

2015

ANNUAL REPORT



SENTINELS OF FREEDOM
VETERANS NEVER STOP SERVING



We

Believe

Veterans

Our vision is to grow this organization, not only in the breadth of our support services but to provide 100 scholarships to wounded Veterans each year. 2015 is reflective of where this organization is headed and how we intend to bring our vision to fruition.

This past year has brought about a number of changes in our organization and in our program. Each change has been a step forward in fulfilling our vision:

We have expanded our Student Veteran Resource Center program in which we help establish on-campus resource centers for student Veterans at local colleges, with plans to open three more within the next year.

We have streamlined our customer relations management system (CRM) by transitioning to Salesforce which will help us more efficiently and effectively stay in touch with donors and sponsors.

We have simplified our application process using a program called Fluid Review which tracks all applicants and allows our program director and manager to focus more of their time on working with current Sentinels.

We have expanded our financial services for our Sentinels through the addition of financial coaching which helps scholarship recipients manage their budget through first outlining their financial goals. We now also provide resume services as part of our program.

We have partnered with the HERO Child-Rescue Corps Program which trains wounded Veterans to assist federal agents in the fight against online child sexual exploitation and have accepted a number of HERO Program participants into our program as Sentinels.

Previously, management of our scholarship program and operations were the responsibility of one person. We have since separated those two areas of responsibility and brought in additional staff to solely manage the operations aspect of the organization. This hire allows our program director and manager to focus solely on our Sentinels.

The steps we have taken to move this organization forward would not be possible without the support of our donors, sponsors, and corporate partners. We value every supporter who has helped bring this vision to life and continue to help propel us forward.

Thank you for choosing to support our organization; we look forward to continuing our partnership together in serving these courageous men and women.

Mike Conklin



Chairman and CEO



Never

Stop

Serving

2015 SENTINEL GRADUATES

Every time a Sentinel graduates from our program, we are further inspired to commit ourselves to our mission. We proudly celebrate the graduates from 2015 who have accomplished so much and will continue to do so as they move forward in their careers.



“It is hard to quantify the contributions the Sentinels of Freedom Scholarship Foundation have made in my life. Many contributions are tangible, but it might be the intangible contributions that made the most impact. When the Sentinels of Freedom entered my life, they saw the potential inside of me. That belief in my abilities was that spark I needed to charge forward in life. I have flourished in many ways under the guidance of the Sentinels of Freedom...I owe so much to the Sentinels of Freedom; they gave me a hand up in a time of need.”



Sentinels of Freedom opened its second Student Veteran Resource Center (SVRC) at the College of Alameda. SVRCs are a new part of the Sentinels program aimed at helping the entire student Veteran population.

SVRCs are on-campus centers that provide for the specific needs of student Veterans, such as a community of other Veterans, resources on Veterans benefits, quiet places to study, and academic counseling.





Sentinels of Freedom welcomed a strong leader, savvy business woman, and a Veteran to our Board of Directors with the addition of Mary King, Vice President of Human Resources at Pacific Gas & Electric.

King's experience has been instrumental in helping our organization plan out its next steps in expanding not only our program but our fundraising efforts.



2015 played host to Sentinels of Freedom's first Annual Sentinels Gala. The event celebrates our Sentinels while bringing together members of the community to pay their respects and show their support for these courageous men and women.

Guests of Honor included Major General Lawrence Nicholson, USMC, and Medal of Honor recipient and Sentinel, Corporal Kyle Carpenter, USMC (ret.).



“ When my military career ended, Sentinels of Freedom gave me an opportunity to pursue my post-Army dreams. I would not be in a financial, educational, or emotionally positive position without SOF’s help. I hope that my future successes are a reflection of this organization’s stellar and relentless commitment to aiding severely wounded veterans. I will be paying it forward. ”

CAPTAIN JASON CHURCH, US ARMY

Sentinel Graduate

Jason was born in Fort Knox, Kentucky. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, with a bachelor’s in political science in 2011 and commissioned in the Army as a second lieutenant. After having completed the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course, Army Ranger School, Army Airborne School, and the Stryker Leader Course, Jason deployed to Panjwai’, Afghanistan, in 2012 as a first lieutenant.

