaged in supporting the military family – the service member, veteran, and the family members, of all constituencies. The participating organizations were tasked with identifying the most prevalent needs, gaps, opportunities, and challenges to deliver the defined goals.

Participants were brought together initially as a single group to set the stage and

“I found the AJF Summit at White Oak plantation to be a truly worthwhile opportunity for government and non-profits to discover opportunities for synergy and collaboration so that we can work more effectively together on the challenges facing military families.”

– Brad Cooper, Executive Director Joining Forces

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asked to share a primary concern from their perspective. With the stage set, those representing government and those representing the non-governmental community were challenged to think about and discuss, in facilitated break-out sessions, the obstacles inhibiting positive momentum. The purpose of this exercise was to open dialogue between government and non-profit organizations to allow participants to focus discussions around the three pillars of greatest concern: education, employment, and wellness in a small working group setting.

Activities concluded by discussions around next steps and concrete deliverables. The summary that follows is an overview of sessions and discussions with special focus on outcomes and next steps.

“The White Oak meeting and subsequent work are indicative of the strong collaboration we are deliberately undertaking in the non-profit community. We realize how much more impactful we can be when we coordinate our efforts, each bringing the unique contributions of our organizations to bear on the issues faced by military and veteran families today.”
- Sherri Brown, Senior Vice President, Service to the Armed Forces American Red Cross

Opening Plenary Session

The opening session introduced new participants to the ideas behind the White Oak Summits and reviewed the agenda and goals for White Oak II. Doug Wilson, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, set the stage and provided direction for the summit by asking participants to consider the impact of shrinking government budgets on military families and how government and non-governmental organizations can work together to help mitigate these impacts. He also asked what programs and systemic behaviors are helping and what obstacles are limiting collaboration between the public, non-profit, and private sectors.

Morning Working Groups: Session I

The morning sessions consisted of four working groups that discussed the barriers to public-private collaboration. Government participants and NGOs met separately to discuss what challenges prevented them from collaborating effectively with other sectors; then shared insights and brainstormed solutions. Government leads for this session were Deborah Amdur, Department of Veteran Affairs and Jason Dempsey, former Team Lead, Presidential Study Directive - 9. Non-governmental leads were

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Ross Cohen, National Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes and Tricia Thompson, Points of Light Institute.

Barriers to Public-Private Collaboration Identified by the Government Participants Included:

- ❖ Varying messages from NGOs create an information overload for government decision makers.
- ❖ An NGO "clearinghouse" is needed in order to identify effective/ineffective practices, refer the appropriate organization for services, and to serve as a repository for evidence and examples of successes from NGOs. In particular, it is difficult and time consuming for government at all levels to perform some type of "vetting" of NGOs. There needs to be a streamlined, efficient process so government can identify NGOs and determine if they are appropriate for partnership.
- ❖ The government needs better information about non-profits (their mission, services, programs, targeted community), and NGOs need better knowledge of how the government operates (i.e. state versus federal environments, regulations, etc.).

Barriers to Public Private Collaboration Identified by NGO Participants Included:

- ❖ NGOs need better access to both governmental agencies and to military families in order to provide service and support
 - There are often barriers to accessing the military population on a military installation: The lack of an approved "vetting" system at the local level makes many installation commanders reluctant to work with NGOs.
- ❖ There currently is no military family/veteran NGO association/alliance/umbrella group to credential NGOs. the alliance could, among other things:
 - Require member organizations to meet credentialing criteria and serve as an incubator for new NGOs.
 - Compile lessons learned and best practices.
 - Develop a covenant to send to the DoD and work with the DoD to build evaluations.

"The organization that learns about a specific issue may not be the organization that provides the assistance."

-Session Participant

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- Look to larger organizations for funding of the association/alliance/umbrella group.
- DoD and VA have put in place protocols in place for partnerships between NGOs/Government. This could be used as a potential model.

Plenary Session II: Working Group Report– Outs

In both the governmental and non-governmental working groups, discussions centered on building a collaborative, cooperative relationship across sectors. A basic understanding of each organization's objective and mission is fundamental to achieving progress.

Common Themes From Both Groups

- Need to establish an “umbrella” group (confederation) comprised of military family support organizations that can address issues such as organizational vetting, lessons learned, messaging, in a unified and strategic manner.
- Families experience barriers to receiving services, and NGOs experience barriers to accessing military families.
- Improved communication is needed between the public and non-profit sectors, with more consistent messaging to the public and to service members and their families.
- There needs to be a basic understanding of what each sector does and cannot do:
 - Baseline knowledge of legal and ethical considerations, restrictions, and where there is room for partnering.

