

Dear GSF Family,

We delayed sending our monthly newsletter due to last week's announcement regarding Gary's son, Mac Sinise.



Gary asked me to thank you for all the prayers and heartfelt messages of support and love, as well as the donations we have received in honor of Mac. The whole Sinise family sends you their gratitude and appreciation.

Below, you'll find recent highlights from our outreach across the nation. It's my honor to share with you these incredible stories that represent just a few of the many lives you've improved through your generosity and support of our mission.

Warmly,



*Donna Palmer,
Executive Director, Gary Sinise Foundation*





REMEMBERING FAMILIES OF FALLEN FIRST RESPONDERS

A Message From Heaven To His Little Girl

Amethyst was only five years old when her father, Police Officer Erin Tokley, passed away.

They loved to sing together. Their favorite song was "Remember Me" from the Disney film *Coco*. It was *their* song. Erin even recorded himself singing their special song, and placed it in a teddy bear to comfort Amethyst for those nights when duty kept him from home.

After Erin's passing, the song only became more important.

We had the great honor of hosting Amethyst, now seven, and her mother, Octavia, at our annual Snowball Express Event at Walt Disney World® for Families of Fallen First Responders.

One of the most special moments at this event is when our families gather to send heartfelt notes to their fallen heroes with the help of Disney magic. Surrounded by love, Amethyst and Octavia watched their message ascend to the heavens. A moment later, heaven sent a reply.

Music started to play. The song being performed live for all the families touched their souls in particular.

Because it was their song.

Remember Me.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT
Bringing the Families of Fallen Together

For families who have lost a loved one in service to our country and communities, the grief journey can be especially isolating. And few truly understand their experience.

It is our mission to show these special families that they are never alone.

We create communities of support for families of fallen heroes all across the nation. We bring them together for fun, fellowship, and most of all, remembrance. By connecting families in the same region, lasting friendships are formed and they learn to lean on one another as they heal.

Thanks to your support, we brought together several of these special families from the Colorado area for an unforgettable experience. We kicked off the weekend with a visit to the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum. Inspired by this tour, we took to the slopes. As everyone lived out their own Olympic dreams, new bonds were deepened. They may have started the weekend as strangers, but they left as family.





DONOR SPOTLIGHT

My mom always said, "Whether I am looking at you or not, you always do the right thing."

Ashley Goepfert's roots in the military and first responder communities run deep. "My mom was disabled, so my grandparents took turns raising me during summer breaks. My grandfather was a Navy guy in World War II and taught me how to make my bed military style from a young age."



She was also inspired by the police officers in her neighborhood. "I grew up on the Southside of Phoenix, in a bad neighborhood, and officers would check in to see how I was doing. My mom made sure I was respectful of the officers and offer them water. I still do it to this day."

Her own foray into service began in college. "I joined the ROTC because I wanted to give it a shot. I was a Military Assistant, but I was determined to learn the lifestyle. The cadets thought I was insane because after I made coffee, I would go work out with them. In the summer, I would run with the officers, and then sent them cookies when they deployed."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





After college, Ashley got her dream job with the Phoenix Police Department and made a very unusual request for someone her age. “I decided to donate my retirement and life insurance to the Gary Sinise Foundation. I’m not married, and I don’t have kids, so I want to make sure that whatever money is there can be used for the families who need it. I want to provide comfort to the military and law enforcement, even after I’m gone.”

Ashley first heard about the Gary Sinise Foundation from her mother.

“My mom was a military kid and loved movies about the war. I remember watching *Forrest Gump* when I was really little. When I was 12, my mom told me Gary was creating a foundation to help the military and first-responders. She said, ‘It’s going to be huge – just watch.’ And she was right.”

Today, Ashley is a tireless supporter who goes above and beyond in any way she can. “You have these families, these brave men and women who sacrifice their lives, time and effort, day in and day out. I stopped saying ‘I wish there was something I can do’ and started saying ‘There is something I can do.’”

Recently, Ashley with the Phoenix Police Department collected 1300 letters of appreciation for World War II veterans to present at our Soaring Valor event. She also has collected over 2800 cards for the troops and sends lot of packages of coffee and cookies to her military friends serving abroad, saying, “I like to give them happiness from home.”

When asked why she is driven to give so passionately, Ashley shared, “To see what military and law enforcement and their families do for us is remarkable. They sacrifice day after day so we can be safe. I don’t want to just say thank you, I need to do more.”



Remind our heroes that we never forget them.

[DONATE TODAY](#)