



THE  
**FOLDED FLAG**  
FOUNDATION

# 2016

## ANNUAL REPORT



## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

**03** A Message From the Executive Director

**05** The Mission

**07** What We Do

**09** The Need

**11** The Results



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our freedom as Americans is unique in this world, and there is no greater act of patriotism than that of an American soldier, sailor, airman or marine laying down his or her life to protect that freedom. That is why I am honored to lead **The Folded Flag Foundation** in its mission to help secure the future of these patriots' family members through education.

As a West Point graduate and former Army Field Artillery Officer, I have an unmatched respect for the sacrifices our military and their families make every day. As Executive Director of The Folded Flag Foundation, I have the indescribable privilege of helping Gold Star Families prosper as they set out to carry on the legacy of their fallen heroes.

The mission of The Folded Flag Foundation is to provide educational scholarships and support grants to the spouses and children of the U.S. military and government personnel who died as a result of hostile action or in an accident related to U.S. combat operations.

More than just funding, The Folded Flag Foundation is also about embracing families after loss, using education as the cornerstone. For us, this means not only helping spouses secure a college degree so they can effectively provide for their children, but also helping to ensure their children are on a successful educational path.

After only our second year in operation, The Folded Flag Foundation has granted over \$500,000 to more than 60 spouses and children. But, we have a long way to go. Since 2001, more than 7,000 men and women have died while serving in the Global War on Terror, leaving behind thousands of spouses and children. Our goal is to connect with each of these individuals and help secure their future by providing scholarship support at all levels of education.

Thanks to the generosity of our underwriting sponsors, Black Knight and ServiceLink, 100 percent of all donations we receive goes directly to our Gold Star Families through educational scholarships and support grants. With a projected need of \$100 million over the next 17 years for these families, being able to dedicate the money we raise towards our grants and scholarships is so important.

It is with the highest honor that I serve as Executive Director of The Folded Flag Foundation and help give back to the families of those who have given so much for this great nation.

John Coogan





## THE MISSION

The Folded Flag Foundation's mission is to provide educational scholarships and support grants to the spouses and children of the U.S. military and government personnel who died as a result of hostile action or in an accident related to U.S. combat operations.

“

*There will be some tough and scary times ahead in the near future. When they happen, be tough, be brave and remember you are an American and ready to fight for your freedom as veterans have before you. If you are afraid or you run and stick your head in the sand, the bad guys win. And that is unacceptable.* ”

Lieutenant Commander Scott Allen Zellum

Killed in Combat Accident  
Aug. 10, 2004

“

*The Folded Flag Foundation made it possible for me to go back to school and continue my education ... not only for myself, but for my kids. I could not be more blessed than to have been given this opportunity and help increase awareness that The Folded Flag is there to help you fulfill your dreams.*

”

Crystal Blasjo

Wife of Sergeant Aaron Blasjo, who served in the Special Forces and was killed in action on May 29, 2011.

**2016 Scholarship Recipient**







## WHAT WE DO

In recognition of our fallen heroes, The Folded Flag Foundation awards educational grants and scholarships to families of the U.S. military and employees of the U.S. government who have lost their lives while deployed in combat. Scholarships and grants are available to qualifying spouses and their children under the age of 26 to assist with a wide range of educational needs, including K-12 tuition and tuition for college/trade school.

“

*Because of The Folded Flag Foundation, I'm able to fulfill my educational dream of becoming a pediatric cardiac nurse and help children struggling with heart trauma.*

”

**Madison Marcum**

Daughter of Navy SEAL John Marcum who was killed in action on Sept. 11, 2008, when Madison was only 8 years old.

**2016 Scholarship Recipient**

## OUR COMMITMENT

- **PROTECT THE LEGACY** of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.
- **SUPPORT THE FUTURE** of the families that have been left behind.
- **SHOW APPRECIATION** to military and governmental personnel, and their families.
- **MAINTAIN A STAFF AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES** dedicated to supporting our Gold Star Families.





## THE NEED

We have identified 5,800 students who will need additional educational funding over the next 17 years. The Folded Flag Foundation's goal is to raise \$100 million to fill the gap.

In 2016, The Folded Flag Foundation awarded \$387,171 in scholarships to 50 students.



“

*The Folded Flag Foundation believes in the people they are serving. They go above and beyond to serve the families of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.*

”

**Haley Hartwick**

Daughter of CW3 Michael Hartwick who was killed in action serving in Iraq in 2006, when Haley was 11 years old.

**2016 Scholarship Recipient**

**5,800**

**Number of students who need additional funding over the next 17 years**

**\$100,000,000**

**The Folded Flag Foundation's fundraising goal**



## 2016 SCHOLARSHIP TOTALS



50 STUDENTS



\$387,171



\$7,743

AVERAGE  
PER STUDENT

## RECIPIENTS



5 SPOUSES



45 CHILDREN

## AWARDS BY SCHOOL LEVEL



25 GRADE SCHOOL



25 COLLEGE

## AWARDS BY BRANCH



ARMY

26



NAVY

4



AIR FORCE

2



MARINES

6

# THE RESULTS

All administrative expenses are underwritten by Black Knight and ServiceLink, so **100 percent** of all public donations goes directly to the qualifying families.

The Folded Flag Foundation raises money through various means, including corporate partners, individual donations and special events.

Additionally, several individuals throughout the nation volunteer as ambassadors and host events in their communities to benefit The Folded Flag. These special and valued individuals are creating a grassroots movement to create awareness and raise funds for The Folded Flag.

“

*I couldn't go to [Southwest] College if it weren't for The Folded Flag Foundation. They've helped me every year, and it means so much to me to know they're helping me get my education and honor my dad's legacy.*

”

Craig Thurber

Son of Master Sergeant Bernard Deghand who died on Sept. 15, 2006, in Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

2016 Scholarship Recipient

## THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR 2016\* IS AS FOLLOWS:

**\$1,816,526**

Total contributions

**\$558,976**

Total program expenses

**\$387,171**

Total grants/scholarships paid

**\$529,921**

Total reimbursed by  
Black Knight and ServiceLink

\*The information provided above is filed in [The Folded Flag Foundation's 990 tax return](#).





THE  
**FOLDED FLAG**  
FOUNDATION

The Folded Flag Foundation

601 Riverside Avenue,  
Jacksonville, FL 32204

Phone: 844.204.2856  
[info@FoldedFlagFoundation.org](mailto:info@FoldedFlagFoundation.org)

**[www.FoldedFlagFoundation.org](http://www.FoldedFlagFoundation.org)**