



IMPRINTS  
OF HONOR

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Celebrating 20 Years of Connecting Students with Veterans™



# 2023-2024

As students preserve veteran  
service stories, they are  
inspired to live a life of honor.



Connecting Students with Veterans™ in order to Honor Veterans, Preserve America's Heritage, and Develop Future Leaders

Thank you for supporting our mission and celebrating 20 years of our program. Throughout the school year we were excited to showcase our history, growth, and impact. Social media posts included Fact Fridays and Veteran Spotlights, where we highlighted one veteran interviewed from each year of the program, with great care taken to represent a variety of experiences, backgrounds, eras, and branches of service.

On Memorial Day, we released our first e-book: *Since You Asked, 20th Anniversary Edition: A Celebration of Veterans' Legacies*. This collection contains 100 historical and inspirational veteran legacies our students have had the honor of listening to, learning from, and preserving. Each story, from World War II to present-day conflicts, is a testament to courage, resilience, and the enduring spirit of service.



## 20-YEAR IMPACT

- 20 volumes of published veteran stories
- 2,927 veteran oral histories
- 3,101 student authors
- 59,748 students educated by veteran presentations
- 111 scholarships with \$231,000 awarded
- Pilot programs in Florida and Tennessee
- 600+ civic engagement activities

While celebrating 20 years of building connections between students and veterans, we also spent the year looking to the future.

Prior to growing our program both in Arizona, and ultimately nationally, we knew we had to address confusion around perceived services we provide to veterans, distinguish ourselves from the Veteran History Project at the Library of Congress, and emphasize the student side of our mission and the character and civic education made possible through our veterans.

The decision was made to change our name from Veterans Heritage Project to IMPRINTS OF HONOR and launch the new name in October 2024.

IMPRINTS OF HONOR highlights the uniqueness of our mission, which begins with veterans and lives on in our students. By connecting students with veterans, the veteran's service is respected, appreciated, and remembered. Storytelling from one generation to the next is how we share experience, impart lessons, preserve legacy, and inspire youth. As veterans share their stories of service, they are also leaving imprints of honor in the character of our students.

With your continued support, we know the legacies of our veterans will live on in our work, memories, and in the actions of our next generation. Thank you.



## CHAPTER PROGRAM

As part of our 20th Anniversary, we issued a challenge to our chapters to set very high goals, such as interviewing 20 veterans, or increasing the number of interviews by 20% or more. They worked incredibly hard, contributing over 5,000 volunteer hours and increasing the number of veteran legacies preserved by 75%! This was no easy task. Thank you, students and teachers, for your tireless efforts, positive attitudes, and commitment to excellence.

- 4 editions of published veteran stories
- 216 veteran and 28 Gold Star legacies preserved
- 3,906 students educated by 36 veteran presentations
- 14 scholarships with over \$86,000 awarded
- 41 civic engagement activities

*"I learned more history about our country that has stuck with me, more than any history class."* – **Sebastian Kond, Cactus Shadows High School**



Veteran speakers Daniel Torrez and Dr. Elaine Niggemann

## TEACHER FEEDBACK

- 80% of students improved academics
- 70% of students improved 21st century skills
- 100% of students improved character
- 80% of students improved leadership skills

To earn the Arizona Seal of Civics Literacy, public high school students must pass the Arizona Civics Exam, maintain a 3.0 GPA in social studies courses, and complete the required number of activities and service hours in three categories. In March 2024, the Arizona Department of Education approved our program for all categories.

- CIVIC LEARNING – three activities which focus on civic content & learning.
- CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – 30 hours of service learning where students participate in civics and demonstrate knowledge
- WRITTEN REFLECTION – about their experiences and learning



## Elective Course at ASU

This year we worked with the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University to launch our program in January 2024 as a 1-credit elective course. Students benefit from veteran interviews, supplemental readings and guest lectures regarding civic responsibility, the military, and leadership.

*"I wholeheartedly recommend this class to my fellow students. The experience of interviewing veterans is not just educational — it's life changing."*

– Cole Nehen, ASU Student



Students during ASU course listen to guest speaker, Vietnam veteran Joe Brett.

Veterans leave an imprint on the hearts, minds, and character of our students. Their lessons of leadership, perseverance, and service beyond self are imprinted forever. The sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms demonstrate honor like nothing else. By sharing their service stories, veterans leave imprints of honor that will inspire our students for the rest of their lives.



