



December 2, 2016

Nathanson Family Resilience Center
Military and Veteran Family Initiatives Funding Report
The Georges & Germaine Fusenot Charity Foundation

The Georges & Germaine Fusenot Charity Foundation's generous support for Military and Veteran Family Programs within the UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center has provided the funds to support a number of key initiatives, each of which has attracted additional funding enabling us to grow the reach of these innovations, and helping to ensure their sustainability. Your generosity supports our mission of strengthening the health and wellness of military members, veterans and their families. The Fusenot Charity Foundation's support of our Military Family Programs from 2010 to 2016 has been targeted to develop and disseminate service, education and research programs focused on addressing emerging challenges and advancing the well-being of military families:

1. FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress) Women Veteran's Initiative. Through your support, we have responded to the challenges faced by women veterans and their families in transitioning to civilian life. In 2012, we conducted an initial needs assessment of women veterans in Los Angeles County and within Los Angeles Veterans Administration clinics. This assessment identified the need for a more family-friendly VA, assistance with parenting and managing healthy family relationships, and a service delivery model that respected and was responsive to veterans who were mothers, heads of households and employed.

We brought three distinct values to our response to this needs assessment: a commitment to a family-centered framework, to using technology to improve access to services, and a collaborative approach with families and service organizations. We also only proposed efforts we felt could make a critical impact because of our expertise in family resilience and behavioral health. We made strategic decisions to initiate these responses:

- We teamed with VA staff on two key projects: to train community and VA clinicians in the FOCUS resilience enhancing program to pilot family services at four Los Angeles-area VA clinics and to supply subject matter expertise to the development of a pilot parenting toolkit for women veterans which could be shared with community organizations.
- Working with a range of community partners, such as US Vets, Volunteers of America, the YWCA and Goodwill, we also developed a program for women veterans including skill building and psycho-education groups for women and in-home/residential services through the use of home visits or a virtual platform.

Based on the work that has developed from initial pilots, we have obtained additional grant funding to partner with US Vets and Veterans of America to expand an embedded service program within their agencies for military connected children and parents affected by housing instability.

2. Provider Training and Community Education in Serving Military and Veteran Families. Fusenot gift support has also enabled us to transform our original FOCUS Project training team into the UCLA NFRC Training Institute to support the dissemination of best practices to community and agency partners through interactive on-line and in-person training. Through this funding, we are able to provide low or no cost training to non-profit and social service organizations seeking to expand services to veterans and their families. The success of these efforts has enabled us to more directly meet the needs of community-dwelling military families not only in Southern California but also nationally. We have been named one of seven national Centers of Excellence as part of the Welcome Back Veterans Initiative (welcomebackveterans.org)—a network of academic centers supported by the McCormick Foundation and Major League Baseball who partner with community and the VA to extend evidence-based care to veterans and their families. We continue to train a range of service agencies/providers, educators and community members in military culture, military family issues, and best practice behavioral health models—these include Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health staff, multiple community agencies, California National Guard Family Readiness Team, Los Angeles Unified School District and others. We also obtained a contract funded by the Department of Defense Office of Suicide Prevention to increase the community capacity of mental health clinicians and other providers to provide care for veterans and their families throughout the state of California by training them in military culture and evidence-based practices using the Star Behavioral Health Providers in partnership with the Center for Deployment Psychology.

3. Virtual Home Delivery of FOCUS Family Programming. Military connected families report continued barriers to accessing high quality services in the community, including stigma, geography/travel and cost. We have used your generous support to help develop an in-home Telehealth platform for delivering FOCUS-based family-centered consultation and prevention services to active duty, guard, reserve or veteran service members and their families. This service is currently provided to wounded service members and their families, and California National Guard and veteran families with limited access to high quality services. The success of this program has led to development of an implementation package and training for community agencies serving veteran families in California and nationally to support implementation of Telehealth services for military families. Further, we have a sustained partnership with the California National Guard to assist with high-risk families to provided direct service delivery.

4. Annual Military-Connected Families Conference in Los Angeles (2012-2016). The Foundation's generosity has provided support for four co-sponsored annual day-long conferences in partnership with Children's Institute International and held at the Los Angeles Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, the home of the County's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. This conference has provided training and education in military culture and practices for community providers, legal experts, educators, health providers and family members within the greater Los Angeles region.

5. Translational Research to Advance the Understanding of Military Children and Families. The Fusenot Foundation has provided pilot funding to clinical and service delivery research designed to inform policy and advance the care of military children. In 2010-2011, we conducted a service implementation study of the FOCUS program for military families, as well as an analysis of the

needs of military and veteran families with a focus on improving systems that serve returning service members (Link et al, 2013). Additionally, the NFRC Scientific Leadership guest-edited a special double issue of *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* (16[3-4]) dedicated to military children and families which was published in 2013, and has helped to shape scientific inquiry and policy. Support from the Fusenot foundation has also enabled us to examine the impact of wartime military service on preschool children's developing stress neurobiology. This study adds to the existing literature by examining the role of familial adversity, parenting behavior and children's neurobiological stress responses within the context of a parenting intervention. Initiated in 2015, this study will provide important initial evidence for the role of supporting parenting as a mechanism for promoting children's development. We hope to apply this knowledge to develop larger studies powerful enough to elucidate connections between familial contexts and children's developing neurobiology.

Selected References:

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