Afternoon Working Groups Session II

The afternoon sessions consisted of three working groups devoted to the issues of education, employment, and wellness, respectively. The decision to focus on these three areas is reflective of the priorities outlined in the Obama Administration's January 2011 report, “Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment”, the priorities established in the Joining Forces Initiative and the input by the White Oak Planning Committee.

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Education Outcomes

The leads for this session were COL David Lapan, USMC, and Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Dr. Mary Keller, Military Child Education Coalition.

Main Ideas:

- It is important to remember that the needs of military children, military spouses, and veterans vary.
- There is often a lack of communication between stakeholders, resulting in misunderstandings on the mission, intent, and capabilities of each group.
 - Messaging should have continuity and should focus on children, families, and veterans as civic assets.
 - School administrators at all levels need to be educated in military issues as they impact education of military children.
 - There is an incorrect perception that DoD/VA can and will endorse a particular school, specifically in relation to for-profit institutions. Messaging needs to be clear that the DoD/VA do not endorse institutions (i.e. just because it says it is “military friendly.”)
- Government and NGO’s need to explore smarter ways to use the virtual community.
- It is important to educate local communities on the uniqueness of the military family lifestyle (transient nature, deployments, wounded warriors, caregivers).
- Almost no data exists on military children, which makes it difficult to establish standards.
 - Data collection is especially important for special needs/exceptional family member programming (EFMP) families.
- There has been an increase in the number and diversity of organizations in the academic setting, which includes for-profit institutions. As a result, it is important to provide clear information for military families on decisions relative to G.I. Bill and Tuition Assistance (TA) funds.
- There are credit transfer issues within the program Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) that need to be addressed.

“We must require the Department of Education to report on military kids. They currently do not have data or research on military-affiliated students.”

-Session Participant

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Employment Outcomes

The leads for this session were Kevin Schmiegel, LTC USMC (Ret.), National Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes and Norb Ryan, VADM, USN (Ret.), Military Officers Association of America.

Main Ideas:

- It is difficult for the private sector to get on a military installation; this prevents many organizations from accessing and helping the military family population.
- Companies do not know where to go to find veterans to hire.
 - Even with hiring fairs, many veterans (and spouses) are not prepared for interviews.
 - Hiring fairs need more diversity: Human Resource departments/Veterans Service Organizations/Military Family Support Organizations need to work together, and more small businesses should be more involved.
 - Companies need to share data.
- Veterans and military spouses have distinct needs, but both populations need a better licensing/certification system to help them overcome the hurdles of the military lifestyle and the transition to the civilian world.
- The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is lagging in meeting the needs of transitioning service members and their families.
- Due to changes in the culture and economy, spouses need and want to work. Programming and coordination between sectors in this area needs to be a priority.

"It doesn't matter how many hiring fairs there are if we don't prepare veterans for the civilian employment process."

-Session Participant

Wellness Outcomes

The leads for this session were Kathy Roth-Douquet, Blue Star Families and Joyce Raezer, National Military Family Association.

Main Ideas:

- NGOs experience barriers to accessing military members and their families, which limits their ability to effectively offer services.

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- There needs to be a clear list of what the government does and does not provide so service organizations can work to identify those in real need and begin to fill in the gaps appropriately.
- There is an information/education barrier from both the government and NGOs. Both service members and their civilian peers need to be familiar with and appreciate each other's contribution to their communities.
- Federal Public/Private partnership solutions to barriers of access and service can include:
 - Provide Life Cycle Training (must be accredited to work)
 - Internal connectivity to community
 - Provide High risk counseling & support, with specific emphasis on domestic violence
 - There needs to be an expanded facilitation function
 - Not enough national or military mental health specialists
 - Scholarships for those that go into the mental health support field

“There is such a shortage of providers; states need to recognize other states' licensing.”

–*Session Participant*

“We need to educate the local first responders about PTSD.”

– *Session Participant*

Plenary Session III: Workgroup Reports

The Plenary Session II featured oral reports by the co-leaders of each working group. The reports generated questions and elicited discussion among the larger group, taking into account the themes that had evolved throughout the course of the day. Below are a summary of the key concerns and a breakdown of the recommendations, organized by the topical areas of education, employment, and wellness. While each area has recommendations specific to its own particular context, every discussion repeatedly identified the need for a more cohesive system within the military community. It was consistently reinforced by participants that the NGO and government stakeholders need to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate more effectively.

