By Our Own—For Our Own

Annual Active Duty Fund Drive to Benefit Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY®
Serving Sailors, Marines, and their families
Your Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society recently celebrated an important milestone. It occurred on January 17, when we celebrated the 400,000th Quick Assist Loan, representing $152M of interest-free loans, over the 10-year period since the inception of the program. The Quick Assist Loan provides an immediate interest-free loan of up to $500 for active duty Marines and Sailors, to meet urgent financial needs and keep them focused on their jobs and protecting our freedoms. We are pleased to report that the Quick Assist Loan Program continues to provide a critically important alternative for Sailors and Marines to the payday loans that so plagued our servicemen and women 10 years ago. The predatory loan trap still exists, but is vastly diminished, for active duty personnel, from the conditions in 2006 and before.

We hope this issue of Legacy newsletter will inspire you. Your generous support continues to make a difference for Sea Service members and their families - Marines, like former Corporal and Mrs. Weaver, and their baby girl, Laycee, who made it through some traumatic surgeries with lots of support from a Society visiting nurse. Your donations also helped Sailors like YN1 Grossglass, FCC Pearson, HM3 Adloye, and a recently retired couple with twins.

These stories, and the Sea Service families they represent, could not have been possible without your financial support – and our many dedicated volunteers.

Each year, during March and April, active duty and retired Sailors and Marines are asked to think about Shipmates and fellow Marines who are facing hardship and personal challenges. Because of your generosity, the Society is able to offer them financial assistance, education, home visits by registered nurses, or access to gently used toys, clothes and uniforms, which help them to lead successful lives and set a positive example for their families.

We encourage you to visit www.nmcrs.org/ADFD and www.nmcrs.org/RFD.

And we’ll keep you informed of our ongoing efforts to serve Sailors, Marines, and their families in 2017.

Sincerely,

Admiral Steve Abbot, U.S. Navy (Retired)
President and Chief Executive Officer

A New Heart and a Caring Visiting Nurse, Thanks to You

Laycee Weaver loves to play doctor. It’s not surprising. At three-and-a-half years old, she’s had six heart surgeries including a heart transplant.

Laycee has a congenital heart defect. Doctors discovered the problem the day after she was born, when she went into heart failure. Her dad, Corporal (E4) Steven Weaver, USMC, was stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

“She was a little blue when she was born,” her mom, Brandy, says. “She was born at 1:37 p.m. and slept until the next morning. The doctors thought it was because she was tired from the delivery.”

But during a checkup the next day, doctors noticed a heart murmur and ordered more tests. “Her right ventricle never developed and her body wasn’t receiving enough blood, and too much blood was going to her lungs,” Brandy says. Laycee was flown to Vidant Medical Center at East Carolina University in North Carolina, where she was in the neonatal intensive care unit for three days. “She was doing fine,” Brandy says. “They let us take her home and watch for signs of heart failure. Later, during another checkup, the doctor measured Laycee’s liver enzymes. That test confirmed my baby was going into heart failure.”

Steven was in the field on a training exercise at the time. Brandy called his chain of command so he could be at the hospital for Laycee’s first surgery at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “That surgery was easy,” Brandy says, “although at the time we thought it was hard because it was our first one.”

That was when the family met NMCRS visiting nurse Heather Underhill, who worked with them for the next three
years. “Heather came to our home to check Laycee’s weight and make sure she wasn’t going into heart failure,” Brandy says. “She also attended a lot of Laycee’s doctor appointments with me, especially when Steven was in Afghanistan.”

Nurse Heather remembers the first time she met Brandy and Laycee. “I listened to Brandy tell me what Laycee had gone through,” Heather says. “I cried with Brandy.”

At four-and-a-half months, Laycee went into heart failure again and had another surgery. Unsuccessful, the surgery had to be repeated three days later. Then, doctors found a blood clot in Laycee’s heart, and she spent Christmas in the hospital.

Over the next two years, Laycee had three more surgeries.

“I didn’t know many people in Jacksonville, North Carolina,” Brandy says, “so I relied on Heather. She helped us so much. We developed a close bond.”

Meanwhile, Steven made plans to leave the Marines to be home for his daughter. The Weaver family moved to Port Charlotte, Florida, where Brandy’s family lives, and they settled into their new home while Steven finished his time in the Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune. “When we saw the cardiologist at Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital in Florida, he concluded that Laycee needed a transplant,” Brandy says. She received her new heart in January 2017.

