

OPERATION DECADE OF SUPPORT

JOHNNY MAC SCHOLAR

Ten years ago in 2014, our founding year, we awarded our first scholarships. **Johnny Mac Scholar Shannon Zangas** was one of our original recipients. Shannon graduated from Dickinson College with a degree in political science, the University of Pittsburgh with her master's in education, and Augusta University with her specialist degree. Shannon teaches Medical Ethics & Law, AP Psychology, Art and Current Issues at McClure Health Science High School in Gwinnett County, Georgia.



Shannon's father, **Marine Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Zangas**, made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq in 2004.



FROM OUR JOHNNY MAC CEO

DEAR FRIENDS,

What an honor it is to write my first letter for the Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund annual report! Although I've only been here a handful of months, it's already been a whirlwind—filled with energy, purpose, and connection.

This year's report, *Operation Decade of Support*, is dedicated to our Board Member and founding President & CEO, MaryEllen Picciuto, and to you—the remarkable community she built. It honors the grit, determination, and love for our mission that have allowed Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund to award over \$38 million in scholarships to 8,000 scholars during her tenure.

I remember exactly where I was the moment I learned of this opportunity, and from then on, I knew Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund was where I wanted to be. As I navigated the thoughtful hiring process, my conviction only deepened. I am very fortunate to serve an organization that takes such care in building its team.

As the newest member of this esteemed family, I am committed to carrying our mission forward and building on its legacy. While I never had the

privilege of knowing our inspiration, Colonel John McHugh, I understand the powerful bonds of West Point classmates that led to our founding. I've seen the challenges and tragedy that accompany military service. Most of all, I believe in giving children born into service the brightest possible futures. We honor their parents' sacrifice by ensuring these children have access to the education they need to thrive and shape their own paths.

In this report, I hope you'll experience our 10-year milestone as we did—through a lens of impact, reflection, and renewed commitment. Joining during the final quarter of 2024 was the perfect time to begin my journey. From our record-breaking 7th Atlanta Gala to our largest-ever Army-Navy Tailgate and the awarding of \$3.52 million in scholarships—part of an extraordinary \$4 million raised—I've seen firsthand the generosity and heart of this community.

However, while we're on a serious mission, we also know how to have fun. Whether cheering at Army-Navy, celebrating scholars, or catching up with partners, there's joy in what we do together!



With **MaryEllen Picciuto** at our 2024 Atlanta Gala

Thank you for sharing your passion, resources, and trust with us. We are committed to being careful stewards of it all.

Finally—if I can promise you anything, it's this—in a world full of uncertainty, one thing remains constant: our enduring mission. We will always stand with our military families, ensuring their children have the opportunity to build strong, promising futures. Together, there is so much more we will accomplish.

WITH THANKS AND ADMIRATION,

Meghan Moretti, CEO

OUR MOTIVATION

Our friend Army veteran Garrett Cathcart contacted us in 2023 to tell us about Staff Sergeant James D. Ellis, a soldier he had served with in the 4th Infantry Division on Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sergeant Ellis was killed in action on October 2, 2006 along with three other soldiers. His daughter Ja’Niayah Ellis was just 13 months old when her father made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Sixteen years passed, and as Ja’Niayah approached college age, Garrett introduced us to her mother. We connected Mrs. Ellis with resources to help her navigate the education benefits from her late husband’s military service; then Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund helped fill the education gaps.

Garrett says, "Staff Sergeant Ellis died in my arms. It means so much to know his daughter is taken care of. It doesn’t erase the scars, but it helps heal my heart a little."

The Ellis Family is just one of 50,000 military families that motivate us to provide opportunities for military children to build strong futures through education.

JOHNNY MAC SCHOLAR

Ja’Niayah Ellis is a sophomore at Augusta University pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Her goal is to become a pediatric hematology/oncology nurse and help children through diagnoses of blood disorders and cancers.



Ja’Niayah’s inspiration is her father, **Army Staff Sergeant James D. Ellis**. Sergeant Ellis made the ultimate sacrifice on October 2, 2006 on his second deployment to Iraq.



