



COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Hope Boxes Deliver Motivational Messages, Resources

By NAS Pensacola Fleet and Family Support Center

“You’re a Lifesaver,” “Reasons to Live,” and “Relax, Refresh, and Renew,” are just a few messages contained in the blue plastic pencil boxes that can be found around Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida.

The pencil boxes, called “Hope Boxes,” are a prevention strategy being deployed by the air station’s Suicide Prevention Program and the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC). They promote resiliency and self-care, and improve access to help as part of Suicide Prevention Month and throughout the year.

“When placed in heavy traffic areas such as locker rooms and waiting rooms, Hope Boxes provide an inconspicuous means of reaching a person who might otherwise miss the lifesaving message of hope and help available,” said Lauren Anzaldo, NAS Pensacola FFSC Counseling Program supervisor. “The boxes contain a cache of inspiring and informative materials, from a small bottle of bubbles, to resource cards with phone numbers and tips.”

Individuals who experience suicide-related behaviors often struggle with multiple stressors, including relationship issues, financial problems and career setbacks. Sailors going through such stressors can benefit from the care and support of peers.

In a recent Lifelink newsletter article written by Rear Adm. Philip E. Sobeck, director, 21st Century Sailor Office, he said, “Annual case reviews [of suicide deaths] consistently reveal missed opportunities after the fact.”

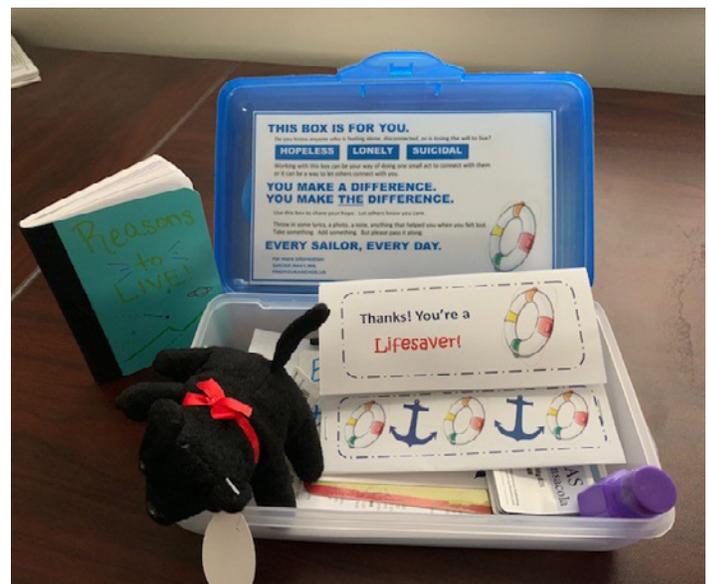
The Hope Boxes offer ways for caring and supportive people to pass on hope and encouragement to someone feeling hopeless, lonely or suicidal – even if the caring people never meet or interact directly with the person they reach. The boxes make use of the “pay it forward” concept.

“A note inside the box suggests throwing in some lyrics, a photo, a note, anything that helped you when you felt lost,” said Anzaldo. “It’s written in the box to take something, add something, but please pass it along.”

The boxes were developed at NAS Pensacola’s FFSC in partnership with the base Suicide Prevention Program coordinator and the chapel. The idea came from a similar initiative in the civilian community.

Hope Boxes do not replace the importance of in-person, one-on-one interaction. Instead, they supplement existing strategies by providing another outlet for delivering hope to a person when he or she needs it most.

For more information on suicide prevention resources and ideas, visit www.suicide.navy.mil.





Making it Through the Upcoming Holiday Season

By Susanna Del Llano, NAS Corpus Christi Gold Star Coordinator

Aside from losing your loved one, grieving through the holidays can quite possibly be the most difficult time in your life. Whatever your age, whatever the cause of death, loss can drastically change how the holidays are celebrated with you and your family. Losing a loved one – whether through unexpected or anticipated circumstances – is always traumatic.