Despite what she’s been through, Laycee is a happy little girl.

“You could look at her and think she’s a normal three-year-old,” Brandy says. “We’re blessed, because she’s so strong.”

Brandy still keeps in touch with Heather. “The Society’s visiting nurses are a blessing and a help to military families,” Brandy says. The visiting nurses from NMCRS Camp Lejeune always made sure one of them was available to help the Weavers.

“Through an emotional three-and-a-half years,” Heather says, “it’s been a pleasure to help them, teach them about Laycee’s medications, assess Laycee’s progress, answer questions, provide emotional support, and more. I’ve loved working with this family.”

Now you know all the good you do for military families like the Weavers. With your support, you make it possible for the Society’s visiting nurses to be a lifeline for Sailors, Marines, and their families when they need us the most.

If you would like to learn more about easy ways to support tomorrow’s Sailors, Marines, and their families through a gift in your will, please visit

www.myimpactwithnmcrs.org
A Retired Sailor and His Wife Have Twins, and You’re There to Help

Fernando Miranda stood out at the Budget for Baby workshop at NMCRS Portsmouth, Virginia. He’d retired from the Navy in 2014 after two decades as a logistics specialist, and he and his wife were the new parents of twins. Fernando attended the workshop by himself because the twins were born early and needed several days in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), and their mom stayed in the hospital with them.

Fernando thought the Society’s workshop was terrific. He got tips, cost-saving ideas, and resources. “I also came home with a junior Sea Bag,” he says, “a $50 gift card, and a handmade blanket for each baby.”

Born premature, the twins – Emily and Marc – required monitoring. Emily spent six days in the NICU. Marc spent nine. Because of the babies’ medical needs, the Society connected Fernando with a NMCRS visiting nurse who accompanied him and his wife to some of Marc’s medical appointments, and who called periodically to check on the family.

“The twins are doing better,” Fernando says. “And so is my wife.” Fernando’s wife had a difficult recovery herself, after a caesarean delivery, a blood transfusion, and other complications. “For the first two days, she couldn’t get up from her bed to see the babies,” Fernando says. “Finally getting to see them was a big relief.”

“I thought the Society just helped Sailors who needed money,” Fernando says. “After the workshop and the visit from their nurse, I realized the Society does a lot more. The Society will give you help when you need it.”

So much good for Sea Service members in need like Fernando – this is your support in action. Thank you for giving so generously to help those who serve.

Your Support Helped This Sailor, and She Paid It Forward

HM3 Natasha Adeloye had a problem. Repairing the dent in her car would cost $400. Her insurance deductible was $1,000. She’d end up paying more than double the amount of the repair cost if she filed an insurance claim – and she didn’t have $400 to fix her car.

“I’m grateful for the help they gave me.”

“Someone told me about the Society and their Quick Assist Loan program,” Natasha says. “I went to their San Antonio office, filled out some paperwork, and the NMCRS volunteer gave me a check for $400. I got my car fixed.”

“If not for the Society, I would’ve had to charge the $1,000 deductible on my credit card. Being able to repay the Society’s interest-free loan was a lifesaver.”

A couple months after her car repair, Natasha entered a contest at her bank to win $1,500 in cash – half for the winner and half for a charity. Natasha won!

She knew immediately that she’d donate half of her winnings to the Society. “I’m grateful for the help they gave me,” she says. The other half went into her savings account.

Because of you, we were there for Natasha when she needed us. Now, she’s helping other Sea Service members just as she was helped. Because of your generosity Natasha chose to pay it forward.

Melissa Bradley, NMCRS Director, Corpus Christi, and HM3 Natasha Adeloye are flanked by Broadway Bank representatives at the check award ceremony.
Running to Remember

The day before Memorial Day weekend in 1997, Marine First Lieutenant Robert Straw was on a routine mission to pick up a helicopter in Texas and fly it to North Carolina. Tragically, the Cobra crashed, killing Lieutenant Straw and his co-pilot. Left behind were his wife Mindi, who was pregnant with their son Seth, and their two-year-old daughter Molli.

As the 20th anniversary of Robert’s death approached, Mindi knew exactly what she wanted to do to commemorate it and remember her late husband. “After Robert died, I volunteered with NMCRS at Camp Pendleton to stay connected with the military,” Mindi explained. When she moved her family to Pensacola, Florida, Mindi continued volunteering with the NMCRS Pensacola office. “I enjoyed it but, after a few years, I realized I needed to get back to work.”