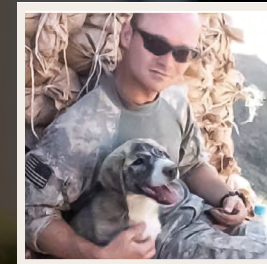
OUR MISSION

Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund is a nonprofit organization that honors military service and sacrifice by providing scholarships to veterans and military family members, especially to children of our nation's fallen or disabled.

This has been our duty for a decade.
We are giving back through education
to those who have given so much.

JOHNNY MAC SCHOLAR

Conner Reese is a junior pursuing a finance degree at the University of Central Florida. His dream is to start a business so he can help support his extended family.



Conner's stepfather **Army Staff Sergeant David Paul Nowaczyk** was on his third deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed in action on April 15, 2012. Conner was just eight years old.

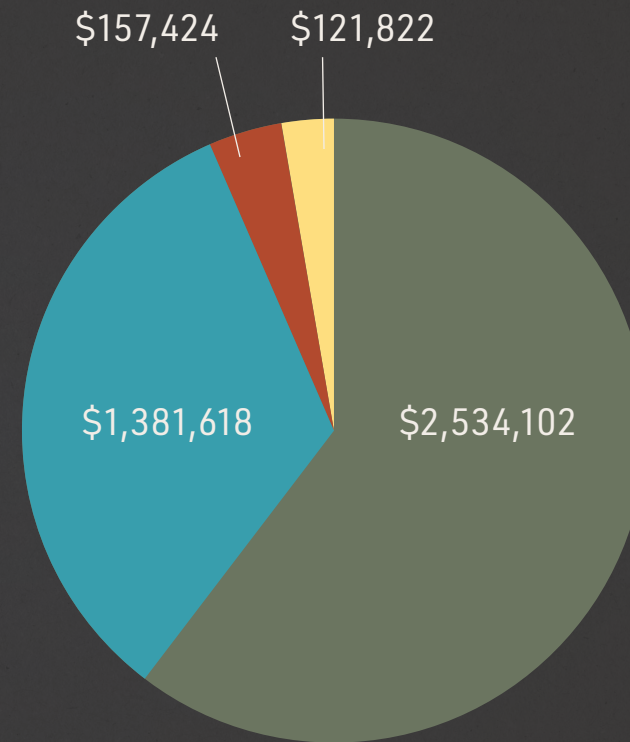
OUR 2024 FINANCIALS

Since our founding in 2014, Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund has raised over **\$49M** for our scholarship mission and operations. In 2024, we raised **\$4.2M** through your support of a variety of fundraising projects and initiatives. We prioritize high performance and results while exercising fiscal restraint and responsibility. We carefully manage our resources to ensure our organization’s sustainability for the years ahead. Independently audited every year, you’ll find our audit results and tax returns posted on our website.

We’re earning the nonprofit industry’s highest grades for our commitment to financial integrity and transparency along with effective nonprofit operations and governance. Over our **DECADE OF SUPPORT**, we’ve become a trusted resource, reliable partner, and sustainable funder.

