



Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

CAPSTONE BRIEFING

FEBRUARY 2024

Caring for the Families of America's Fallen Heroes

3033 Wilson Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

202.588.TAPS (8277)
TAPS.org

**Major Samuel L.
Griffith, USMC
KIA Afghanistan
December 2011**





TAPS Mission

TAPS is the national nonprofit organization providing compassionate care and comprehensive resources to *all those* grieving the death of a military or veteran loved one.



TAPS Vision

TAPS honors our military men and women by caring for *all those* they loved and left behind.





TAPS VALUES

HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE: We cherish the life of our fallen heroes and celebrate military survivors as the living legacies of their loved ones' service and sacrifice.

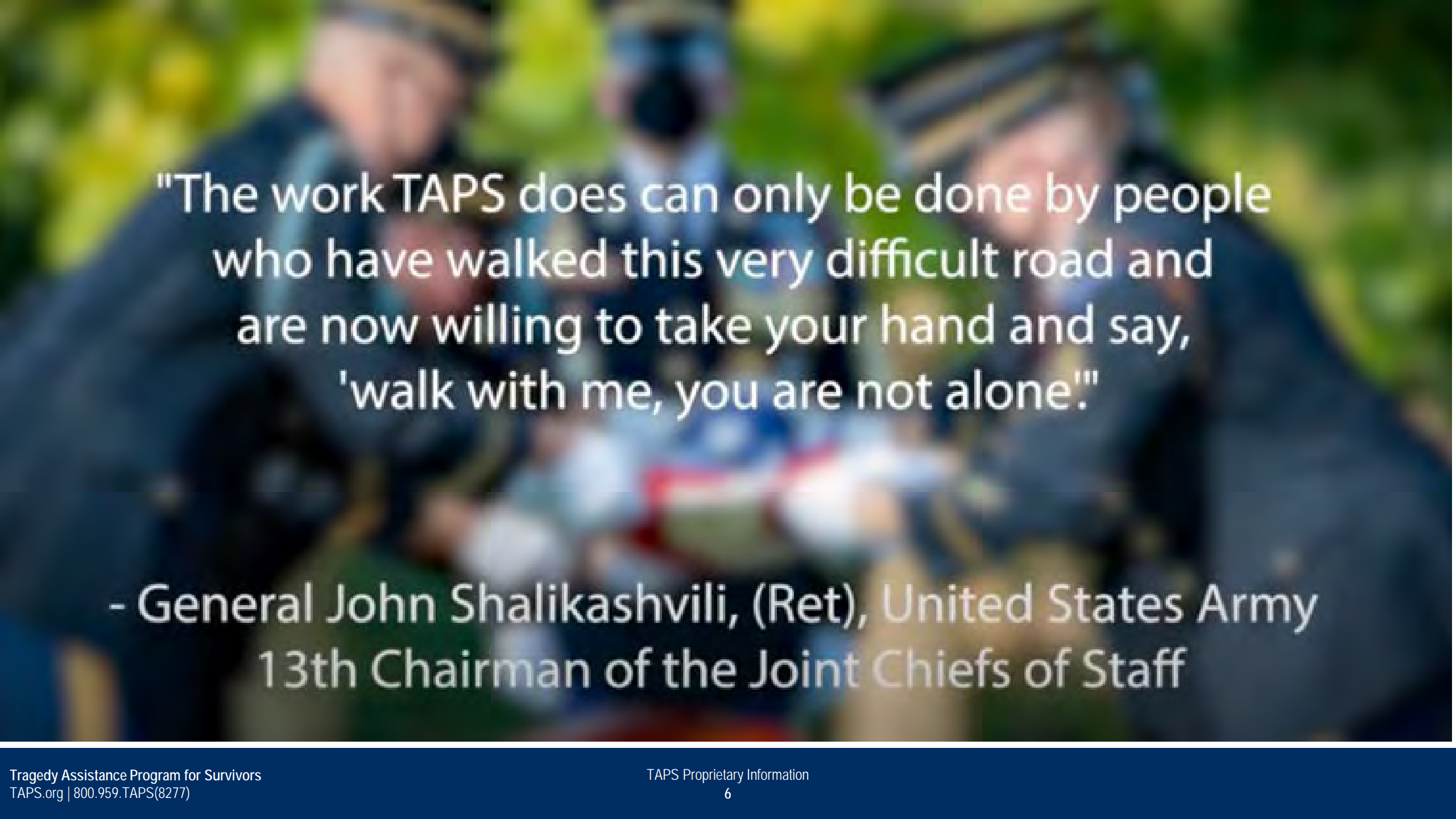
EMPOWERMENT: We empower survivors with healthy coping tools, resources, and opportunities to connect in the comfort of their home, their community, their region, and the nation to grow with their grief.

CONNECTION: We connect all those grieving a military death 24/7 to a nationwide network of peer based emotional survivor support and critical casework assistance.

EDUCATION: We inform and educate using research-informed best practices in bereavement and trauma care for survivors and advocate on behalf of survivors with policy and legislative priorities.

CREATING COMMUNITY: We build community with survivors to provide comprehensive comfort, care, and resources where they live, when they need it, and in a manner comfortable for them.





"The work TAPS does can only be done by people who have walked this very difficult road and are now willing to take your hand and say, 'walk with me, you are not alone!'"

