

Betsy Eves

GROUP

Annual Letter
from the Founder,
Betsy Eves

FEBRUARY 2024



About Betsy Eves Group

At the Betsy Eves Group, our core mission is to uplift and support military spouses, caregivers, and their families through a blend of innovative and community-focused initiatives. We are dedicated to being a source of hope, understanding, and empowerment, advocating for those who serve our country from behind the scenes.

Our Mission

We are more than just an organization; we are a force for positive change, committed to ensuring military families are recognized, supported, and empowered. Our vision is a future where the contributions and sacrifices of military spouses and caregivers are actively acknowledged and supported with tangible actions and policies.

Our work is driven by our **Lighthouse Initiatives**—Advocacy, Rock Island Farm, and JavaCupcake—each designed to meet the unique needs of our community. Through these efforts, we aim to uplift, educate, and empower military families, weaving a network of support that spans the nation.

As we move forward, we remain focused on building a legacy of comprehensive support, ensuring every military family feels acknowledged and valued. The Betsy Eves Group stands as a beacon of empathy, community, and resilience, lighting the way to a brighter future for military families everywhere.

Lighthouse Initiatives



Empowering Voices for Change

- Our Advocacy initiative is at the forefront of our mission, dedicated to amplifying the voices of military spouses and caregivers on both local and national stages.
- We strive to transform recognition into action, working tirelessly to influence policies and create systemic changes that acknowledge and address the unique challenges faced by military families.
- Through strategic partnerships, public speaking, and publication of impactful narratives, we advocate for the support, resources, and recognition that military families rightfully deserve, ensuring their needs are not just heard but met.



A Sanctuary of Healing and Connection

- Rock Island Farm embodies our commitment to offering a tangible space for healing, connection, and community building.
- This serene haven serves not just as a farm but as a therapeutic retreat for military families, providing a peaceful environment to foster growth, resilience, and healing.
- Through agricultural activities, animal therapy, and community events, the farm is a living testament to the power of nature and community in supporting the well-being of military spouses, caregivers, and their children, reinforcing our belief in the healing power of connection to the land and each other.



Bridging Passion and Support

- JavaCupcake stands as a shining example of how passion projects can evolve into powerful platforms for change. What began as a personal blog has grown into a significant source of funding for our initiatives, demonstrating the impact of creativity and digital engagement.
- Through JavaCupcake, we harness the power of storytelling, baking, and community to generate resources that directly support our mission.
- This initiative not only contributes to our financial sustainability but also inspires others to leverage their passions for a greater cause, showcasing the potential for creativity to fuel meaningful support for military families.

Hey Friends,

It's hard to believe, but we've just completed an extraordinary first full year at the Betsy Eves Group!

Reflecting on our journey from our humble beginnings in 2022, driven by a vision to support and advocate for military spouses and caregivers, to now celebrating our achievements in 2023, fills my heart with gratitude.

This letter is not only a reflection of our progress but also an invitation for you to see how integral you are to this beautiful tapestry of support and advocacy we've woven together.



Despite the personal challenges that have touched my family this year, we've been vividly reminded of the power of resilience, the strength found in vulnerability, and the immense impact of a community that believes in hope and healing.

Our mission has resonated more deeply than ever before, echoing through every initiative and success story.

I'm so proud of what we've accomplished - let's take a look back at a few of the highlights.

A Milestone of Community Trust and Impact

Reaching profitability in our first full year is a heartfelt affirmation of the community's deep support and faith in our cause. This milestone isn't just about our financial wellness; it's a beacon of hope that enlarges our ability to connect with and profoundly affect the lives of military spouses and caregivers, broadening our embrace and deepening our influence.



JavaCupcake Blog: A Journey from Passion to Impact

The transformation of JavaCupcake.com from a heartfelt hobby into a cornerstone of support for the Betsy Eves Group illustrates the remarkable influence of creativity and our online community. This year, JavaCupcake's significant role in bolstering our financial foundation and furthering our cause demonstrated the unique ability of passion-led initiatives to nurture and propel significant endeavors, offering a blueprint for sustainable mission-driven engagement.