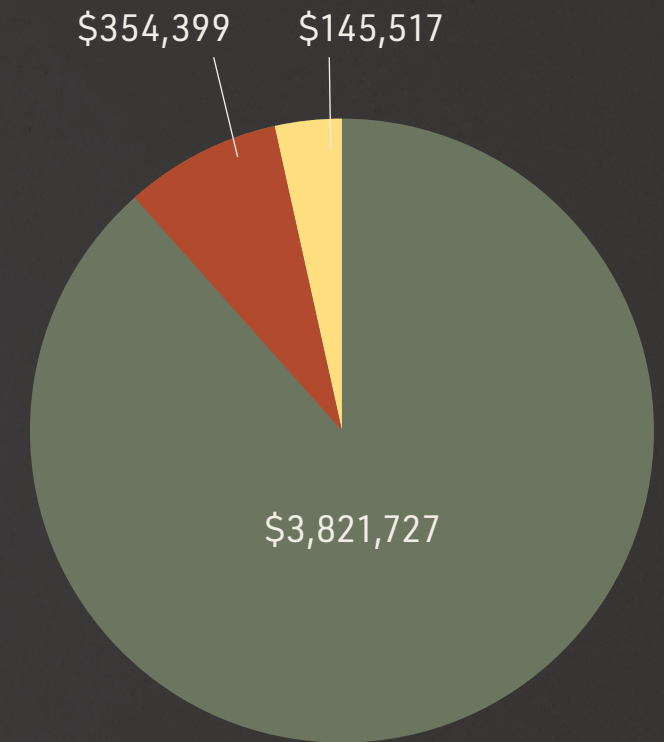


2024 SUPPORT AND REVENUE



- Individual Donations
- Corporate, Foundation, and Matching Donations
- Donated Goods and Services
- Investment Income and Other Revenue

2024 USES



- Programs (Scholarships)
- Fundraising Expenses (net of event expenses)
- Management and General Expenses

OUR 2024 FUNDRAISING

Throughout 2024, we commemorated our **DECADE OF SUPPORT** in our communications, at our events, and in our conversations with you. We're proud of reaching this momentous milestone which makes Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund a trusted organization, reliable partner, and sustainable funder.

It was a busy fundraising year with our annual Johnny Mac Memorial Golf Tournament at West Point, NY; our 7th Atlanta Gala; and our Army-Navy Tailgate at the home of the Washington Commanders, Northwest Stadium. Amidst the planning and execution of these large-scale events, we stayed busy with a wide variety of other fundraising projects and initiatives.

We salute our generous donors, sponsors, and dedicated volunteers for making 2024 such a memorable year for Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund.



In 2024, we raised **\$4.2M** total across all our fundraising events, initiatives, and projects.



A beautiful day at the historic West Point Golf Course at our annual tourney where we remembered Johnny Mac and raised a record \$256K. A generous golfer paid all event expenses for the 5th consecutive year.



Our meaningful monthly recurring donation program "Earn Your Boots" continues to gain momentum, up 23% from the previous year! We need some additional recruits—enlist now!



Our annual Atlanta Gala is one of our tentpole fundraising events with this year's fete raising over \$2M. Be part of this inspirational evening of fellowship and fundraising in 2025 on Oct 17 at the St. Regis Atlanta.



Thank you for your donated goods and services valued at \$157K in 2024! An executive search, printing, marketing, legal services, and more—these donations helped us devote more dollars to scholarships.



We are graced with so many dedicated caring donors and volunteers! Thank you for your employee campaigns, golf tournaments, social media fundraisers, donations in memory of loved ones, auction items, product promotions... the list goes on. We couldn't do it without you ♥



Our Army-Navy Tailgate at Northwest Stadium outside Washington, DC raised over \$1M for the 4th consecutive year! With 3,500 attendees, it was the hottest pre-game ticket in town.



Our year-end "Cheers to Ten Years" fundraising campaign raised over \$700K in just 6 weeks and marked the conclusion of our **2024 DECADE OF SUPPORT** commemoration.

\$49.1M

Total raised in our **DECADE OF SUPPORT**



OUR 2024 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING OF \$3,520,000

We raise funds each year—all year—for our scholarship programs. At the end of 2024, we awarded \$3,520,000 for scholarships and education programs for military children of the fallen or disabled. This funding is providing scholarships to 700 Johnny Mac Scholars for the 2025 academic year.

Says Johnny Mac Scholar Megan Kelley: “I’m a student at Western Governors University. I’m currently pursuing a degree in business administration and management and have a dream to one day use that degree to start my own business running a gym.

“My father Chief Warrant Officer Matthew Kelley served in the Army as a helicopter pilot. He loved to serve and he loved to fly—it was a dream of his ever since he was a boy. He was deployed to Iraq, and in January of 2009, he was sent to fly out on a night mission. Insurgents ambushed them and shot down their helicopters, killing my father along with three other brave men. I was only six years old when it happened and I remember the day the soldiers came to our home to tell us.