- General John Shalikashvili, (Ret), United States Army
13th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



TAPS CORE SERVICES

Grief doesn't follow a timeline. TAPS provides 24/7 care, forever.

24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline

TAPS is the only national nonprofit organization ready with a 24/7 live-answer helpline staffed by trained professionals specializing in grief and trauma support.

Peer Based Emotional Support

As the national nonprofit organization providing comfort, care, compassion, and connections with resources, TAPS connects survivors living with grief and trauma with trained peers who share a similar experience of grief and loss, fostering connectedness and belonging.

Community Based Care

TAPS Community-Based Care creates a supportive network of local grief support groups and mental health professionals who offer compassionate assistance and services to grieving military survivors and families in their community.

Casework

TAPS Casework provides practical support to military survivors and families living with grief, helping them navigate administrative processes and access emergency and critical financial resources.





**TAPS PROVIDES SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR ALL SURVIVORS
REGARDLESS OF THE DUTY STATUS AT THE TIME OF DEATH**

- ☑ ACTIVE DUTY
- ☑ TITLE 10 STATUS
- ☑ TITLE 32 STATUS
- ☑ ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE
- ☑ TECHNICIAN
- ☑ TRADITIONAL GUARD

- ☑ STATE ACTIVE DUTY
- ☑ NON-DUTY STATUS
- ☑ RESERVES
- ☑ VETERAN TO INCLUDE VETERAN OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

- ☑ RETIRED TO INCLUDE RETIRED FROM THE GUARD AND RESERVE
- ☑ MILITARY FAMILY GRIEVING A CIVILIAN FAMILY MEMBER LOSS
- ☑ BATTLE BUDDY



Keeping the Lights On

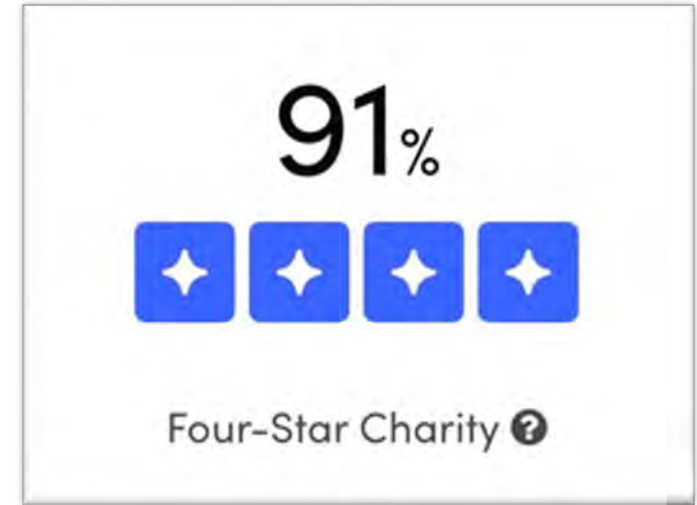
6%

Fundraising Initiatives

3%

Survivor Programs for the Loved One's of America's Fallen

91%



Charity Navigator

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

Is this your nonprofit?
 501(c)(3) organization
 Donations are tax-deductible

<https://www.taps.org/>
 3033 Wilson Boulevard
 Third Floor
 Arlington VA 22201
 202-588-8277

Arlington VA | IRS ruling year: 1995 | EIN: 92-0152268

Organization Mission
 The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is the national organization providing compassionate care and survivor support services for the families of Ameri... (More)

Rating Information
 Great

91%

Four-Star Charity

Impact & Results

- Accountability & Finance
- Culture & Community
- Leadership & Adaptability

Donate

Favorite



2023 TAPS OVERVIEW



2023 NEW SURVIVORS

+9% more new survivors welcomed in 2023 than in 2022

9,611

New Survivors Connected with TAPS in 2023

8,849

New Survivors Connected with TAPS in 2022

78% (7,490) of all new 2023 survivors **Adults**
21% (2,012) of all new 2023 survivors **Children**



