

Hello Fairfax County PTA leaders and supporters of Military Families,

I'm Julie Shepard and I'm the military families chair for FCCPTA! I've been collaborating with several local organizations in support of our military families. FCCPTA and NOVA District PTA are proud to announce this initiative in support of our military families in this region.

For our PTA leaders who aren't as familiar with the needs of our military families, one of the main issues military families express is a lack of feeling connected to their community.

COVID-19 has only amplified this. Many of our military families who have moved (we call it PCS) during COVID are feeling even more disconnected to their community. Our students are not making friends or having the opportunity to meet other peers due to the pandemic. I encourage you to review this infographic, specifically page two where it shows local community support, civilian-military divide and issues of military children's education. <https://bluestarfam.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BSF-2019-Comprehensive-Infographic-rev200305.pdf>

Julie Riggs, Chapter Director of the DC Chapter of Blue Star Families, has agreed to sponsor a series of in person events to facilitate our military families networking and as a way to have socially distanced meetings for our students and families.

Amanda Woodyard with Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) as the community engagement and outreach director for the Nation Capital Region will also be partnering with us. MCEC has launched a volunteer Military Parent Advocate role and several of the parent volunteers will be included on this townhall to listen to the community feedback. MCEC offers parent education classes.

As such, we are kicking this partnership off with a Town Hall on Tuesday October 13th from 7-8:30. This will be an opportunity for our military family chairs/liaisons to their school PTAs to share needs in their communities.

Northern Virginia District PTA Military Family Town Hall

Tuesday, October 13th

from 7:00-8:30pm EST

Virtual Meeting

Please join Blue Star Families for a special Town Hall meeting of the Northern Virginia District PTA. The purpose of the meeting is to explore opportunities for collaboration to support military students in the NOVA region. Blue Star Families has agreed to sponsor a Welcome Event for our military-connected students and families. Please join us to discuss details. Registration is required. <https://bluestarfam.us/NOVA-PTA-Town-Hall-10132020>

Who: Invite parents/staff who are filling the role of military liaisons to their school PTAs. The goal is to have 1 person per school PTA where there is a military family program or where we want to help start one.

What: We are setting up a partnership with Blue Star Families and Military Child Education Coalition sponsored and facilitated by NOVA District PTA. I have several contacts in schools around Fairfax County. I would like to include on this call MFLAC's and any PTA leaders who want to start programs in their schools to support military families.

When: 10/13 7 pm Zoom townhall, link above.

This is just the beginning! We are planning for an in-person family event that will be open to all military families in NOVA District on 11/1 in the afternoon at Lee District Park. Julie Riggs was dropping off the payment to reserve it today and we will be promoting the event and planning this with everyone's help. More details to come!

Please contact me with any questions. The townhall link is not designed for every military family members, but only those who are committed to supporting and working with their school PTA community in support of military families. The in-person events will be open to all (with social distancing measures).

Julie P. Shepard

Advocacy Chair, Northern Virginia District PTA

Military Families Chair, Fairfax County Council PTA

Hayfield Secondary School PTSA, 2nd VP and Military Families Connect Chair

(703) 638-0009 (cell)