

# Holiday Trends

## How To Support Veterans' Families During The Holidays

(NAPS)—While the holiday season is generally a time of joy and celebration, military families can often experience a very different range of emotions. Active service members and veterans returning home for the holidays might struggle to participate in family gatherings or even find the season particularly distressing. And, for the families of those service members who do not return, the holidays can be an agonizing reminder of a loved one's absence.

In the spirit of the season, honoring the sacrifice of all men and women who proudly served in our armed forces through charitable giving can make a big difference. Children of Fallen Patriots, a foundation that honors the sacrifices of fallen military heroes by helping ensure the success of their children through college education, has outlined several ways that showcase how charitable giving ensures strong futures.

### Support Veteran-Serving Organizations

Tens of thousands of non-profits exist in the United States dedicated to serving veterans and their families. With so many different veteran-serving organizations in the States, it's crucial to ensure donations are doing the most good for heroes in need.

A good way to evaluate an organization is to use Charity Navigator, a renowned nonprofit evaluation site. The site rates charities on the cost-effectiveness and overall health of their programs on a four-star scale, evaluating their measures of stability, efficiency, and sustainability.

### Care for Military Families in Need

Service members selflessly put their own lives on the line to ensure better lives for all Americans, but their families sacrifice much as well. While many organizations offer support directly to veterans, the family back home can get lost in the shuffle.

Children of Fallen Patriots provides college scholarships and educational counseling to military children who lost a parent in the line of duty. Studies show that almost 25,000 children have lost a parent in the line of duty over the last 35 years. A college education is a signif-



**Ashley, a junior at Eastern Illinois University, poses with a photo of her father, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2009. Ashley continues to receive educational scholarships from Children of Fallen Patriots.**

icant financial burden, and the majority of surviving military spouses make less than \$50,000 annually.

Since 2002, Children of Fallen Patriots has provided over \$61 million in support to over 2,700 children, including over 1,300 graduates. Additionally, the Gold Star family-focused nonprofit earned a perfect rating from Charity Navigator—an accomplishment less than 1% of the 200,000 rated charities have earned.

“The best way to honor the sacrifice of our service members is to ensure better futures for their children,” said David Kim, co-founder and CEO of Children of Fallen Patriots. “A college education is the single most important gift we can give to the children of our fallen heroes, especially during the holiday season—a particularly difficult and stressful time for Gold Star families.”

### Generosity Goes Beyond The Wallet

Making a donation is one of the easiest ways to support veteran-serving organizations, but plenty of options exist.

More and more people give their time by coordinating fundraising events, such as bake sales and 5k runs. They also spread the word on social media so the country's veteran community is supported and speak up about the issues that adversely affect them.

### Learn More

For further facts on what you can do, visit [www.fallenpatriots.org](http://www.fallenpatriots.org).