2023 Average of 26 New Survivors Each Day

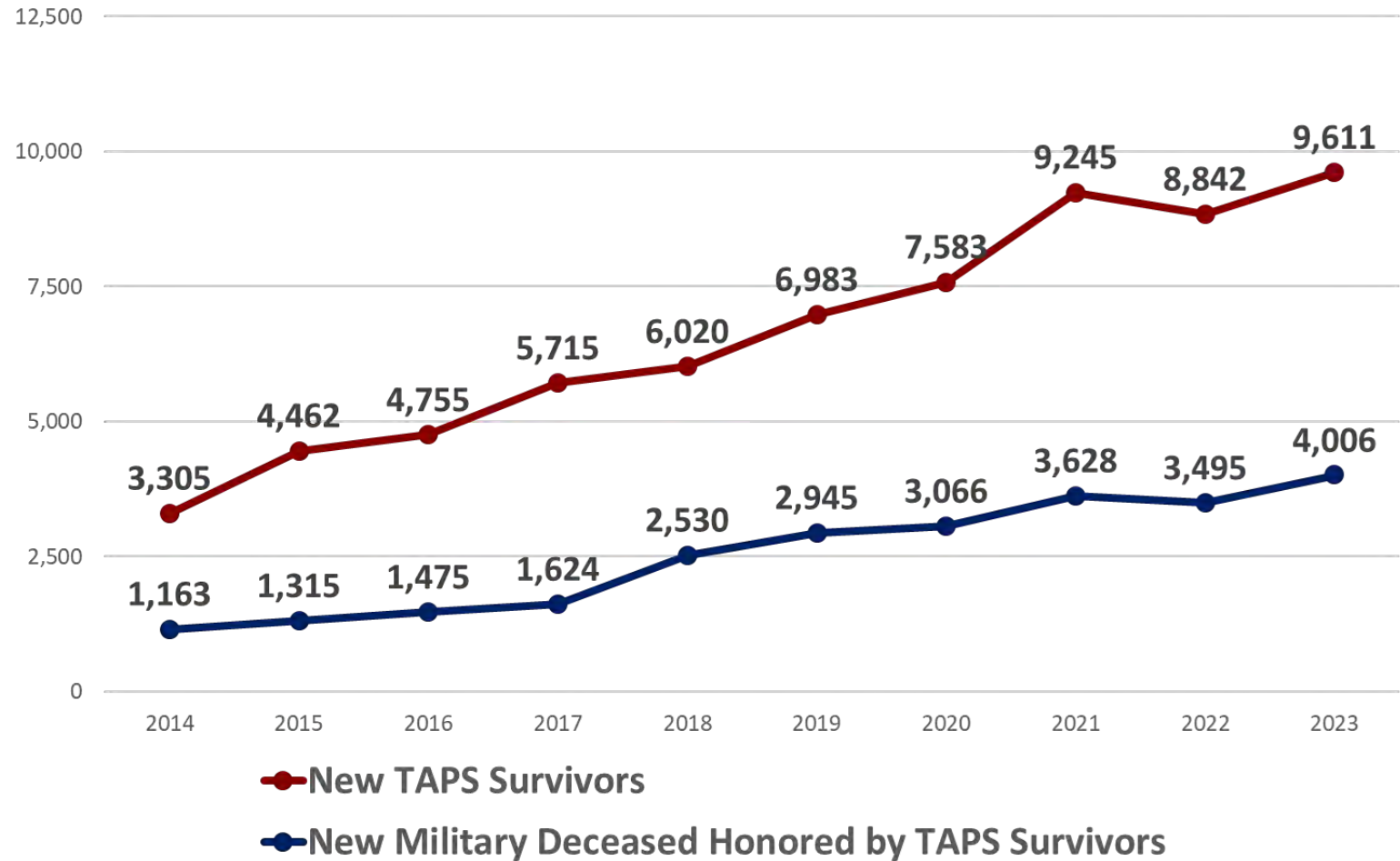
67% of survivors connected within the first year (365 days) of their loss

11% of survivors connected 1-3 years post-loss

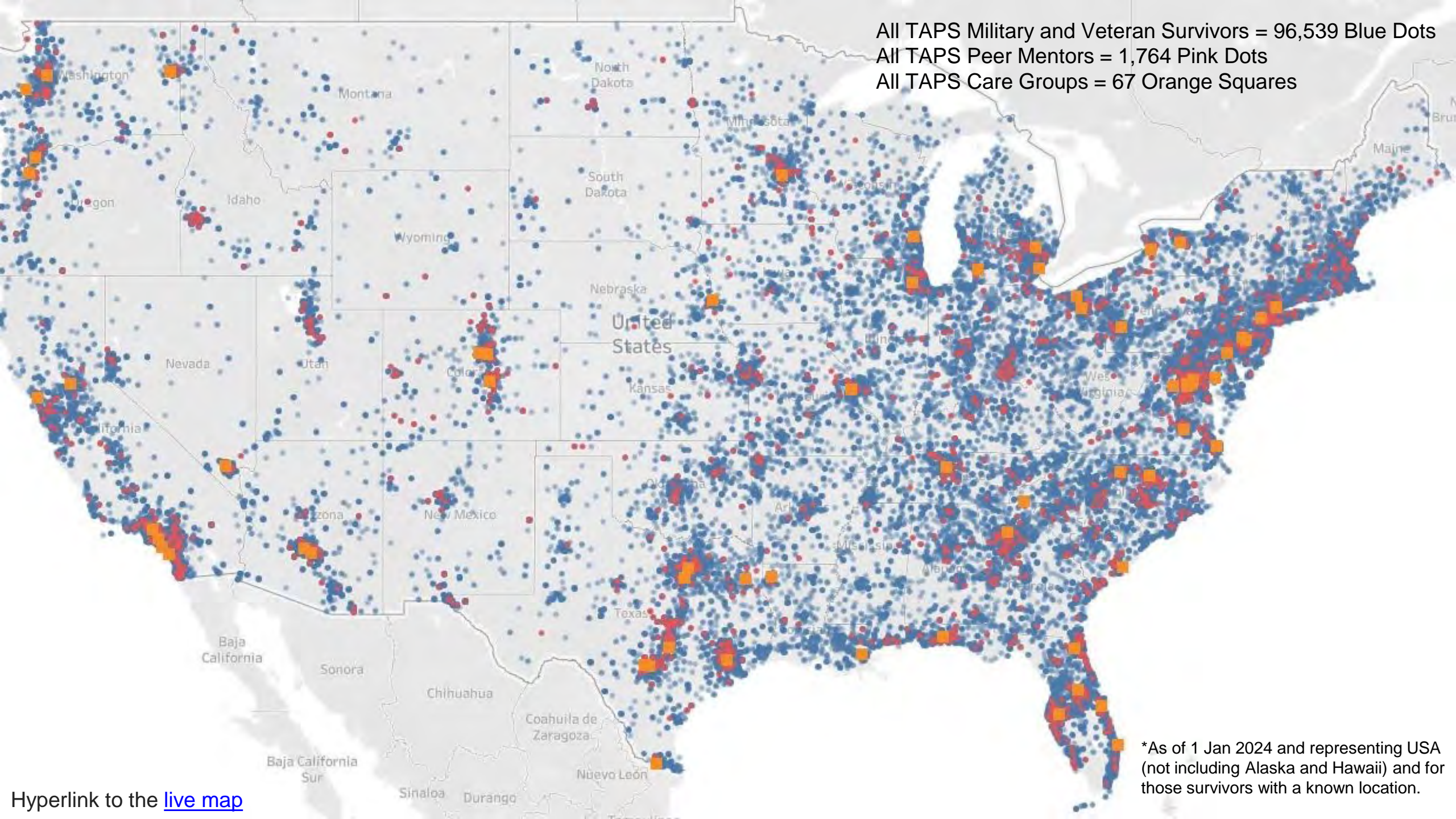
11% of survivors connected 4-9 years post-loss