Meanwhile, Mindi had started running to stay fit. “I’m a big believer in staying active,” she said. “Once you stop moving, that’s when things start to fall apart.” She’s also a registered dietitian and promotes youth fitness, so health is paramount to her. Gradually, she shifted from being a casual runner to completing 5K races then to running marathons and triathlons. She has run at least a hundred races of varying lengths and finished more than 50 triathlons, ranging from a sprint to Iron Man distance—which includes a 2.4-mile swim and a 112-mile bike ride, finishing with a 26.2-mile marathon.

Mindi prefers triathlons to marathons, but has long planned on running the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) to honor her late husband. “I ran the Boston Marathon in 2014. I was in Boston as a spectator the year of the bombing and I was determined to run the following year. The MCM is the only other marathon on my bucket list.”

Although her regular fitness regimen keeps Mindi in shape, she will have to train for October’s MCM. “I turn 50 this year,” she said. “It’s going to be hard. In Pensacola, our hottest time of the year is July, August, and September, so I’ll be doing my long runs in pretty hot weather. But everyone I know who has done it says it’s a fabulous race. This is my heartfelt race. My husband is buried in Arlington Cemetery, so it will be nice to be close by, as the race starts and finishes there.”

Because she lives near Naval Air Station Pensacola and uses military health care and other benefits, Mindi still feels closely connected to the military. Her children, both enrolled in college, receive NMCRS scholarships. So when she thought about running the MCM she knew she wanted to be part of the Society’s team. Mindi hopes to raise $5,000 to $10,000 for the Society. “The Marine Corps Marathon means something to me, and the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society means something to me, so I’m hoping to raise a lot of money.”

“My fiancé, Evan, is also running the race—he’s on the NMCRS team too. In addition, his sister and brother-in-law heard about us running the MCM and want to run too. I don’t know if we’ll run together or not. Evan is a much faster runner than I am. But it’s my race and I’m doing it for my reasons. Everyone is very supportive.”

Support the NMCRS MCM Team! To donate or join our team, visit www.nmcrs.org/MCMTeam.

Your Endorsements Make a Difference

“I recently learned of your organization from a friend in Waxahachie, TX, who told me how much you help military families. I hope my small donation will provide some help for those in need. God bless”

Minnette C., Texas

“Thank you for being there to give help to our sailors! Some “charities” spend most of their money on fund raising and administration. You make it easy for me to show I care.”

Ken C., Connecticut via email
Petty Officer Third Class Ivan Pearson returned from deployment to a car with transmission problems. “Someone suggested I go to the Society, but I didn’t think a broken car was an emergency,” Ivan says. “But the Society helped me. I received an interest-free loan and they set up a repayment plan I could afford. As an E4, my paycheck didn’t go far, so their assistance was a big help.”

Years later, when Ivan’s wife Tiffani, was pregnant with their first child, she learned that the military hospital at Naval Station Great Lakes didn’t deliver babies or offer birthing, breastfeeding, or other new parent classes. Tiffani says, “the prenatal nurse at the VA hospital in Great Lakes told us about our options.”

Tiffani met with NMCRS Great Lakes visiting nurse April Pearson (no relation to Tiffani or Ivan), and Tiffani and Ivan attended birthing and breastfeeding classes offered by NMCRS Great Lakes, as well as the Society’s Budget for Baby workshop.

“I love seeing the positive impact the Society has.”

In addition to parenting classes, Tiffani was grateful for help from nurse April. “April continued to check on me,” Tiffani says. “As a first-time mom, I was worried about everything.”

When Ivan and Tiffani were stationed in Yokosuka, Japan, Tiffani continued to need support. “Several months after our baby was born, we PCS’d to Yokosuka. I reached out to NMCRS Yokosuka’s visiting nurse, Karen Fahrney. I’m grateful for the Society’s visiting nurses. They’re why I began volunteering with the Society.”

Enjoy Free Sports, Concerts and Other Events

You don’t have to let a hefty price tag hold you back from spending quality time with your military family. The nonprofit Veteran Tickets Foundation (VetTix), a new partner of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, provides veterans, service members, and caregivers and family members of those killed in action, with free tickets to major sports games, concerts, and a diverse mix of other events.