2023: A Look Back



Growth and Healing Through Nature

The recent expansion of our farm, welcoming chickens and rabbits into our fold, has deepened the therapeutic experiences we offer, transforming our space into a sanctuary of healing and natural connection for the families we serve. This growth in our agricultural pursuits not only broadens the scope of our initiatives but also stands as a symbol of resilience and renewal, underscoring the profound healing power of the natural world.

Community Ties at the Scottsville Farmers Market

Diving into the heart of our community through the Scottsville Farmers Market, we've sparked invaluable collaborations and connections. This involvement has been key in building strong relationships with local businesses and community members, significantly boosting our support network and raising awareness about the unique challenges military families face.



From Our Hearts - Veterans Day Gift Bags

At the Buckingham County Veterans Day parade, we shared "thank you" gift bags, a gesture that meant more than words can say. This effort, made possible with help from our local friends and generous donations, was our way of saying we see you, we appreciate you, to our service members and their families. It was a reminder that in our community, gratitude isn't just felt—it's shown. This day was about more than parade floats and waving flags; it was about making sure our military families feel the warmth and support of the home they served so faithfully.

2023: A Look Back

Empowering Youth through Education and Art

In partnership with Buckingham County Elementary School for the Month of the Military Child, we crafted a curriculum that nurtured understanding and empathy between civilian and military lives. This collaboration led to meaningful art projects, now showcased at Rock Island Farm, symbolizing the enriched dialogue on service and sacrifice. These initiatives not only enhanced the students' educational journey but also spotlighted the critical role of community in supporting military families.

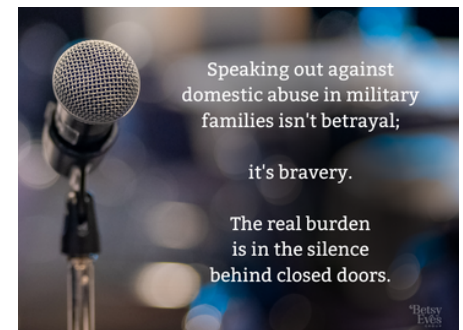


Gathering Together: Retreats and Community Celebrations

This year, we opened our hearts and our doors wider than ever before, launching our very first annual retreat for veterans and their families, paired with a heartwarming picnic over Memorial Day weekend. These gatherings were more than just events; they were our way of knitting our community closer, creating a space where laughter could be shared, memories honored, and support found in every smile and hug. It's been about offering a hand to hold, a moment to breathe, and a place to belong, truly embodying our commitment to walk alongside military families with every step they take.

Advocating for Change: Shedding Light on Hidden Struggles

Our publication, "Behind Closed Doors: Military Caregivers and the Hidden Cycle of Abuse," was a defining moment in our advocacy journey. By spotlighting the intricate challenges faced by military caregivers, we ignited vital discussions aimed at policy reforms and enhanced support. This underscores our dedication to driving systemic improvements and fostering community resilience.



2023: A Look Back

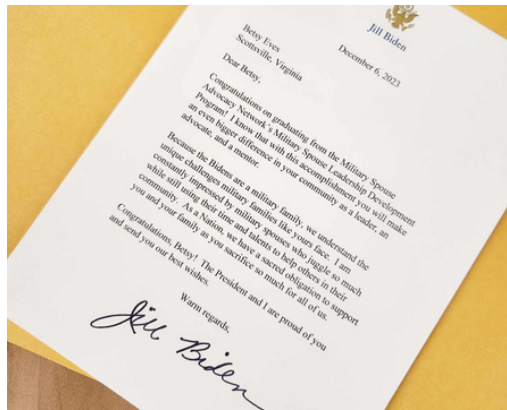


Speaking Up for Mental Health and Support

This year took us to the heart of Virginia's efforts to protect our service members, veterans, and their families from the shadow of suicide. By joining the Governor's Challenge and engaging directly with Governor Glenn Youngkin, we've been able to lend our voice—and your stories—to the crucial cause of mental health and caregiver support. It's been about ensuring that the struggles and strengths of our military families are at the forefront of policy decisions. This isn't just advocacy; it's about weaving our experiences into the fabric of state and national support systems, making sure every effort reflects the real needs of those we stand beside.

