

"There are some who bring a light so great to the world that even after they have gone, the light remains."

— Anonymous

**T A P S**  
TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS  
**FAMILY NEWSLETTER**

**December 2023**



**A Message from TAPS President and Founder Bonnie Carroll**

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# LEARN

## Tips for Facing Holiday Grief

**1. Admit the pain of grieving through the holidays.**

Holiday grief is painful. There is no need to try to ignore the pain this season.

**2. Do only as much celebrating as you feel like doing.**

Holiday events and activities can add up to exhaustion by the new year. You have permission to say no to invitations.

**3. Evaluate your traditions, and create at least one new one.**

Since things can't be exactly as they were before your loss, evaluate your holiday traditions.

**4. Take care of you physical well-being.**

A healthy diet, exercise, and rest are all essential to the bereavement process, especially during the busy holiday season.

**5. Consider the spiritual dimension of your life.**

Worshiping with your faith community or meeting with a spiritual leader are ways to face special days in grief.

**6. Embrace your memories of past holidays and special events.**

Write your favorite stories in a journal. Look through photos in albums or on your phone. Though potentially painful, these help us face the future by celebrating with gratitude what we had in the past.

*These tips are excerpted from Dr. William Hoy's "When You Really Don't Feel Like Celebrating," which appears in the Winter 2023 issue of the TAPS Magazine.*



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# HEAL



## **Life Will Be Different, But It Can Still Be Good**

The holidays may never be the same without your loved one, but — as TAPS Peer Mentor Heather Gray Blalock shares — different can still be good.

**Embrace the Different**

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# GROW



## **Join Your TAPS Family on Wreaths Across America Day**

On Saturday, December 16, TAPS Family members of all ages, types of loss, and relationships to the fallen are invited to join us as we place wreaths at the graves of our nation's heroes as part of Wreaths Across America Day. This shared moment alongside your TAPS Family and our partner, Wreaths Across America, is a way to connect with your local TAPS community and honor the fallen during the holidays.

**Volunteer**



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# REFLECT



## Salute to Service

As a longtime NFL Salute to Service partner, TAPS accompanied surviving families as they honored their fallen heroes at NFL games nationwide in November. In addition to attending games and practices, TAPS also received a generous donation from GilletteLabs through this year's NFL Salute to Service initiative. The Gillette Camo Razor initiative, which features one of our very own Military Mentors and mentees, is on sale at Walmart stores through the end of the year. Visit [taps.org/entertainment](https://taps.org/entertainment) to see how TAPS can help you honor your loved one through a teams4taps experience.



## TAPS Friendsgiving

Throughout November, TAPS Friendsgiving events were held across the country and online. Attendees embraced the gratitude of the season among fellow survivors who understand their grief. If you would like to become more involved with your local survivor community in 2024, visit [taps.org/tapstogether](https://taps.org/tapstogether).



### **California Family Camp**

TAPS families met in California for a healing weekend in the great outdoors as a family unit. Campers bonded through fun outdoor activities with the support of the same knowledgeable and caring Youth Programs staff members who organize TAPS Good Grief Camps. Learn more about the program at [taps.org/youthprograms](https://taps.org/youthprograms)"



### **Austin Parents Retreat**

Surviving parents headed to Austin, Texas, last month for a healing weekend among peers who understand the grief that follows losing a child who served in the military. Parents connected with their own grief and the memory of their child, and they formed new bonds to carry forward. Find your community at TAPS by viewing our program options at [taps.org/programs](https://taps.org/programs)"



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# PLAN

Events are added to our TAPS calendar on a regular basis. Visit [taps.org/events](https://taps.org/events) for ongoing updates.