Education

Key Concerns: The needs of military children, military spouses, and veterans vary. Often, there is a lack of clear communication between stakeholders, resulting in misunderstandings of the mission, intent, and capabilities of each group.

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Additionally, there needs to be continuity of messaging so that support organizations and the government are all using consistent language and information in any public communications. Lastly, almost no data on military affiliated students exists, and there is a varying quality of standards between states, populations, and programming that can only be addressed by collecting data from individual states.

“We need to provide toolkits for counselors, schools, and administrators to help them better understand the military lifestyle.” –
Session Participant

Key Recommendations:

- The participants agreed that there needs to be a continuity of messaging: using the same language and information in communication to the public would help convey information and reduce confusion among all stakeholders.
- Military NGO's need to press for more and better data collection on military children within each state.
- The Department of Defense should develop a collaborative plan to “educate the educators” on the unique needs of military children and their families.
 - **Action:** Representatives from OSD agreed to convene a meeting in April to develop plans to provide educators with information and best practices on ways to interact with military students.

Employment

Key Concerns: The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) process needs to be reevaluated as there are many gaps in its services and barriers to access for private/non-profit entities to participate and provide resources. It is also important to remember that military spouse employment challenges are different than veteran employment challenges and both require unique strategies and tactics.

Key Recommendations:

- The TAP program needs to be considered as a continuing process rather than engaging a service member at only one point in time. The Program needs to address and include more innovative ways to integrate NGOs and private sector entities into the process, as well as considering small businesses as a resource.
- There needs to be increased coordination between sectors to support the transition into employment:

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- Create/continue to develop pipelines with community colleges and synergies with higher education institutions for transitioning service members
- Government/NGOs/For-profit sectors should share data in order to utilize resources more strategically and effectively. Coordination will help find employment solutions for veterans and military spouses.
- For veterans, the emphasis should be on translating military experience into civilian language and certification/licensing for military job-related experience.
 - There are efforts underway (which should continue) to confer licensing/certification for service members within their fields, based on military experience.
- Spouse employment strategies should start when the service member joins the Armed Forces rather than waiting until they move duty stations or when the service member transitions out of the military. Emphasis should be on spouse licensing/certification transferability between states.
- There is a pilot program at the National Chamber of Commerce to “push” available job opportunities throughout the entire TAP process. Currently, Chamber of Commerce involvement relies on local Chamber of Commerce and installation connectivity. There needs to be government “buy-in” to institutionalize this approach.

Wellness

Key Concerns: Families need more knowledge about the resources available to them throughout the various points of military life. Civilians who interact with and serve military families need more education about the military lifestyle. As stated in earlier sessions, there are access issues for NGOs attempting to get on military installations in order to offer programs not provided by the military but provide a benefit and service to military families.

Key Recommendations:

- Institute peer-to-peer mentoring programs for military spouses and programs that focus on prevention rather than intervention.
- Ensure that civilians who interact with military families receive “Military 101 Awareness” training to help them understand the military lifestyle.
 - Community Blueprint teams can make resources available at a local level to help address these issues. The Community Blueprint’s mission is to promote and improve services for military personnel, veterans, and their families through community collaboration. It aims to provide a forum for enabling local military-focused organizations to communicate and

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- collaborate to address needs and provide a ‘best practices’ for meeting needs by cataloging them and making available a web-based toolbox.
- Transitioning from active duty should not be just a DoD function. The existing process needs a mechanism to allow for local communities, other federal agencies, non-profits, and the private sector to be involved in the transition process.
 - Create a system or forum where discussions and sessions can be held on wellness issues. This system will allow military families to identify and help those in higher risk groups, like families/children of those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
 - Continue to develop messaging and communication that de-stigmatizes those who seek help.

Final Plenary

The final Plenary “*Connecting America with Its Military*” offered the opportunity for a strategic re-cap of the Summit’s discussion and sessions. Whereas many of the recommendations, approaches and ideas offered during the varying sessions focused on the tactical, most the actions below highlight the need for a solid, strategic approach to supporting the military family. This last session allowed for the participants to also identify areas where leveraging and synergies already existed in order to maximize the benefits and resources for military families.

Recommended Actions

- Recommendation: Explore the formation of an alliance or coalition of NGOs serving military, family, and transitioning vets. This alliance may include the following:
 - Development of criteria for vetting purposes and serving as an incubator for new support organizations.
 - Acting as a repository for best practices and asking each participant organization/agency to make a specific commitment that is collaborative in nature.