“It’s been really hard but with the help of Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund I’m able to go to college and pursue my dreams. And for that, I thank you all.”



Johnny Mac Scholars and scholarship alumni took a brief break from their studies and busy careers to join us at our 2024 Atlanta Gala. They graciously shared their stories of love and loss with our caring community of supporters. Each one of these military children lost their father in combat operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

From left to right: Conner Reese (University of Central Florida); Shannon Zangas (Dickinson College); Margaret McHugh (Liberty University); Kristen McHugh Moore (Liberty University); Kelly McHugh-Stewart (Kansas State University); Andrew Voelke (Auburn University); Annalise Ravella (Auburn University); Aspen Ravella (Auburn University); Boston Gilbert (Southern Methodist University); Megan Kelley (Western Governors University); Ja’Niayah Ellis (Augusta University).

JOHNNY MAC SCHOLAR

Jack Merz is a senior at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach. He is set to graduate this spring with a degree in aerospace engineering.



Jack's father, **U.S. Air Force Colonel Alexander Merz**, died on May 19, 2019 from injuries sustained in a car accident. At the time of this tragedy, he was assigned

as the Deputy Director of Special Programs in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. Colonel Merz had multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan over his 27-year career.



OUR DECADE OF SUPPORT SINCE 2014

\$38,343,900

TOTAL EDUCATION FUNDING AWARDED

8,000

SCHOLARSHIPS TO MILITARY CHILDREN OF OUR
NATION'S FALLEN OR DISABLED

- 2014**
 - April 10: Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund established as a nonprofit
 - Opened our bank account with \$25
 - Launched our website and social media; formed our board of directors
 - First 10 scholarships awarded
- 2015**
 - First gala event in Houston raises \$1.3M
 - Johnny Mac Golf Classic at Baltusrol with Rickie Fowler
 - Birmingham Gala with Tim Tebow and Coach Saban
 - 1,000+ supported our events this year
- 2016**
 - 3rd annual Johnny Mac Memorial Golf Tourney at West Point
 - Inaugural Atlanta Gala
 - \$5M in donations since 2014
 - 700 Johnny Mac Scholars served
- 2017**
 - Mercedes-Benz USA partnership (lasting 6 years and \$12M in donations)
 - \$10M in donations since 2014
 - Johnny Mac Scholars in all 50 states and repping all the Armed Forces
- 2018**
 - Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Humanitarian Award
 - "Heroes in Hollywood" gala with emcee Jimmy Kimmel
 - 5 large-scale fundraising events this year in TX, NY, FL, CA, and GA
 - 5 years of impact
- 2019**
 - \$20M in donations since 2014
 - Inaugural Dallas Gala
 - Collaborating with the best nonprofit partners to reach more military children
 - Earned the Army's Distinguished Public Service Medal
- 2020**
 - Covid-19 stopped us from gathering
 - Candid Platinum Seal (first time evaluated!)
 - Sustain Support fundraising
 - Instagram launch
 - Over 3,000 Johnny Mac Scholars to date
- 2021**
 - Monthly e-news SITREP debut
 - Hosted our first nonprofit partners collaborative
 - First Army-Navy tailgate in NJ at MetLife Stadium
 - Operation Endurance fundraising
 - Charity Navigator 4-Star Charity (first time evaluated!)
 - \$34M in donations since 2014
- 2022**
 - Safely gathering with friends again!
 - Galas in Houston and Atlanta
 - 5,000 Johnny Mac Scholars to date
- 2023**
 - 10 years of tourneys at the West Point Golf Course
 - 2nd Dallas Gala
 - \$45M in donations since 2014
- 2024**
 - Commemorating a **DECADE OF SUPPORT**
 - 7th Atlanta Gala (16th gala overall)
 - Colossal 4th tailgate at Northwest Stadium
 - \$50M raised for the mission since 2014
 - 8,000 Johnny Mac Scholars to date



**OPERATION
DECADE OF
SUPPORT**

OUR LEADERS

The board of directors and staff proudly commemorated a **DECADE OF SUPPORT** throughout 2024. With about 200 years of combined military service amongst them (including 1 Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army), the board and staff maintain strong ties to our nation’s military leaders and veteran population and share the unique bonds of military service.