## Attend a 2024 Military Survivor Seminar & Good Grief Camp

### **30th Annual National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**

*As we mark 30 years of TAPS, our two national events will combine under one event.*

May 23-27, Arlington, Virginia

### **Southeast Regional Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**

February 23-25, Destin, Florida

### **Western Regional Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**

July 26-28, Scottsdale, Arizona

### **Northeast Regional Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**

August 23-25, Buffalo, New York

### **Southern Regional Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**

October 4-6, San Antonio, Texas

[Register to Attend](#)



## Online Groups

By Relationship, Peer Group, &  
Type of Loss

[Find a Group](#)



## Community Events

TAPS Together, Care Groups, & Events  
Happening Nationwide, Year-Round

[Find an Event](#)



## Team TAPS Events

Honoring Loved Ones at Events  
Nationwide

[Join the Team](#)



## Young Adults Events

In-Person & Online Events  
Survivors Ages 18-30

[Find an Event](#)



## Youth Programs

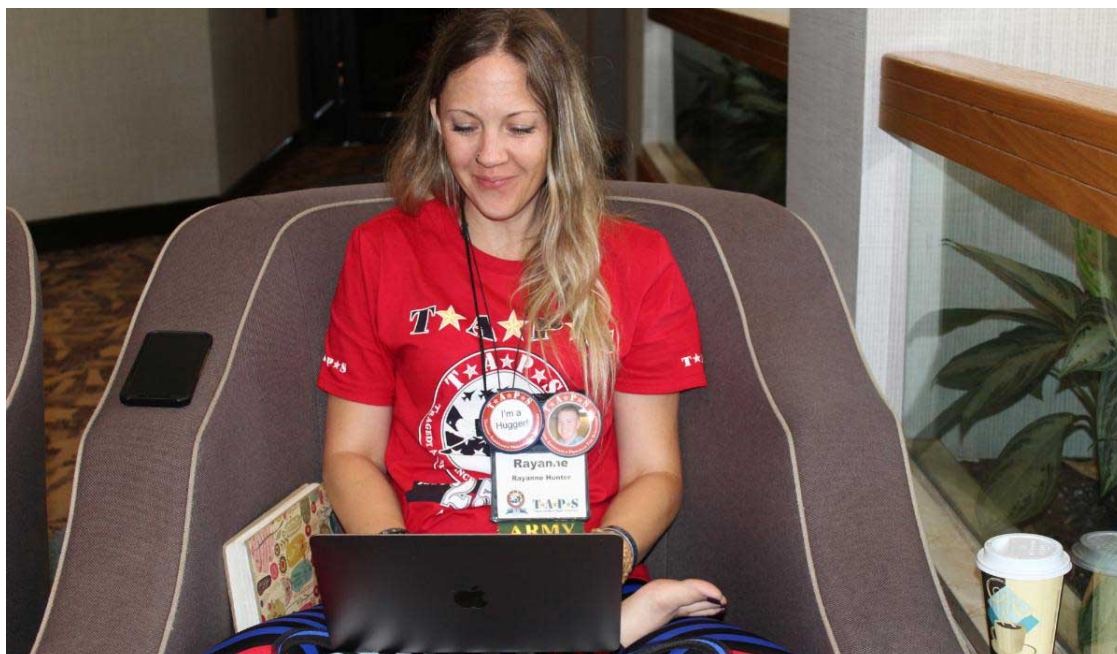
In-Person & Online Events  
School-Aged Survivors and Parents

[Browse Events](#)



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# HONOR



## Honor Your Hero, Support TAPS through a Facebook Fundraiser

When you host a Facebook fundraiser for TAPS, you are not only raising funds that support fellow survivors and TAPS' healing programs. You are also sharing your loved one's story, and keeping their memory present as you share the TAPS mission. Click the button below to honor your hero on Facebook.

[Host a Fundraiser](#)

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Compassionate TAPS support is available 24/7 via our National Military Survivor Helpline: **800-959-TAPS** (8277).



[Donate](#)



If you no longer wish to receive the TAPS Family Newsletter, please email [info@taps.org](mailto:info@taps.org).