“I think it was an excellent conference and I was honored to meet and interact with all of the truly wonderful and dedicated people involved in supporting our military and I look forward to working with them in the future.”

–Michael T. Endres, COL, US Army, Retired,
Director of Military Service Initiative, George W.
Bush Presidential Center

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- Creating working groups within the consortium around the key areas to continue moving forward with some of the recommendations discussed at White Oak II. The working groups should include a representative from non-profit, private sector and government groups as appropriate.
- Continuing to address the access issue across public, private and non-profit sectors and substance areas.
- Developing and promoting unified messaging for interactions with different stakeholders.
- Continuing to leverage the strength of each participating entity to best diffuse the Community Blueprint Network to the grassroots level.
 - Action: Planning meeting for alliance formation to be held in summer 2012
- Recommendation: Increased collaboration between government and NGOs.
 - Action: A number of collaborations began at the Summit, these relationships should continue to be developed.
- Recommendation: Detailed information on the services/programs and efforts undertaken by the DoD needs to be made available.
 - Action: The DoD office of Military Community and Family Policy will create a brief overview of what services they provide and disseminate it to the participants of White Oak II.
- Recommendation: Analyze and prioritize the rules that both hinder and promote collaboration between sectors.
 - Action: Develop strategies to change those rules that are able to be changed and clarify those that cannot be changed.
- Recommendation: Find ways to engage more foundation and corporate partners and additional creative thinkers to help initiate and fund solutions.
 - Action: Schedule roundtables with the private sector to discuss the outcomes from White II and determine best approaches for private sector engagement.

Next Steps:

In accordance with the above recommendations and action items, the following next steps are currently underway:

- Corporate Roundtables to be held over the summer 2012

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- In order for this agenda to be set in motion, the community is in many ways, reliant upon the private sector to join the discussion and work collaboratively towards the defined goals. In an effort to build a consortium, Blue Star Families will bring together a select set of for-profit companies whose insight and engagement in the military community can energize this critical agenda.
- Continue planning and discussions for alliance formation to be held over the summer 2012. Blue Star Families has taken the lead for facilitating these discussions and meetings.

Conclusion

Collaboration across the public, private, and non-profit sectors was mentioned in almost every discussion. The hurdles facing the military support community—too many disparate activities, confusing and even contradicting messaging, and barriers to access—all point to a need for clearer communication and greater collaboration and coordination among government and non-government entities. A consortium or confederation of NGOs will not only help tackle these concerns, but it will also help organizations use resources more effectively—a crucially important asset given the pending budgetary cuts. A consortium will help attract more foundation, corporate, and community partners as the current array of organizations and solutions can be overwhelming and off-putting to those “outside” the military community. As military families face the broader challenges of building resiliency, healing, and transitioning into civilian employment or remaining on active duty, service providers must emphasize sustainability and scalability of programming and must be able to effectively leverage all available resources. These goals can only be accomplished by building relationships and trust among the military family community, the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

“White Oak provided really unprecedented opportunity for open dialogue between government and non-governmental organizations. It served to better focus our efforts and foster increased collaboration.”

– Deborah Amdur, Chief Consultant, Care Management and Social Work Service, Office of Patient Care Services, Department of Veterans Affairs

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Appendix A

AGENDA

Friday, Feb. 24th

5:30–6:15 **Welcome Reception**

6:15–7:00 **Dinner**

7:20–9:00 **Opening Session: Since White Oak I:**

What have we accomplished since we last met? What tasks and vacuums remain? How are shrinking government budgets going to impact military families? How can government and non-governmental organizations work together help address these impacts? What's helping and what's limiting the collaboration across sectors?

Saturday, Feb 25th

8:00–9:00 **Breakfast**

9:00–10:00 **Voluntary Nature Walk**

10:00–11:00 **Morning Working Groups 1: “I wish THEY would do _____”**

Government Group A
Government Group B
Non-profit Group A
Non-profit Group B

11:15–12:15 **Plenary Session II: Working Group reports**

12:30–1:30 **Lunch**

1:45–4:00 **Afternoon Working Groups 2: “Given the feedback, we should _____”**

Education:
Employment:
Wellness:

4:00–6:00 **Optional White Oak Activities & Tours**

6:00–7:00 **Dinner**

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7:00–9:30

Plenary Session III: Working Group Reports

7:00 pm – 7:40 p.m.