Board members are CEOs, senior executive leaders, entrepreneurs and consultants who lead a diverse array of businesses. The board of directors governs major decisions and approves all scholarship funding. Our board members actively fundraise, offer insight and oversight, and advance the Johnny Mac mission.

The Johnny Mac staff is the small but mighty team that gets the work done! Meghan Moretti became our CEO in October 2024. She is a West Point graduate and U.S. Army combat veteran with deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan. An accomplished nonprofit leader, Meghan has been committed to supporting military families and communities for 20 years. Meghan joins Director of Operations (and U.S. Air Force veteran) Joanne Hyman on the staff team.

Board members and staff personally donated 20% of our 2024 total revenue.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Agresti	Bob Eisiminger	Rob Healy	Meghan Moretti, <i>CEO</i>
Dave Anderson	Sal Fichera	Ted Hoyt, <i>Clerk</i>	Bill Noble
Doug Black	Terry Finley	Jim Hradecky	Rich Pascoe
Steve Cannon, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Malcolm Frost	Bob Lockett	MaryEllen Picciuto
Patrick Daly	Alex Gellert	Vic Losure	David Urban
Joe DePinto	Butch Giardina	Paul Magness	
Jim DiOrio	Kurt Gutierrez	Jim McHugh, <i>Treasurer</i>	
Dean Dorman	Tony Guzzi, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Rick Minicozzi	AS OF MARCH 1, 2025

STAFF

Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund CEO **Meghan Moretti** with Director of Operations **Joanne Hyman** just before 3,500 tailgaters arrived at our 2024 Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund Army-Navy Tailgate.





OUR INSPIRATION

As we reflect on a **DECADE OF SUPPORT**, we remember the service and ultimate sacrifice of our organization's namesake, Colonel John "Johnny Mac" McHugh and the sacrifice of the McHugh Family. At our 7th Atlanta Gala in October, John's eldest daughter Kelly McHugh-Stewart shared commemorative remarks and an update on her McHugh siblings.

"When [my dad] died, college was the last thing on anyone's mind. Even for me, and I was in college. But luckily for my family, when we

weren't thinking about college, my dad's West Point classmates were. They turned tragedy into hope. They put a plan into motion to make sure college was taken care of for my siblings and me, and that snowballed into the Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund. "For ten years they've shown up, you've shown up, over and over and over and over, and that commitment has been life changing for me, my siblings, and all these scholars who have experienced the unimaginable. No matter how long it's been since our loved one's death, no matter

what's going on in the world, the Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund has been there. Here are all these people who show up, over and over and over, for ten years, and you remind us: Your parents' sacrifices matter. "Thank you for shining light where there was once only darkness. Thank you for making a plan for our education when it was the last thing on our minds. The generosity I've experienced over the past ten years will never be forgotten, and I thank every single one of you who have been a part of this journey."



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE McHUGH FAMILY.

A recent photo of the five McHugh children with their mom, Connie. From left to right, Michael, Kelly, Margaret, Connie, Kristen, and David.

Michael, an Army combat veteran, is a Delta Airlines pilot based in Atlanta with his wife Angela and their 4 children.

Kelly is a writer and Assistant Director of Content Strategy and Development at New York University. She and her spouse Mark keep busy with their 2 children.

Margaret recently graduated from Liberty University with a degree in Religion: Christian Leadership and is currently earning her master's degree in marketing at Georgia State University.

Kristen is a military spouse to Dan and mom to their 2 children. She launched and runs a crochet pattern business called Junebug & James.