Now, wouldn't things be easier if we could buy a book that told us exactly how to grieve, what we would experience, and what to expect? Please remember that grieving is not done in a cookie-cutter fashion. There is no right or wrong way to grieve; everyone grieves in different ways. It is important to be gentle and kind to yourself. Have patience with your grief. With time, the intensity and frequency of your emotions will lessen.

It is very easy to picture in our heads how the events of the holidays are going to unfold. Sometimes the anticipation of what is going to happen is much different than the reality. You can manage the holidays better by taking charge of the season instead of letting it take charge of you. You can do this by sharing your fears and concerns about the approaching holiday season with close family members and friends. Tell them what they can do to help you. Take inventory of how you are feeling and what you truly want this holiday season, and skip on doing anything that does not serve your soul and your loss. You may feel bad for not feeling good around the holidays, or feel guilty if you manage to enjoy yourself because you think you should still be in mourning. Allow yourself to feel those emotions, whatever they are, without judgement. Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays while grieving the loss of a loved one. You and you alone decide what is right for you.

Here are a few key tips to help get you through the holidays:

1. *Don't expect much from the holidays for at least a year – if you want to feel numb, allow yourself to feel numb.*
2. *Let yourself cry – don't dwell on the fact that you are crying. It's okay to be sad sometimes.*
3. *Acknowledge the holidays may be different and/or may be difficult.*
4. *Communicate what you need – don't expect people to read your mind.*
5. *Keep old traditions, start new ones, or make a combination of both.*
6. *Do not feel guilty if you feel happy.*

*“Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift. That's why it is called the present.”*

– Alice Morse Earle



Remembering Kevin

By Karen Bushell, Mother of ET1 Kevin Bushell, and President of Kevin Bushell Foundation Inc.

The Kevin Bushell Foundation Inc. was created after we lost our beloved Kevin Sayer Bushell while he was serving in the United States Navy. Kevin was 26 years old and one of 10 Sailors killed when an oil tanker collided with USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) in the Singapore Strait on Aug. 21, 2017. Let me take a moment to tell you about Kevin. He was one of a kind! He had a razor-sharp wit, he was so smart and handsome, he had a thirst for new adventures, and was just about the kindest person you could ever meet. He loved all animals and they were drawn to him too. Kevin loved being in the Navy; he enjoyed the travel and the good friends he met along the way. Kevin loved life, and it showed in everything that he did!

When the accident first happened, five of Kevin's fellow Sailors who he met while stationed in Rota, Spain, created a GoFundMe account. Their goal was to create a scholarship in Kevin's name for a student who attended the high school that Kevin attended, Gaithersburg High School, in Gaithersburg, Maryland. It was so successful that we as a family decided that we wanted to keep this idea going. Our family brainstormed and came up with the idea of forming a nonprofit that would help to bring back some sunshine and goodness into this world -

just like Kevin did! The Kevin Bushell Foundation provides scholarships to Gaithersburg High School (GHS) students. We are hoping to help ease the financial burden of attending college. We encourage GHS students to apply who have a financial need, good grades, and embody the Navy's core values of honor, courage and commitment. On May 20, 2019, we awarded scholarships to three awesome GHS seniors. Their commitment to furthering their education is so inspiring. They certainly embodied the Navy's core values.

Another way the Kevin Bushell Foundation Inc. is helping to do good things is by assisting students who attend Goshen Elementary School, also where Kevin attended. This objective is a little less defined. It could come in the form of paying for field trips or lunches, helping a student with school supplies, or helping teachers with the "extras" they need to teach our young. This year we are providing soccer goal nets for the playground and providing supplies for the teachers. We just want to bring a little sunshine and happiness in Kevin's name.

Creating this foundation has helped me to channel my grief into something positive. I feel that I have a responsibility to live my life fully even in the face of this tragic and unexplainable loss. If you would like to learn more about The Kevin Bushell Foundation Inc., visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TheKevinBushellFoundation. On behalf of our family, I would like to say thank you and let's all "live the Kev life."