## GRADUATING STUDENT FEEDBACK

**100% of high school seniors are pursuing continuing education**

**94% have developed a mentor relationship with at least one of their veterans**

**83% improved ability to collaborate**

**87% improved public speaking**

**96% improved listening skills**

**100% increased appreciation for service**

**95% increased understanding of civic responsibility**



Austin Stasik, Chapter President at  
Cactus Shadows High School

Young students may start as shy and insecure, but graduate as seniors with strong writing skills, the ability to speak in front of groups, leadership experience, confidence, goals, an appreciation for civic engagement, and an understanding of sacrifice, accountability, resilience, and respect for others.

*“Veterans all have stories that need to be told, as they are crucial to understanding why this country is so great.”*

– **Ashton Akam, St. Joseph Academy**

*“I developed an appreciation for the sacrifices made by our veterans. I had no previous knowledge, and this (program) provided insight.”*

– **Roxanna Quinones, Kofa High School**

*“My veterans taught me to never give up and to give it your all.”*

– **Raul F. Sias Peralta, Payson High School**

*“It’s easy to get an intellectual understanding of what our veterans have done for us, but it’s only when I started interviewing veterans that I understood their sacrifices emotionally. The civic events helped make me feel part of a community and feel responsible for doing my part.”* – **Austin Stasik, Cactus Shadows High School**

*“I learned the importance of selflessness and service to others, the importance of a sense of duty to one’s country and a mission bigger than themselves, and the value of work ethic and commitment to one’s goals.”* – **Jacob Bagley, Shadow Mountain High School**

Veterans from all service branches and eras are included in every edition of *Since You Asked*; however, over the years we incorporated a tribute to an aspect of service, such as service branches and conflict eras. For *Since You Asked XX*, it was our honor to salute Gold Star Families. A Gold Star Family is defined by legislation as a “parent, spouse, sibling or child of members of the Armed Forces who died as a result of their service during a period of war.” Of the 244 veteran stories preserved this year, 28 came from Gold Star Families. These 28 stories were included in a special section of each of the four published editions, ensuring their sacrifices are not forgotten.



Gold Star Families at Community Reception & Book Signing

## VETERAN FEEDBACK

- 86% described the experience as “cathartic” and “healing”
- 36% told their story for the first time
- 100% said they would recommend the program to another veteran
- 100% said the book reception and quality of the book both exceeded expectations

*“It was an honor to meet all the other Gold Star Families. I felt that my daughter Shauna was honored, and it filled our hearts with honor and pride. It was a beautiful experience for my husband and me. Thank you so very much.”*

– Linda Gillam, Mother to Pvt2nd Class Shauna Ward, US Army, War on Terror, 5/23/86 - 10/15/07

*“I applaud the efforts of your group. I think the stories will become and are pieces of history that may have otherwise been lost. I actually think that the more times the story is told, it kind of spreads the burden of pain out to others, perhaps freeing one of some of the burden.”* – Larry Willett, USMC, Vietnam Veteran

*“It was great fun remembering my experiences. I appreciate that someone cares enough to record them. I found it recommitted me to my country and service.”*

– Britt A Cummings, USAF, Vietnam & Cold War Veteran

*“Very impressed with the students and the questions they asked. I feel so much better about sharing my experience in Viet Nam. The story Sophia wrote brought awareness to my family and friends about that part of my life.”*