In August of that year, Jason and nine other members of his platoon were involved in an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion that resulted in Jason suffering double below-the-knee amputations. He went through 21 surgeries at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, before receiving his prosthetics and going through the recovery process. Jason was promoted to captain and medically retired from the Army in July 2014.

Since then, Jason has earned a master’s in security services from Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, and he is currently a law student at the University of Wisconsin. He also works as a regional director for US Senator Ron Johnson and has political aspirations of his own. Additionally, he speaks around the country to various schools, companies, and organizations about overcoming adversity and the power of a positive attitude. Jason is a member of the Sentinels of Freedom board of directors.

Jake was born in Illinois and grew up in Ames, Iowa. Following high school, he attended Iowa State University and joined the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) while majoring in business management with a minor in military studies. After graduating from college in 2008, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. In January 2011, Jake deployed to Afghanistan with the 8th Marine Regiment.

In October 2011, while conducting an escort mission in Musa Qaleh, Jake's vehicle was struck by a command-wired improvised explosive device (IED). Jake applied tourniquets to his legs but, subsequently, both of his legs had to be amputated below-the-knee. He also suffered a fractured left elbow and a torn knee ligament. Jake underwent several months of physical and occupational therapy at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center that returned the functional use of his arm and gave him the ability to walk again with the aid of prosthetics.

Jake graduated with a master's degree from the University of Minnesota's Carlson Business School in 2016 and took part in the Human Exploitation Rescue Operative (HERO) Child-Rescue Corps Program which trains Veterans to assist federal agents in the fight against online child exploitation. He is currently working as a computer forensics analyst at US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

CAPTAIN JAKE DOBBERKE, US MARINE CORPS

Sentinel Graduate

“I have been a Sentinel since early 2012 after retiring from the Marines. SOF has meant a lot to me; they assisted me in my transition out of the Marines by providing me with professional and financial mentoring, as well as providing support when earning my Masters in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota. With SOF, I know that I can always reach out to their team and I know that I will continue to excel.”





SENTINEL KYLE PLETZKE
Sergeant, US Army

Kyle was born and raised in Rockford, Michigan. Following high school, he enlisted in the US Army and started basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 2010. In 2012, he deployed to the Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

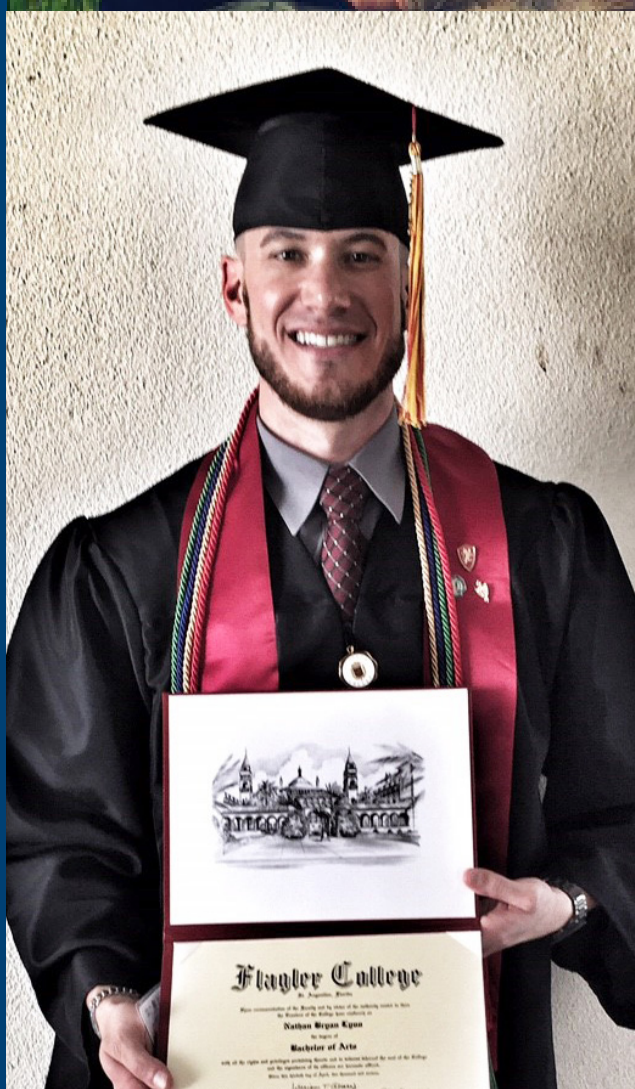
In December 2012, while returning from a mission, Kyle's vehicle was involved in a rollover. He sustained multiple pelvic fractures and several injuries to his lower right leg. Following his medical evacuation, he spent nearly three months in the hospital at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center where he went through multiple surgeries. Currently, Kyle is a student at Central Texas College and hopes to transfer to the University of Maryland to pursue a degree in elementary education. He is also part of Enlightened Development LLC, a housing rehab company in Ohio.