11% of survivors connected 10+ years post-loss

2023 New Survivors and Military Deceased Connecting with TAPS



8% of all new 2023 survivors have an unknown Date of Death



All TAPS Military and Veteran Survivors = 96,539 Blue Dots
All TAPS Peer Mentors = 1,764 Pink Dots
All TAPS Care Groups = 67 Orange Squares

*As of 1 Jan 2024 and representing USA (not including Alaska and Hawaii) and for those survivors with a known location.

Hyperlink to the [live map](#)



ALWAYS BY THEIR SIDE



If our survivors do nothing proactive, they still receive
432 Messages of Hope and Healing from TAPS Every Year



EVERY DAY:

365 TAPS Daily Reflection Email Messages

EVERY YEAR:

1 Angelversary Card Honoring the Anniversary of their Loved One's Death

2X A MONTH:

24 Email Invitations to Join a TAPS Care Group

EVERY MONTH:

12 Monthly TAPS Family Newsletters

ONGOING PEER CONNECTION:

24 Invitations to Connect With Other Survivors with a Similar: Manner of Death | Gender | Relationship to Loved One | Other Special Circumstances

WHEN NEW TO GRIEF:

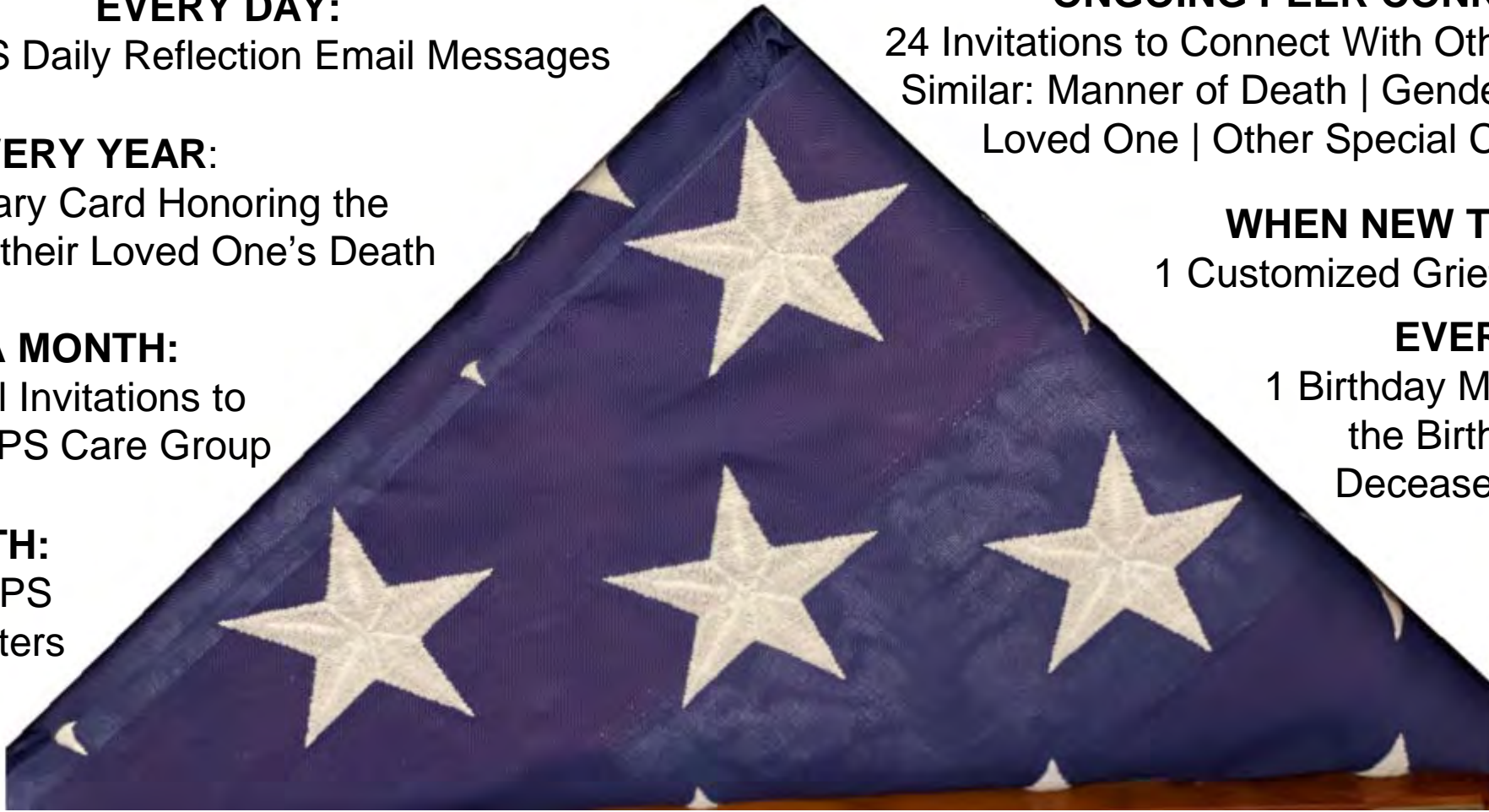
1 Customized Grief Resource Kit

EVERY YEAR:

1 Birthday Message Honoring the Birthday of Their Deceased Loved One

EVERY YEAR:

4 TAPS Quarterly Magazines





SURVIVOR SERVICES (non-events)

9,611 new survivors in 2023

17,534 individual survivors had 113,092 engagements with non-event-based Survivor Care in 2023

Average of 6.4 non-event-based engagements for each survivor in 2023

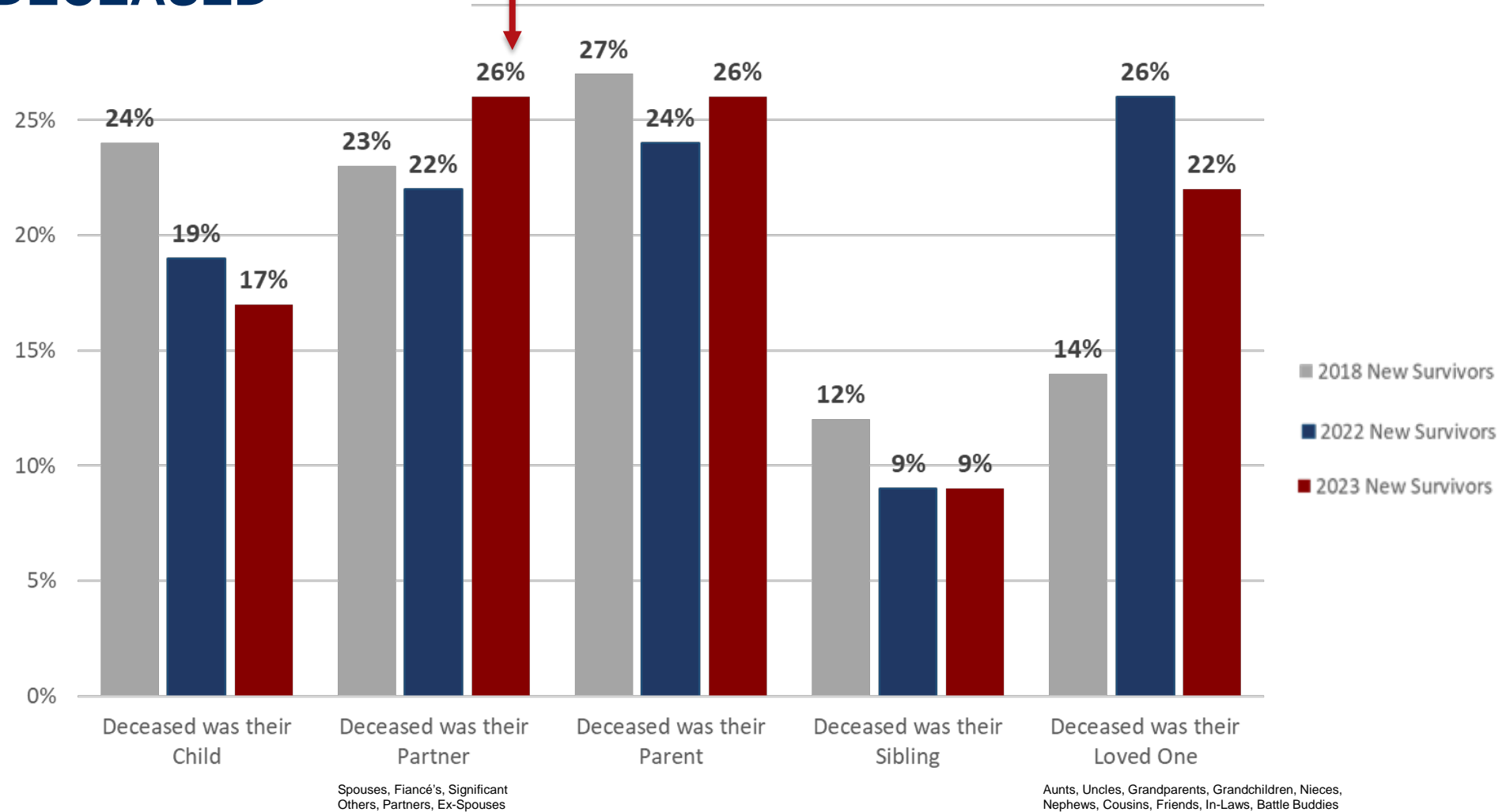
Services provided to all military and veteran survivors through TAPS Survivor Care Team, Peer Mentor Program, Counseling Connections, 24/7 Helpline, Casework, Education, Youth Programs, Care Groups, Community Based Care, TAPS Online Community, and more!