– Liberato (Rudy) Baca, USAF, Vietnam Veteran

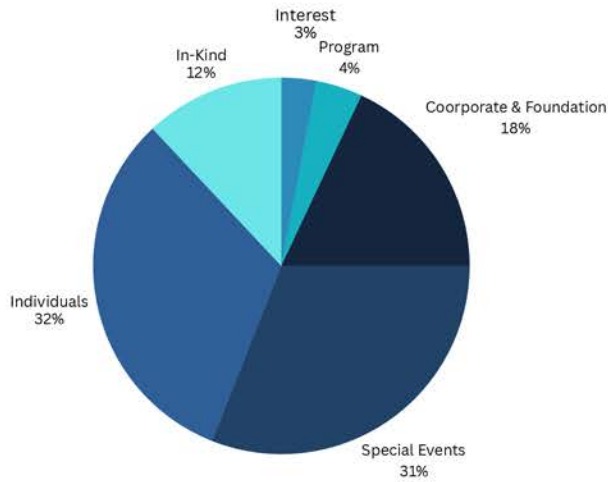




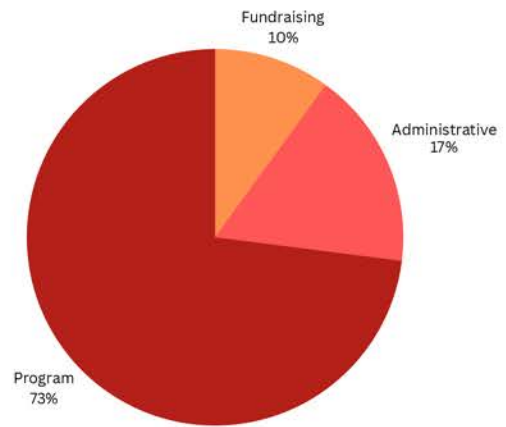
Veterans, students, and volunteers during Veterans Day Parade 2023

## FY 24 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

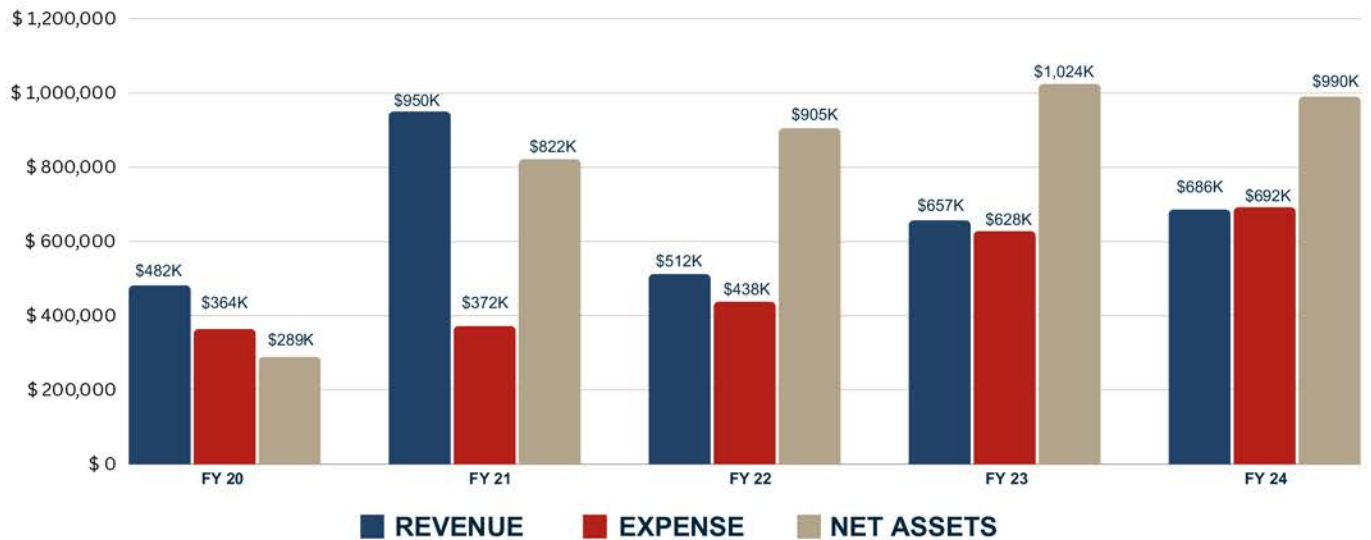
**FY 24 REVENUE \$685,936**  
(ending June 30, 2024)



**FY 24 EXPENSE \$691,399**  
(ending June 30, 2024)



## 5-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY



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## HONOR

Honoring veterans, their stories, and service

## CONNECTION

Making connections across generations

## CHARACTER

Building student character and civic responsibility

## LEGACY

Preserving veteran legacies and America's heritage

## LEADERSHIP

Developing the next generation of leaders

## COMMUNITY

Bridging the gap between military and civilian populations

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\*FY 25



*Imprints of Honor Board Members with honored guests Alumni Award recipient Mark McCullough, veteran Rose Mattie, and Founder Barbara Hatch at Saluting Stories of Service Gala*

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