Jessica, pictured, is currently serving in the Navy. Thanks to VetTix, she recently took her mother to the Charlie Wilson concert with special guests, Fantasia and Johnny Gill. Jessica and her mother spent great quality time together enjoying fabulous music—thanks to VetTix.

How can you get these tickets, which are free - except for a very small delivery fee? Become a VetTixer – just visit www.VetTix.org to create a free account. Once you’ve created an account and verified your military service, you can review hundreds of upcoming events across the country and request tickets to those you’re interested in.
You Helped This Sailor Through One Crisis After Another

It was March 2011. Coming home after a six-month deployment, Petty Officer First Class Jennifer Grossglass spotted her mom and dad on the pier. But she didn’t see her sister, Ginger.

When Jennifer made it down the gangway and hugged her parents, they shared the bad news. Ginger had cancer. “They didn’t tell me while I was deployed because they didn’t want me to worry,” Jennifer says. Jennifer visited her sister a few times during her treatment, but then she was transferred from MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina, to Corry Station in Pensacola, Florida.

“After I PCS’d to Florida, I learned Ginger had beaten her rare form of cancer – but now had terminal lung cancer,” Jennifer says. “At the same time, I was going through a divorce. I’d put myself in debt trying to establish my life as a single mom.”

With Ginger’s death drawing closer, Jennifer wanted to return home. “I didn’t have the money,” Jennifer says. “My department head told me to go to the Society. The Society paid for and arranged a plane ticket and rental car for me. They also explained how I could pay back the no-interest loan when I returned.”

Jennifer flew to Washington, arriving an hour after her sister passed away. Her grief turned to frustration when the funeral home required $4,000 before preparing her sister’s body for burial. “My parents didn’t have the money,” Jennifer says. “So I paid. I wiped out my savings.”

Returning to Pensacola, Jennifer went back to the Society to request a longer repayment period. “The NMCRS director said, ‘We’re going to turn your loan into a grant,’” Jennifer says. “That saved me!”

That’s why, a few years later, Jennifer jumped at the opportunity to give back to the Society by helping coordinate the Active Duty Fund Drive at NAVSTA Mayport, Florida. But only a year after that, Jennifer faced another family crisis. Her father suffered a heart attack. He was in surgery when Jennifer got the call that she and her brother should come. “I went to the NMCRS office,” Jennifer says, “Within 30 minutes, they had me ticketed on a flight leaving the next morning, and gave me money for my hotel and expenses.”

Sadly, Jennifer’s father passed away. “After my dad died,” she says, “I went back to NMCRS, and they said they wanted to turn my loan into a grant, but I said, ‘No, not this time.’ With everything NMCRS has done for me, it’s got to be paid back.”

Today, Jennifer serves as executive assistant to the Commanding Officer, NAVSTA Mayport. Her fiancé, currently deployed, is an Avionics Technician. Jennifer promotes the Society to junior Sailors and recently she saw NMCRS in action when Hurricane Matthew struck Jacksonville, Florida. “The Society is always helping,” Jennifer says. The Society provided $409,563 in disaster assistance to 686 military families affected by this natural disaster.

Isn’t it good to know that you’re there for Sailors like Jennifer? This is how your giving touches the lives of Sea Service members in need.

YNI Jennifer Grossglass with her children and fiancé.

Were you inspired? Pass this copy of Legacy® Newsletter to a friend!
YOU CAN SAVE ON TAXES WHILE SUPPORTING SAILORS AND MARINES IN NEED

Here are two easy ways you may avoid some taxes with a gift to the Society:

1) With a gift of stock or mutual funds you may avoid capital gains and investment taxes and enjoy a charitable income tax deduction.

2) Use all or a portion of your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA to make a gift directly to the Society and you don’t pay income taxes on the amount you donate.

Visit www.myimpactwithnmcrs.org/avoid-taxes to learn more.

“I give gifts of appreciated stock because it benefits the Society, helps Sailors and Marines, and provides tax benefits – everyone wins. I’ve been fortunate to serve, and in the simplest terms, it just makes me feel good to give.”

Rear Admiral Steve Maas, SC, USN (Ret.)

For assistance in making a Charitable IRA Rollover gift, please contact Kate Hillas at 800-654-8364 or philanthropy@nmcrs.org, or visit www.myimpactwithnmcrs.org/avoid-taxes.