My Personal Journey of Remembrance

By Ray Cunnikin, CNRMA Gold Star Coordinator

I still remember it as if it was yesterday. The date was May 17, 1987, and I was a seaman recruit stationed aboard the flagship USS LaSalle (AGF 3), forward deployed to Manamah, Bahrain. That day seemed liked any other normal day while we were in port for a brief liberty call, but, unfortunately, it was far from normal. Something felt tremendously strange when the entire crew was ordered to expedite returning to the ship for an immediate underway. We soon found out that the unthinkable had happened - while deployed in the Persian Gulf, the USS Stark (FFG 31) was attacked by two Iraqi missiles, killing 37 Sailors aboard the ship. As we arrived on station to provide support to my fellow shipmates, I recalled how intensely focused and extremely exhausted the crew was from long night of tireless efforts to save the ship. In the midst of extreme chaos and adversity, the crew was phenomenal, to say the least. Their pride in our country coupled with their resolve was on display at the highest level that day. Although it has been 32 years, I will always remember with great compassion and respect those 37 Sailors aboard USS Stark who stood the watch and paid the ultimate price to serve and protect this great nation. Let us never forget our fallen Navy heroes who served aboard USS Stark. They will always be intertwined in the fabric of my naval career and will never be forgotten.



Understanding Unresolved Emotions

By Christy Forsling, CNRNW Gold Star Coordinator

Stress, anxiety, anger - these are some of life's unpleasant realities that everyone faces. For some, these emotions present moments of difficulty that they need to pass through. For others, they are a constant daily struggle that make the idea of peace seem an impossibility. Experiencing these feelings as a constant state is often rooted in unresolved emotions from a situation in our past. A retired chaplain from the Navy shared the following story as a way to understand how our past-unresolved emotions can influence our present:

Try to picture your unresolved emotions as a dinner that didn't taste very good. You put the leftovers into a Tupperware container and shove it in the refrigerator just the same. Over the next few days, as you scrounge through the fridge looking for something to munch on, the Tupperware is pushed farther and farther back until it finds its home in the darkest recesses of the fridge. As time passes, what do you think happens to that Tupperware? As you have probably guessed, it grows moldy and starts to develop a life of its own. Soon enough, everything in that fridge starts to smell a little bit like what's in that Tupperware, and then everything starts to taste a little bit like what's in that Tupperware. The only way to resolve this phenomenon is to pull it out, open up the disgusting mess that those leftovers have become, and clean it out. It will absolutely be an unpleasant process, but it will also be the only way to move forward to a cleaner fridge.

Our unresolved emotions are a lot like that. The longer we bury and avoid them, the more they tend to infiltrate the rest of our lives. If you have a situation from your past that keeps showing up in moments of anger or stress, I highly encourage you to reach out to those around you and connect to professional help. Meeting with a therapist is often the way we are able to pull the Tupperware out and start to deal with what is inside. If you would like to seek professional assistance, please reach out to your local Navy Gold Star coordinator. We would love to connect you to support.

Chaplain's Corner: Reach Out and Touch

By CNIC Force Chaplain's Office

“Reach out and touch somebody’s hand, make this world a better place, if you can. Reach out and touch somebody’s hand, make this world a better place, if you can.” (Refrain)

Many artists, including Aretha Franklin, performed this 1970s popular song. Actually, “Reach Out and Touch” was the “theme” song for Diana Ross and the Supremes! The refrain is a call for action, and not just words, sentiments or condolences. It is a call to do something. It is a call to change conditions we see surrounding us. It is a call to claim a proactive concern. It is a call to cease with the discussion points about current events or local gossip. You are familiar with the kind of gossip that begins with, “Hey, did you hear about,” and the rest of the story makes you want to return home and take another shower.

The first stanza of the song confirms that this song is about action: “(Just try) Take a little time out of your busy day to give encouragement to someone who’s lost the way. (Just try) or would I be talking to a stone if I asked you to share a problem that’s not your own. We can change things if we start giving. Why don’t you?”

