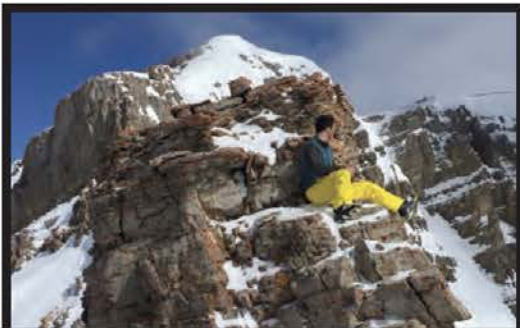




CARRY YOUR OWN WEIGHT *Milestone*

Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Operators are known for their mental toughness, ability to think on their feet and quick adaptability to their surroundings. On this trip, Noah, along with his Mentor Justin, put his skills to the test – skills passed down from his father. Armed with only what they packed, the two spent seven days in the wilderness navigating arduous terrain and technical situations requiring sound teamwork. A special bonding experience much like the bond that existed between his father and his teammates. His father would have certainly been proud.



JACKSON HOLE *Milestone*

Sam is an adventurous young man with many interests and talents often displayed in everyday life. On this excursion, he displayed one of those talents on the slopes of Jackson Hole with his mentor, Paul, a life-long friend of his father's. Between runs, the two shared conversations that Sam, a growing teenager, would have enjoyed with his father. The two encountered tough terrain that they conquered together!



LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

Dear Families, Teammates, and Friends,

Since our humble beginning in 2012, Word of Honor Fund has facilitated meaningful support activities for our community's Gold Star and Surviving Youths. By Spring of 2016, we determined more could be done; not all youths experienced equal support. By that Summer, the team had developed a holistic strategy to reach the previously unregistered youths throughout the Naval Special Operations enterprise.


In the fall of 2016, we launched a campaign to register all Gold Star and Surviving Families spanning the east and west coasts. Since its launch, we have seen a significant increase in registrants and their accompanying activities. This endeavor is ongoing and will continue through 2017.

To achieve our stated goals and to meet this new demand, it was essential for us to establish new infrastructure and increase our support staff. In February 2017, we opened the Virginia Beach based Word of Honor Fund Support Center. This center now provides our families direct access to our team and serves as a physical location for our supported families to participate in designing activities geared around their father's intentions, as well as their own interests.


I am pleased to report that it has been an exciting and activity-filled year for Word of Honor Fund sponsored Gold Star and Surviving Youths and their Mentors. The preceding pages of this update will provide you a small glimpse into their shared experiences covering June 2016 to June 2017. We look forward to sharing many more of their experiences in subsequent volumes.

On behalf of the Word of Honor Fund Team and a grateful Naval Special Operations community, thank you for your enduring friendship and support.

Very Respectfully,
Louis W. Shepard




NEWSLETTER VOLUME IV



KEEPING THE PROMISE

wordofhonorfund.org





AN AMERICAN GIRL IN D.C. *Milestone*

Every surviving child is unique in where they find comfort. For Janie, her greatest comfort is found in her American Girl doll, especially because of a treasured photo taken of her dad holding her American Girl doll on the day of his deployment in 2011—one of the last photos of the two together. Janie and her Mentor, her father's youngest brother, Uncle G, visited the American Girl doll store and historical sites while in Washington D.C. They were afforded the privilege of a White House and Oval Office tour, a trip facilitated by Word of Honor Fund and guided by her father's teammate and Medal of Honor recipient, Ed.



MOSSY CREEK *Milestone*

Navy SEALs are screened and selected because of their ability to endure all conditions. This same trait is also evident in their children. Nicholas proved to be no exception to this rule. Despite challenging mid-summer conditions, Mossy Creek guide, Tom, along with Nicholas' Navy SEAL mentor, Joe, enjoyed a three-day fly fishing experience. The trip started with a beginner class full of patience, good humor and teamwork. The high-spirited group was given the opportunity to put their new fly fishing skills to use at Mossy Creek, Beaver Creek and Smith Creek. A quick study, Nicholas caught a 16" rainbow trout in one of the more challenging sections of Mossy Creek!



PRINCESSES AND THEIR FROGS *Cornerstone*

Every little girl grows up with images of themselves as Cinderella attending a magical ball, adorned in a gorgeous gown with their Prince. Jessie and Sydney experienced their magical moment when they attended Princess and Her Frog with their Frogman (SEAL) Mentors. Their Mentors made their night special - complete with a limousine ride and corsages. A night not soon to be forgotten.

DRESSAGE FESTIVAL *Milestone*

On a very special weekend, what was her father's 46th birthday, Gabby attended the Adequan Global Dressage Festival in Florida with her father's brother-in-law, Uncle E and her cousin Susan. Olympic Dressage rider and coach, Debbie McDonald arranged a special experience for this special young lady. Her weekend included Olympic caliber performances, as well as a special ceremony in which her father, Chief Collins, was honored.



Along with singing the National Anthem, there was a special rendition of "Proud to be an American" sung just for their family on behalf Chief Collins's memory.

MONSTER TRUCKS *Cornerstone*



mentors found it difficult not to feel like boys themselves again!

The roaring of the monster truck engines didn't scare these three brothers! Lee, Lewis & Harry enjoyed the show with their mentors sharing popcorn and even an up close special look at their new favorite, Megalodon. The

BOWS AND BOW TIES *Milestone*

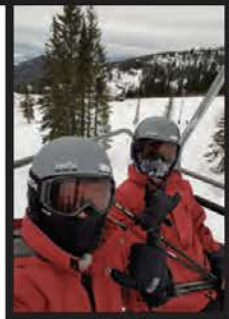


A father's absence is always felt as a surviving child grows up; they learn to live and adapt to their new family dynamic. When an event like a Daddy/Daughter dance occurs, it provides an opportunity for a child's mentor to fill that void. This year, Jessie was accompanied by her Grandfather to her school's Daddy/Daughter dance.

Grandpa R lovingly escorted his granddaughter, adorned with her princess gown and corsage, in their limousine coach. Jessie was the twinkle of her grandfather's eyes as they swept across the dance floor!

SCHWEITZER MOUNTAIN *Milestone*

Often the primary job of a parent is to foster their child's interests by assuring them that there are no limits to their dreams. On this trip, Noah received his first skiing instruction on the slopes of Schweitzer Mountain, Idaho with his mentor, Uncle Mark. The two Hawaiian natives shared wipeouts and successes on the side of this mountain creating memories that will last a lifetime.



NOTRE DAME VS. VIRGINIA TECH *Cornerstone*



What better way to spend quality time with your mentors than over a little Pigskin? Jack and Nicholas were treated to some good ole' American football at the Notre Dame vs. Virginia Tech game with their lifelong mentors Joe and Al.

This group of guys enjoyed the classic stadium foods and cheering on the teams while bonding, much as their fathers would have done with them.