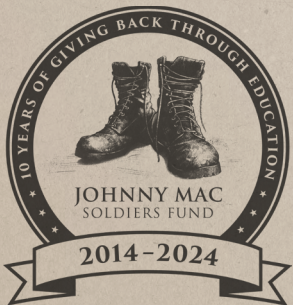
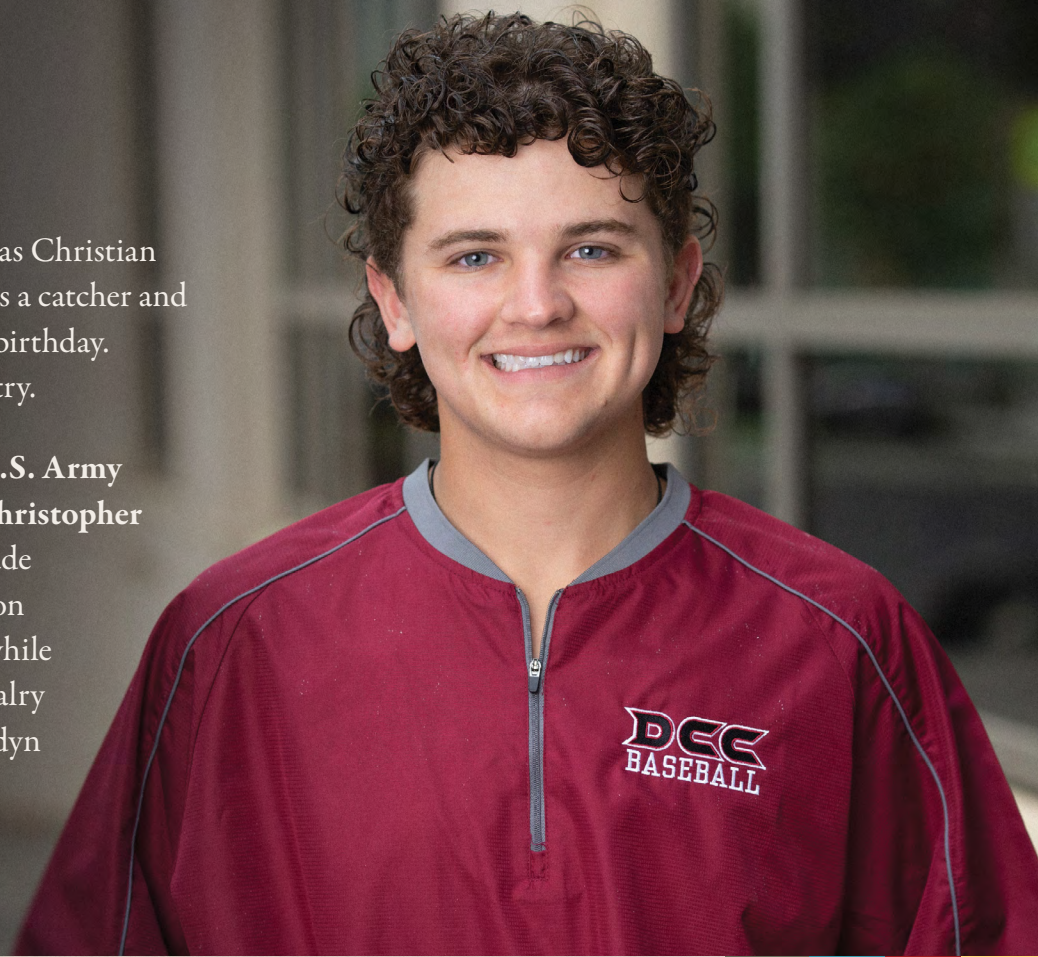
David was just 5 years old when his father was killed in action. He attends Enterprise State Community College close to home in AL and coaches a local soccer team.

JOHNNY MAC SCHOLAR

Landyn McCloud is a business major at Dallas Christian College where he plays on the baseball team as a catcher and wears the number 19 to represent his father's birthday. Landyn aspires to a career in the sports industry.



Landyn's father was **U.S. Army Private First Class Christopher M. McCloud** who made the ultimate sacrifice on September 14, 2007 while serving in the 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq. Landyn was just 2 years old when his father was killed in action.



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SCAN TO DONATE



Thank you for generously donating all printing and mailing associated with this year's annual report.