This iconic song comes to mind when reading a popular novel available today. Published in 2018, “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens provides a captivating story of a literal and figurative lonely place for a little girl in the backwoods of a small North Carolina town. This novel captures what it means to live in alienation, abandonment, isolation, disrespect, and total disregard by an entire community. The central figure in this novel not only survives, but also thrives. Moreover, the key to her success is responsive hands that reached out to her. Hands of the most unlikely persons who reached out and touched her at critical times when her need was greatest and vulnerability was highest.

(Disclaimer: There is no intent to promote the song nor the book. There is an intent to promote elements of community building.)

The message of the book and the song is pertinent today for each of us. Each of us can change the world. All it takes is a choice to reach out and touch somebody’s hand.

Bells Across America For Fallen Service Members

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

In association with Gold Star Mother’s and Family Day, which is celebrated the last Sunday in September, the Navy Gold Star Program, in coordination with Navy installations across the country, will host the 4th Annual Bells Across America For Fallen Service Members ceremony on Sept. 26.

Bells have been used for centuries by the Navy for timekeeping, safety and communication, to sound alarms, in ceremonies and events, and to signal the presence of important persons. During these ceremonies, the bells rung will not signal anyone’s presence; instead, they will toll in their absence.

Bells Across America provides service members, Survivors and members of the community an opportunity to commemorate the life and service of those who died while on active duty. The primary focus and mission of the Navy Gold Star Program is to provide an unprecedented level of service and commitment to our Navy Gold Star families. Bells Across America is one way the Navy would like to recognize the sacrifices of our fallen heroes and their Gold Star families left behind.

If you are a Gold Star family and would like to ensure your loved one is honored at a ceremony, or for more information about a ceremony near you, please call your local Navy Gold Star coordinator or send a message to www.facebook.com/navygoldstar or www.navygoldstar.com.



Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Since 1936, the last Sunday in September has been designated as Gold Star Mother's Day to recognize and honor those who have lost a child while serving our country in the United States Armed Forces. In 2009, fallen service members' families were officially recognized and added by presidential proclamation, renaming the observance to Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day.

Members of our armed forces do not serve alone. Standing with each service member are parents, spouses, children and siblings providing support and love. This year, when the president signs the proclamation observing Sept. 29, 2019, as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day - we, as a nation, have the opportunity to let the families who have suffered the unimaginable pain of losing a loved one while in active service to our nation know that we will not forget them or their hero.

The Navy is committed to helping foster resiliency for the families of our fallen service members, regardless of how they died. The Navy Gold Star Program honors our Gold Star families throughout the year by hosting events that pay tribute to their lost loved ones, and by providing resources and opportunities to connect with one another.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program in your area, please call 1-888-509-8759, or visit www.facebook.com/navygoldstar or www.navygoldstar.com.



Recognizing the Warning Signs of Suicide Risk

By Military OneSource

You can help reduce the risk of suicide by offering support to those around you, and seeking help if you need it yourself. Keep an eye out for friends, family or coworkers distancing themselves from their community, unit or loved ones. Seek help if a person:

- Talks or writes about suicide, death or ways to die
- Threatens to hurt or kill themselves
- Tries to obtain pills, guns or other means of self-harm
- Suffers a sudden or dramatic change in mood or behavior
- Expresses feeling hopeless or trapped
- Begins preparing a will, giving away possessions or making arrangements for pets
- Suffers from intense rage or desire for revenge
- Increases alcohol or drug use
- Acting on warning signs

Suicidal people sometimes have mixed feelings about ending their lives and either intentionally or unintentionally signal their intentions. Contact a mental health professional or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 if you see one of these warning signs:

- Feeling hopeless or trapped
- Dramatic mood changes
- Threatens to hurt or kill himself or herself
- Unusual spending
- Withdrawn from society
- Intense rage or desire for revenge
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Tries to get pills or guns
- Preparing a will
- Talks or writes about ways to die