“The program to me is much more than a scholarship. It is representative of all that is good in this country. It gives me motivation knowing I have a whole network of people who know about me and my story and care to see me do well now and in the future! It's a great feeling knowing there are so many people cheering me on in life!”





SENTINEL NATE LYNN
Specialist, US Army



Nate was born and raised in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Fascinated by the military service of his father and grandfather, he joined the National Guard infantry.

In June 2015, Nate arrived in Iraq. Four months later, after having lost seven men, his squad came under heavy fire. Nate's rifle scope was struck by a bullet, causing shrapnel to enter his chin, but he stayed in the fight for another six hours. He suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and struggled with post-traumatic stress, memory issues, back problems, and survivors' guilt. However, life for him has since moved forward. Nate graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's in psychology from Flagler College, and he is currently working on a master's in criminal justice at Saint Leo University. He has four children and is married.

“I think back to when I first came home, and the trials and tribulations I faced..[Then], I found out about...Sentinels of Freedom...I am so blessed to have folks like you who are willing to serve in any capacity that I need...I am honored to be a part of SOF. Because of SOF, I have been able to have structured accountability on multiple fronts, which has allowed for my family and me to be successful.”

THE SITUATION

Employment of 2015 college graduates

2.8 Million college graduates joined the workforce in 2015

25% of students parlay an internship into a job offer

14.2 % is the unemployment rate of 18-29 year olds; the age of 62% of Sentinels

14% of college seniors had jobs lined up upon graduation

Employment of wounded Veterans

1 in 3 Post 9/11 Veterans have a service-connected disability



4%

The unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or lower

VS

9.6%

The unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 60% or higher

OUR PROGRAM

Housing
Subsidies

Financial
Counseling

Employment
Networking

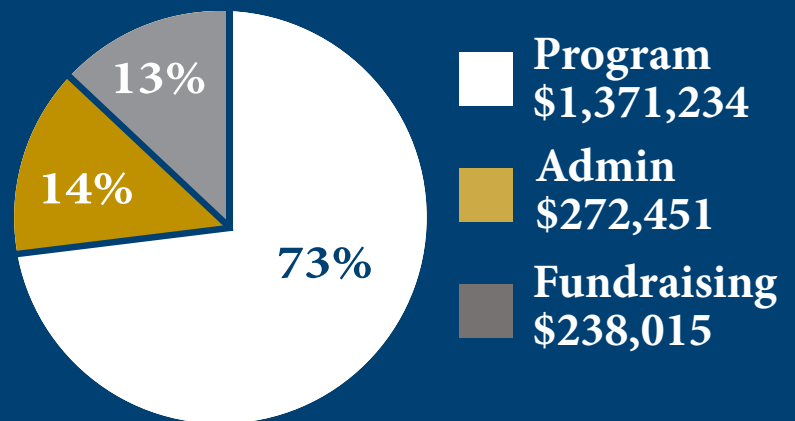
Our program achieves
success through a
comprehensive 6 part
program

Mentoring

Merit Based
Grants

Student
Veteran
Resource
Centers

We have served more than 200
Sentinels



with 73 cents of each dollar
raised going directly to our
program

The effectiveness of our program is proven

95%

of Sentinels are employed within 6 months of completing their program



85%

of Sentinels have employment lined up before
they graduate from their educational program

10%

find employment 6 months
after graduation



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