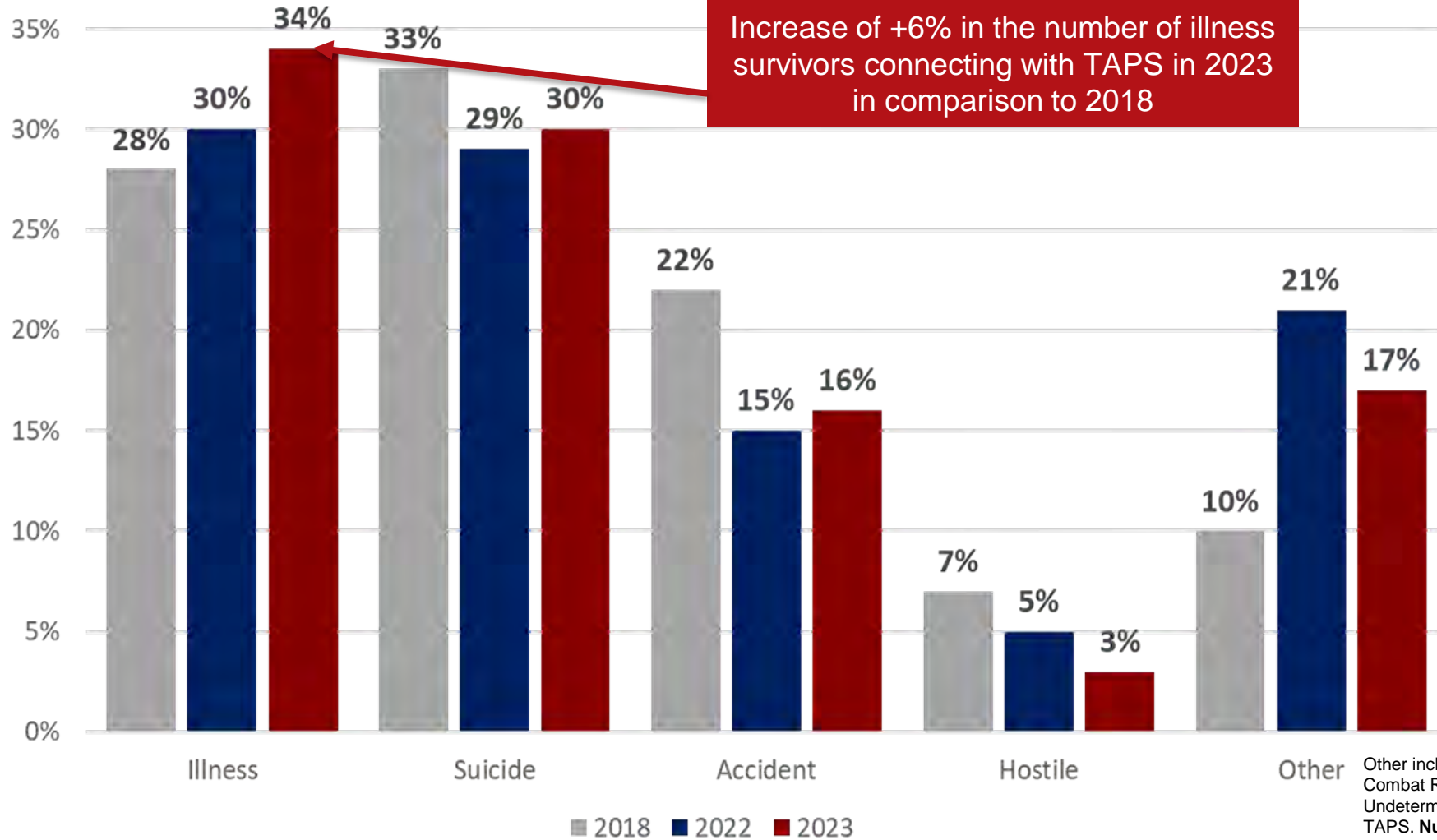
NEW SURVIVORS BY RELATIONSHIP TO THE DECEASED

In 2023, We had the highest overall percentage (and highest number) of partners connect with TAPS since 2008.