Bridging Resources and Support

This year, we've played a pivotal role in bringing together Blue Star Families and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, sparking an incredible partnership that extends essential support to military spouses and caregivers. It's been about more than just connecting organizations; it's been about weaving a network of resources that can reach further and lift higher. Through this collaboration, we've underscored our commitment to not just serving our community, but empowering it, ensuring that every military family has access to the support they need, when they need it.



Leadership and Recognition: Amplifying Our Voice

This year marked a pivotal chapter in our journey, as we joined forces with leadership initiatives and gained national recognition. Being part of the Military Spouse Advocacy Network's Leadership Development Program and the Harvard National Preparedness Leadership Initiative has deepened our leadership skills, empowering us to advocate more effectively for military families. Highlighted by sharing our mission at MilSpouse Fest and receiving acknowledgment from Dr. Jill Biden, our work is making waves beyond our community, showcasing the power of our collective voice and the importance of our cause. This recognition is not just a personal achievement but a reflection of our shared dedication to making a difference in the lives of military families.

Looking Forward in 2024

We're reigniting our passion for blogging on JavaCupcake, diving deep each month into the heart of our market experiences. Expect posts brimming with details on our themed sugar cookies—from the inspiration behind each design to the cutters, decorating techniques, and so much more, all aimed at sharing our joy of baking and creativity with you.

Following that, at the Scottsville Farmers Market, we'll spotlight those very cookies, introducing take-home DIY cookie decorating kits, available in limited quantities, and inviting you to join us for hands-on frosting sessions right at the market.

Our annual retreats will continue to offer healing and connection, with a special "Honor Flight" experience for an 80-year-old Navy Veteran and a new retreat tailored for caregivers and their children.



All Hands on Deck: How You Can Help

Your support is the lifeblood of our mission. Here's how you can continue to stand with us:

1. **Visit us at Market:** Sail over to our [calendar](#) to catch us at upcoming market dates.
2. **Explore JavaCupcake.com:** Your [clicks and visits](#) fuel our efforts.
3. **Shop Our Merch:** Every purchase from us directly supports our initiatives - [shop here](#).

Our Community Partners, Collaborators and Supporters

We are immensely grateful for the vibrant tapestry of partners and supporters who stand with us in our mission. Each organization and individual listed below plays a crucial role in amplifying our efforts, enabling us to reach further and impact more lives. Their dedication and support embody the spirit of community and solidarity that drives us forward. We invite you to join us in acknowledging and celebrating these remarkable allies.

Agathon - Strategy, Design, Development, Hosting
Amber Bracegirdle & Mediavine Publisher Network
Andrew Buss & Foreword Films
Boyer's Lawn Care LLC
Caitlin & Cody Walls - Happy Humblestead
Colleen Rose
CPO William T. Jimerson, USCG (Ret.)
SGT David Eves, USA (Ret.)
Dr. Courtney Browning & Buckingham County Elementary
Elizabeth Rotenberry - Elizabeth Dole Foundation
Emily Eves
Gia Colombrano - Elizabeth Dole Foundation
Governor Glenn Youngkin
Heather Diehl & Blue Star Families
Jennifer Hyrciw - Painted Goddess
Kayla LaFond - Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Lisell Perez-Rogers - Elizabeth Dole Foundation
Matthew Eves
Nealand Farm
Odin's Reach Farm
Robin Jackson - Shelter for Help in Emergency
Scottsville Chamber of Commerce
Scottsville Farmers Market
Senator Elizabeth Dole
The Vintage Veteran
Tony's Roadside Services
WeGrow Shop of VA
Wendy Wade & WesWen Designs



As I reflect on our journey, I'm filled with deep pride and gratitude. Each step we've taken together reaffirms my unwavering dedication to supporting military spouses and caregivers. As we eagerly anticipate the adventures that 2024 holds, I warmly invite you to continue walking this path with me, embracing both the triumphs and trials that lie ahead.

Thank you for being an integral part of our story. Your steadfast support not only propels our mission forward but also kindles a beacon of hope for those we serve.

With love and gratitude,

Betsy Eves
Founder, Betsy Eves Group