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Recognizing the Warning Signs of Suicide Risk

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If you believe a person is in immediate danger of suicide:

- *Stay until help arrives. Never leave a person experiencing suicidal thoughts alone.*
- *Remove any weapons, drugs or other means of self-injury from the area.*
- *If you're on the phone, try to keep him or her on the line while you or someone else calls 911, the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Keep talking until help arrives.*

If the person is unwilling to accept help, contact command or law enforcement. If you or someone you know is suicidal or in a state of crisis, you can contact the Military Crisis Line 24 hours a day (1-800-273-8255 and press 1). You can also start a conversation via online chatter text (838255).

Note: v does not provide medical counseling services for issues such as depression, substance abuse, suicide prevention or post-traumatic stress disorder. This article is intended for informational purposes only. Military OneSource can provide referrals to your local military treatment facility, TRICARE or another appropriate resource.



Suicide Awareness

Suicide is a serious concern in military communities; service members and their families deal with a great number of stressors. You can help reduce the risk of suicide. Pay attention to those around you – or reach out to talk to someone if you feel you can't cope.

Survivor's Link is published quarterly by Navy Gold Star Program.

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Disclaimer: It is the mission of the Navy Gold Star Program to provide Survivors with information on resources available to them. Survivor's Link is one of several tools used to accomplish that mission and from time to time will include information (including phone numbers and websites) for various non-governmental resources. The Department of the Navy does not warrant or endorse these entities, products or services.

Navy Gold Star Program Directory

Name	Phone	Address*
NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	619-532-2886	FFSP / 937 N HARBOR DR BOX 53 SAN DIEGO CA 92132-0058
NB VENTURA COUNTY INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	805-982-6018	FFSC / 1000 23RD AVE BLDG 1169 CODE N91 PORT HUENEME CA 93041
NAVBASE CORONADO INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	619-767-7225	FFSC / BUILDING G SAUFLEY RD SAN DIEGO CA 92135-7138
NB SAN DIEGO INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	619-556-2190	NB SAN DIEGO FFSC 3005 CORBINA ALLEY STE 1 BLDG 259 SAN DIEGO CA 92136-5190
NAVY REGION NORTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	360-396-2708	FFSC / 610 DOWELL ST BLDG 35 KEYPORT WA 98345
SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	425-304-3721	SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX 13910 45TH AVE NE SUITE 857 MARYSVILLE WA 98271
NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	904-542-5712	FFSC / BLDG 919 LANGLEY ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212-0102
NAS JACKSONVILLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	904-542-5706	FFSC / 554 CHILD ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212
NSA MID-SOUTH INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	901-874-5017	FFSC / 5722 INTEGRITY DR BLDG 456 MILLINGTON TN 38054-5045
NCBC GULFPORT INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	228-871-4569	FFSC / 5301 SNEAD ST GULFPORT MS 39501-5001
NAS CORPUS CHRISTI INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	361-961-1675	FFSC / 11001 D ST CORPUS CHRISTI TX 78419-5021
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON REGIONAL COORDINATOR	202-433-3059	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	202-433-3171	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COORDINATOR	757-445-3073	FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 209 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219
NWS EARLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	732-866-2110	FFSC / 201 RT 34 BLDG C59 COLTS NECK NJ 07722
NAVSTA GREAT LAKES INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	847-688-3603 ext 127	FFSC / 525 FARRAGUT AVE STE 300 BLDG 26 GREAT LAKES IL 60088
NB NORFOLK INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	757-322-9182	FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 102 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219
SUBASE NEW LONDON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	860-694-1257	FFSC / BLDG 83 BOX 93 GROTON CT 06349-5093
NAS OCEANA INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	757-492-8282	2073 TARTAR AVENUE, BUILDING 585, FFSC AT DAM NECK ANNEX, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23461-1917

*When communicating with your coordinator via mail, please add NAVY GOLD STAR PROGRAM and contact column info to all mailing addresses to ensure delivery.