TRENDS IN MANNER OF DEATH



Other includes Friendly Fire, Homicide, Non-Combat Related Incidents, Non-Hostile, Undetermined, or Unknown at time of intake with TAPS. Numbers will vary upon connection with military survivors to identify cause of death



TRENDS IN MANNER OF DEATH

★ Trends in deaths involving fentanyl

- ★ Pain
- ★ Opioids
- ★ Addiction
- ★ Street drugs
- ★ Fentanyl
- ★ **Loss of benefits to surviving family**

*“My son died on February 23, 2022, at his home in Fort Benning GA. He was in the process of transitioning out of the Army at the time of his death, but he was still Active Duty at the time of his death. Because he died at home and a drug overdose was suspected, I requested an autopsy thru the military, which was done. The results of his autopsy indicated **multiple drugs in his system at time of death - including fentanyl**. My son was a Staff Sergeant and a sniper instructor when he was assigned to Fort Benning, GA in late fall of 2019, with 10 years of very dedicated service to our country and two tours to Afghanistan. But he was diagnosed with PTSD, depression, insomnia, and the range of issues related to these unfortunate souls that were our so loved children.....”*



MEETING THE MISSION



SURVIVOR CARE TEAM

- ★ Frontline of survivor comfort, care, and support
- ★ Connecting survivors with professional peer support based on:
 - ★ Relationship to deceased
 - ★ Circumstances of death
 - ★ Manner of death
 - ★ Generation level

“When we lose someone we love, time ceases to exist. There’s only a before their death and an after their death. TAPS helps me to come to a place of peace between these times.”

– Survivor on Survivor Care Team





CASEWORK



Survivor Support

Supporting survivors of a military death through the complexities after the loss of their military member

2023 - 5,763 Cases Resolved
2022 - 6,397 Cases Resolved
2021 - 6,459 Cases Resolved
2020 - 6,729 Cases Resolved

Official Papers | Employment
Headstone | Healthcare
Investigations | Line of Duty
Legal Cases | Medals
Personal Effects | Survivor Flags



+49%
increase
from 2022

Financial Assistance

Providing emergency financial support in their greatest time of need

2023 - \$556K
2022 - \$372K
2021 - \$390K
2020 - \$402K

Groceries | Mortgage/Rent
Post-Mortem Cleaning | Burial Expenses
Travel Costs | Moving Expenses
Clothing | School Supplies
Holiday Support | Tutoring



+46%
increase
from 2022

Retroactive Benefits

Retroactive benefits awarded to survivors with the support of TAPS Casework Assistance

2023 - \$5.7M
2022 - \$3.9M
2021 - \$2.5M
2020 - \$3.9M

DFAS (SBP, SSIA, AOP)
VA (DIC and Survivor Pension)
OSGLI (SGLI and SGLI-DE)

*Total number of cases resolved prior to 2023 included cases specific to Education. Education cases are presented in the following slides

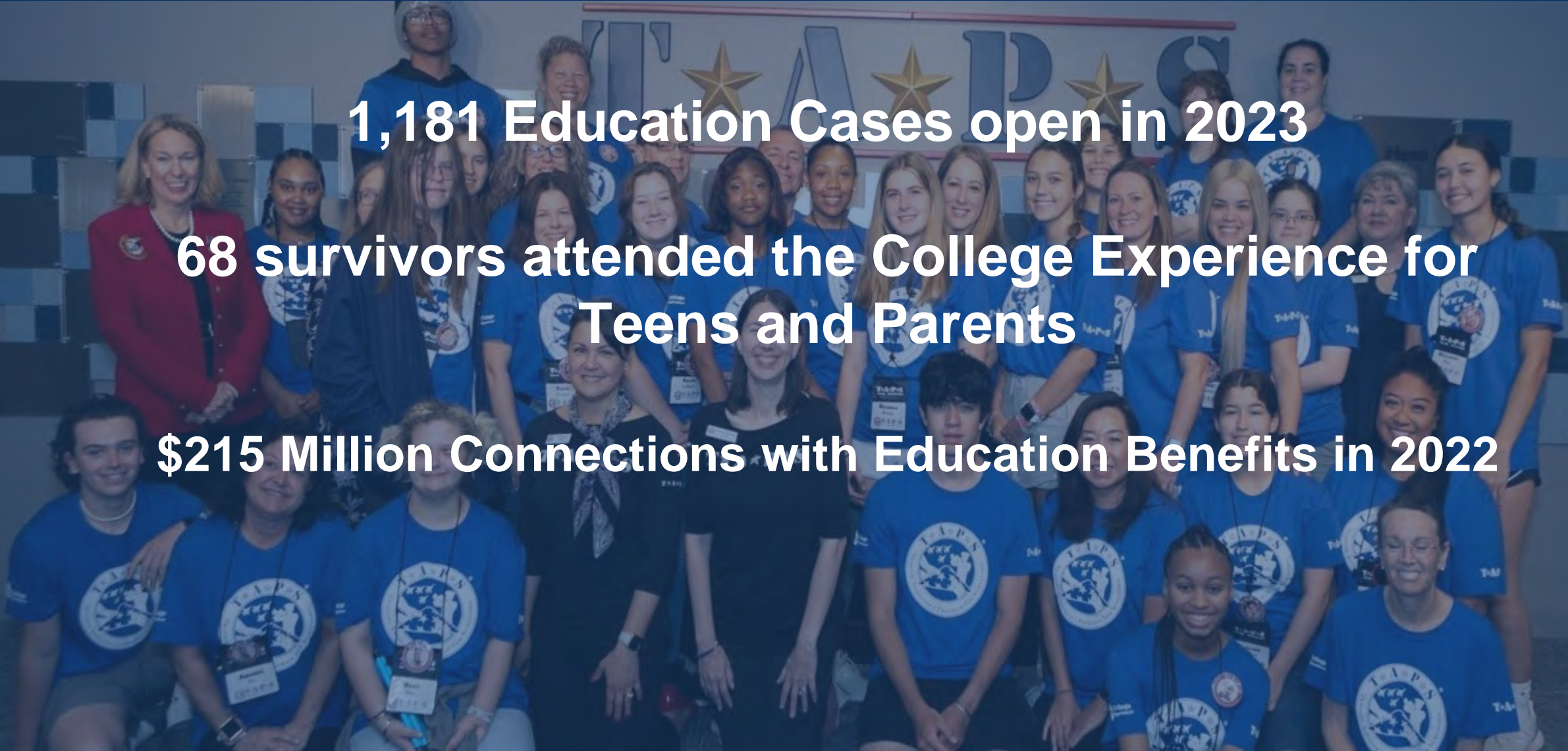


\$561+ MILLION EDUCATION BENEFIT CONNECTIONS IN 2023

1,181 Education Cases open in 2023

68 survivors attended the College Experience for Teens and Parents

\$215 Million Connections with Education Benefits in 2022





EDUCATION SUPPORT

Federal Waivers

State Waivers

Scholarships

TAPS Education Support works closely with military and veteran survivors to help meet their educational goals.

The TAPS Education Team customizes support, benefits, and resources considering:

- 1. Educational goals of student**
- 2. Era of military service**
- 3. Duty status of service member at the time of death**
- 4. Manner of death**
- 5. Branch of service**
- 6. State of residence**
- 7. Additional unique circumstances**



24/7 NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR HELPLINE

In 2023, TAPS answered the most calls in our history

20,656

+16% from total calls answered in 2022

2020 - 2023 Averages

2020 # of incoming calls per day	37
2021 # of incoming calls per day	43
2022 # of incoming calls per day	50
2023 # of incoming calls per day	57

Casework, Emotional Support, and TAPS Programming are the main reasons military and veteran survivors call the 24/7 TAPS Helpline



2023 TAPS EVENTS

1,300+

TAPS Events for military survivors

13,300+

Survivors attended a TAPS Event

522+ Virtual Events = 4,400+ survivors

781+ In-Person Events = 8,900+ survivors

+36% more events in
2023 welcoming 15%+
more survivors than 2022

*Final numbers will be available in the 2023
Impact Report available March 2024



TAPS PROGRAMS

Survivor Seminars | Suicide Pre/Postvention | Caregiver to Survivor
Women's Empowerment | Sports & Entertainment | Outdoor Expeditions
Retreats | Care Groups | Young Adults | TAPS Togethers
Online Community | Virtual Programming





WHAT SURVIVORS GAIN

This weekend
I want to
establish peace
inside my own
soul | ♥

Figure out what to do
with the rest of my
life.

TO -
Start living
and stop
existing.

Amy

To reflect on the
anniversary of Cesar's
death the life that we
shared and who I am
now. To find a place of
peace with the two.

THEY served. THEY died.
THEIR stories
DO NOT END
#livinglegacy
www.taps.org



TAPPS SUPPORT TO YOUTH

Good Grief Camps | Family Campouts

Early Childhood | Young Adults | Online Support





2023 TAPS YOUTH PROGRAMS

**905 children attended
11 Youth Program Events**

832 children attended Good Grief Camp
8 Seminar Good Grief Camps

73 children attended Family Camp
3 Family Camps

Most children attending a TAPS Youth Program event in 2023 grieve the death of their military loved one who died by **suicide** and are **within 4 years** of loss.





MILITARY AND LEGACY MENTORS



WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF SERVING AS A TAPS MILITARY MENTOR?

- 1 To make a difference in the life of a grieving military child
- 2 Honoring the life and legacy of a fellow service member or veteran
- 3 Supporting the needs of caregivers and survivors
- 4 Improved personal outlook on life



71%

of TAPS Military Mentors reported they volunteer in honor of a Battle Buddy

70%

of Mentors surveyed in 2020 reported they have served in combat post 9/11 with the majority having served in Operation Iraqi Freedom

93%

of Mentors surveyed in 2020 reported they would recommend the TAPS Military Mentor program to a fellow service member or surviving military family



BRINGING JOY TO MILITARY SURVIVORS

teams4taps | Stars4TAPS





ADVOCACY



LOVE LIVES ON ACT OF 2023

- ★ Allows surviving spouses to remarry before the age of 55 and retain their survivor benefits
- ★ Allows surviving spouses to maintain education benefits, base access, and privileges
- ★ Restores TRICARE benefits in case a subsequent marriage ends
- ★ Removes the “hold themselves out to be married” clause & honors all surviving spouses
- ★ Sponsors: Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS) & Raphael Warnock (D-GA); Representatives Dean Phillips (D-MN) & Richard Hudson (R-NC)





CARING FOR SURVIVORS ACT

- ★ Raises DIC from 43% to 55% of the rate of compensation paid to 100% disabled veterans
- ★ Reduces time frame veterans need to be rated totally disabled from 10-5 years
- ★ Current monthly DIC base rate is \$1,612.75
- ★ Impacts 465,000 eligible survivors
- ★ Sponsors: Senators Jon Tester (D-MT) & John Boozman (R-AR); Representatives Jahana Hayes (D-CT-5) & Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1)

