

The Blue Star Mothers of LA Chapter 1 is a support and service organization with a rich history dating back to WWI. We are dedicated to the members of our armed forces and their families. Our organization consists of mothers, fathers, siblings, friends and anyone interested in supporting our troops.

Since forming 5 years ago our organization has grown tremendously. We now have 4 additional chapters around the state and have grown to over 300 members statewide. We have continued our work in supporting our military and their families, but we are no longer just an organization...we are now a sisterhood. We have been through so much and have supported each other in ways that I cannot even describe. We have stood alongside other mothers as they have buried their children. This no longer makes you an organization...it makes you a family.

I am so proud of our group and what we have done in turning our pain and sorrow into a way of helping others.

We have sent over ~~1500~~1500~~3000~~ care packages to our troops serving all over the country. We have also provided supplies and cards and letters to our veteran homes and hospitals. This is one of our major projects. We often receive notes from soldiers letting us know our packages are the only ones they receive. We depend on the generosity of other organizations and individuals to help us with donating the supplies. EATEL of Gonzales has been very generous in covering up to \$2500 in postage each year. However, this is usually spent in one or two mail-outs.

We have assisted military families when tragedies such as fires, illness and other life ~~altering~~altering events have taken place. Our chapter was instrumental in getting HB15 and SB50 passed during the 2006 legislative session.

Our most difficult responsibility has been to support our fellow military families when they lose their soldier. We accept this solemn responsibility because our families are joined by the special bond of having a loved one who volunteered to protect the rights and freedoms that Americans hold dear. When a Blue Star Mother loses her child who is serving in the Armed Forces, she becomes a Gold Star Mother. It is an honor only a child can give a parent. It is an honor none of us want. Since 9/11 Louisiana has lost 137 young men and women while serving our country.

~~Each year since 2005~~For the last 5 years, we have hosted a Mother's Day luncheon honoring our Gold Star Parents. This luncheon is a time of remembrance and a way of letting our Gold Star Parents know their sacrifices have not been forgotten. This is one of our most important projects. We not only support families in Louisiana, but also some from Texas and Mississippi who do not receive any support.

Most of us have watched our children go off to war not once, twice, but three and four times. It doesn't get easier because ~~you~~we have been through it before. ~~You~~We

now wonder if fate will be on your side. We are also faced with difficult obstacles when our children return home from war. Many are returning with the scars of war that will be with them for the rest of their lives. They are struggling with PTSD and physical injuries. Many are afraid to seek help because of they are embarrassed or scared it will be held against them. This simply is not right. We as a Nation must allow them to seek the help needed. We must not allow today's soldiers to be treated so unfairly like our Vietnam Veterans were treated.

I hope this gives you a little insight about the Blue Star Mothers and we thank you in advance for any help you may offer.

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~~I would like to share with you this poem that says it all:~~

# ~~Who's Got Your Back?~~

~~By Autumn Parker~~

~~I am a small and precious child, my dad's been sent to fight.  
The only place I'll see his face, is in my dreams at night.  
He will be gone too many days for my young mind to keep track.  
I may be sad, but I am proud...My daddy's got your back.~~

~~I am a caring mother. My son has gone to war.  
My mind is filled with worries that I have never known before.  
Everyday I try to keep my thoughts from turning black.  
I may be scared, but I am proud...My son has got your back.~~

~~I am a strong and loving wife, with a husband soon to go.  
There are times I'm terrified in a way most never know.  
I bite my lip, and force a smile as I watch my husband pack.  
My heart may break, but I am proud...My husband's got your back..~~

~~I am a soldier. Serving Proudly, standing tall.  
I fight for freedom, yours and mine by answering this call.  
I do my job, while knowing the thanks it sometimes lacks.  
Say a prayer that I'll come home...It's me whose got your back.~~