Education (military kids, spouses)

7:50 pm – 8:20 p.m.

Employment (spouse, vet, NG/R)

8:30 pm – 9:10 p.m.

Wellness (empowerment, mental health...)

Sunday, Feb 26th

8:00–9:00

Breakfast

9:00–10:30

Connecting America With Its Military

national How do we maximize the impact and synergies amongst the large efforts underway (e.g. Joining Forces, Community Blueprint)

11:00

Depart

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Appendix B

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Deborah Amdur: Chief Consultant, Care Management and Social Work Service, Department of Veterans Affairs

René Bardorf: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs for Community and Public Outreach

Lynly Boor: Director, External Relations, United Service Organization (USO)

Sherri Brown: Senior Vice President, Service to the Armed Forces, American Red Cross

John Campbell: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Wounded Warrior Care & Transition Policy

Bonnie Carroll: President and Founder, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

Jeff Clarke: President and CEO, Council on Foundations (former)

Rosye Cloud: White House Director of Policy, Wounded Warriors, Veterans and Military Families

Ross Cohen: Senior Director, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

COL Quentin Collins: Joining Community Forces – Coordinator, National Guard Bureau

CAPT Brad Cooper, USN: Executive Director of Joining Forces

Curtis Coy: Deputy Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Economic Opportunity

Michael Dakduk: Executive Director, Student Veterans of America

LTC Jason Dempsey, USA, Ph.D.: Team Lead, Presidential Study Directive – 9 (former)

Laura Dempsey: Director of Spouse Employment Programs, Hiring our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Geoffrey Deutsch: President and CEO, Armed Forces Services Corporation

Amy Elsbree: Director, Public Affairs and Member Relations, National League of Cities

COL Michael Endres (ret.): Director, Military Service Initiative, George W. Bush Institute

Mary C. Farrell: President, Howard Gilman Foundation

B. Sue Fulton: Communications Director, Outserve

Robert L. Gordon, III: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy

Vivian Greentree, Ph.D.: Director of Research and Policy, Blue Star Families

Daisey Holmes: President, BNY Mellon Foundation

Mary Keller, Ph.D.: President and Chief Executive Officer, Military Child Education Coalition

Jim Knotts: President and CEO, Operation Homefront

Koby Langley: Senior Advisor to the CEO for Wounded Warrior, Veterans and Military Families Initiatives, Corporation for National and Community Service

COL David Lapan, USMC: Special Assistant for Public Affairs, Office of the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff

Sheri Robey-Lapan: Senior Director of Programs, Blue Star Families

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Gary Leeling: Counsel, Senate Armed Services Committee

Peter Long, Ph.D.: President and CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth: Director, Center for Families and Military Family Research Institute, Purdue University

Chris Marvin: Director of Civil Military Partnerships, ServiceNation

David McGinnis: Former Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs

LCDR Kimberly Mitchell, USN (ret.): Former Deputy Director, Office of Warrior and Family Support

John Molino: Chief of Staff, Programs, Wounded Warrior Project

Paige Moody: Senior Vice President, Points of Light

Delores Morton: President of Programs, Points of Light

LTC Dennis O'Neil, USA, Ph.D.: Acting Director of the Performance Improvement Council

Joyce Raezer: Executive Director, National Military Family Association

Bob Reeg: Director of Government Relations, American Legion Auxiliary

Kathy Roth-Douquet: CEO, Blue Star Families

VADM Norbert Ryan, USN (Ret.): President and CEO, Military Officers Association of America

Joseph M. Samulski: Managing Director, Bank of New York Trust & Estate Services Member, Board of Directors, The Howard Gilman Foundation

LTC Kevin Schmiegel, USMC (Ret.): Executive Director, Hiring Our Heroes and Vice President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Patty Shinseki: Board Member, Military Child Education Coalition

COL David Sutherland, USA (Ret.): Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Office of Wounded Warrior and Family Programs

Diana Tabler: Professional Staff Member, Senate Armed Services Committee

Barbara Thompson: Director, Office of Family Policy/Children and Youth, Office of the Secretary of Defense

Tricia Thompson: Military Liaison, Points of Light

Tracey Thornton: Chief of Staff, Congressman Sanford Bishop Jr. (GA)

Noeleen Tillman: Managing Director Blue Star Families

Barbara Van Dahlen, Ph.D.: Founder and President, Give an Hour

Marianne Watson: J-1 Manpower and Personnel for NGB

Hon. Douglas Wilson: Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs