



Young Marines 
NATIONAL FOUNDATION

— 2021 ANNUAL REPORT —



WHAT WE DO



Our goal is to empower future leaders—but perhaps even more importantly, to create conscientious, empathetic, and productive members of society.

Ours is a mission of growth. Since our humble beginnings in 1959, we've expanded to more than 235 units with more than 7,500 members and 2,500 adult volunteers; we are spread over 40 states, the District of Columbia, Germany, and Japan; and have affiliates in a host of other countries. We help by initially focusing on character building and on fostering leadership qualities—helping to mold productive citizens through programs that help instill the qualities that will help them step into the shoes of the leaders of tomorrow.

WE BELIEVE

IN THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION



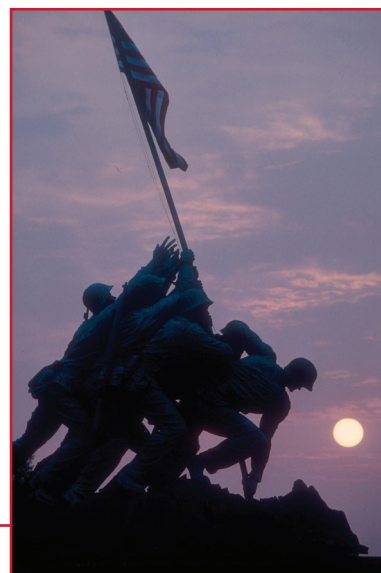
Our children are the future—future world leaders, captains of industry, teachers, scientists, change makers. The Young Marines mission is to empower them, helping them maximize their potential to become the citizen-leaders that our nation needs. Here, they hone and uphold values such as discipline, self-confidence, the desire to live a healthy life, and the motivation to excel academically. Values that stand as the cornerstone of our success as one of the leading nations in the world.

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Cover photo by PH1 Harold J. Gerwien, USN, (Ret.)



MESSAGE FROM OUR Chairman of the Board

The Young Marines is a non-profit youth services and education program for boys and girls eight years old through the completion of high school. The Young Marines National Foundation was established in 2014 to raise and invest funds to ensure that our youth program could sustain operations in times of financial need. After all, that's what foundations do, raise funds. Our initial five-year Strategic Plan was created without any idea on how well we would perform. To our surprise, we nearly hit our benchmark. Following a few changes to our investment policy statement, we managed to exceed our benchmark by a significant margin. As a result, we were able to make a meaningful contribution to the Young Marines to offset application fees for any Young Marine wishing to attend the National Leadership Academy and to offset costs associated with youth members attending regional junior leadership schools. But we can and will do more. The Foundation's updated Strategic Plan calls for an increase in our fundraising efforts but also places greater emphasis on giving back to the program.

But who are the Young Marines and what is it we are supporting with financial contributions?

Two elements separate the Young Marines from all other youth programs.



Closing the Gate on Drugs!

The first is that the center pole in the tent is its focus on drug demand reduction (DDR) education. This came about as a result of the Defense Department's 1993 decision to create programs to educate America's youth on the perils of drug use. The Young Marines were identified as the Marine Corps' focal point for that effort. This DoD pilot program included eighteen youth organizations of which only two remain to this day, the Young Marines being one of them.

The next DDR highlight came when the Office of the Secretary of Defense created an award to recognize excellence in youth drug demand education. This award would be called the Fulcrum Shield Award and was first awarded to the Young Marines in 2001. The Young Marines have won that award an amazing eleven times. During this period, the program has also established a close working relationship with the Drug Enforcement Administration to create the Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Award in recognition of the DEA Agent who was kidnapped by the Mexican Cartel, tortured, and killed. This award is presented by the DEA to that Young Marines unit that has best exhibited the qualities of the DDR program. Finally, the Young Marines were recognized for their work in creating a program called "Closing the Gate on Drugs". This was an education program that highlighted the five "gateway" drugs and why it is so important to stay away from these drugs.

The second important element is exposing the program's youth members to varying levels of leadership. A survey pinpointed the "Most Valuable Lessons" learned in the Junior, Senior and Advanced leadership courses. In each class, leadership was the single most valuable lesson learned, so of the eight measured elements, we'll set that one aside. The survey suggests that the junior class saw discipline and respect and being significant, while public speaking was the least important. But as the Young Marines grow in their leadership roles, their responsibilities change and with that, their priorities. The transformation was clear. The advanced Class of Young Marines revealed that self-confidence and public speaking were the key elements of leadership upon which they had to focus. After all, they were the ones now in a leadership position and the ones working most closely with the juniors. They were front and center and having to be the ones to set the example for the others. Not only did they understand that, but they accepted it. This was the goal when we started the Leadership Academy many years ago ... and it works!



Clearly, the program has inculcated a sense of pride and dignity within its youth membership. They understand the value of stepping up, accepting challenges, providing community support, respecting veterans; and teamwork ... taking care of one another. The program continues to achieve its goals and accomplish its mission year after year.

Michael Kessler

OUR MISSION



The Young Marines National Foundation provides financial support to the mission, values, and programs of the Young Marines through the solicitation, preservation, and distribution of gifts, grants, and matching funds from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

MESSAGE FROM OUR National Executive Director

Today, I want to celebrate the great work that our Young Marines are doing every day.

Nowhere else in the country are young people getting together to celebrate veterans, contribute their time to community service, and talk about the values of a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

I also want to thank our supporters past and present for making this valuable assignment possible; without your aid, these kids would be left to other social influences and not have this program and these values to guide them.

Finally, I want to thank the Young Marines Board of Directors and Young Marines National Foundation Board of Trustees; without your hours of dedication and selfless service, none of this would be possible.

2021 has been an incredible year for the Young Marines; while the pandemic created unique challenges for a youth group founded on community and camaraderie, this organization has come out stronger than before.

And to the Foundation team, together, this year, we have made our most significant contribution to the kids (\$30,000) and added more to the investment account (\$500,000) than ever before.

As we look to 2022, we will expand on the momentum we have built, seek to grow our contributions, and continue to develop our strategic reserve.

Thanks again to everyone involved with the Foundation and the Young Marines; we all look forward to another great year.

Mike Zeliff



NATIONAL YOUNG MARINE OF THE YEAR

2021-2022

By YM/SgtMaj Mario Koch
National Young Marine of the Year
2021-2022

Hello Young Marines!

From Division Young Marine of the Year training in February to Pearl Harbor in December, it has been a very exciting and busy year. I am so glad and feel extremely fortunate that I got the opportunity to travel and meet all of you. My favorite part of traveling around the country has to be seeing how diverse and unique we all are. We may be from different parts of the country, but we all have one thing in common; the Young Marines. We all share the common morals to live a healthy, drug-free lifestyle, and to be the best version of ourselves.

This year I also had the pleasure to meet some of my closest friends, the 2021 Division Young Marines of the Year. We were all friends right out of the Washington-Dulles Airport in February, and we have been supporting each other ever since. I admire their work ethic, and how much they care for their Young Marines in each of their Divisions. I have learned so much from them throughout the year, and I am so grateful to have been Division Young Marine of the Year with them. Making new friends can be one of the most rewarding benefits of the program, and our relationship with one another proves that. As their terms come to an end, I would like to take a moment to thank them for their constant hard work in their Divisions, and for the Young Marines program. With that being said, they will be passing the torch to the new Division Young Marines of the Year for 2022. These Young Marines are very compassionate, and there is no doubt that they will help improve the program over the course of the next year. I am so excited for these Young Marines, and the opportunities that they will be presented with.

I have been so blessed to have attended many events this year, including National Leadership Academy, multiple encampments, birthday balls, and most recently, the annual trip for Pearl Harbor Remembrance. In the beginning of December, many Young Marines from across the



country flew to the island of Oahu, Hawaii to commemorate those who had lost their lives in Pearl Harbor. We participated in a ceremonial wreath laying at the Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, and we also got to learn about Hawaiian culture and the environment. It was my first time in Hawaii, so I had an amazing first adventure to the islands. I also got to spend some time with some Young Marine units and do some fun activities with them. It was a great change of temperature compared to Ohio, and I had an amazing time there.

As 2021 comes to an end, I am proud to have seen so many Young Marines across the country seize every opportunity given. If you remember from my first Esprit article, I told you all that “the time is now” to take every opportunity given in this program. If you have not, it’s okay! 2022 is a fresh start. It is a new year to fully exert yourself to become a better Young Marine,

a better student, and a better individual. I believe we all can push ourselves to take advantage of everything this wonderful program has to offer to us and each other.

Lastly, I would just like to tell you all to cherish the people you love. Spend time with all of those people, and do not take a moment for granted. I wish you all a wonderful 2022 and hope you all had a safe and happy holidays with your families, and remember, the time is now!



From a Retired Young Marine to a Marine Corps PFC

By YM/MGySgt Sophia Righthouse
Miramar (CA)

Trevyn Hoefer joined the Miramar Young Marines, based on Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, CA on October 9, 2014 at the age of 14. On August 6, 2019, just shy of having 5 years in the program, and after reaching the rank of YM/Sgt, he graduated from Point Loma High School in San Diego, California and aged out of the program.

Having loved his experiences in the Young Marines program, YM/Sgt Hoefer decided to follow in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He reported to USMC Boot Camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego.

MCRD San Diego, then the Marine Advanced Expeditionary Base, was first commissioned on December 1, 1921 by General Joseph Pendleton. In 1923 the Marine Recruit Depot relocated to the base. The base, next to the San Diego Bay and the San Diego International Airport, consists of 388 acres of which 367 acres are reclaimed tidal areas.

On May 1, 2020, Private First Class Hoefer graduated Marine Corps boot camp. He used 30 seconds of his precious two minutes of phone calls to speak with his Unit Commander and Executive Officer to excitedly tell them the news.



PFC Hoefer said he loved having joined the Marines and credited the Young Marines program with helping him to be prepared for the challenge. He then said, "I don't mean to be short, but I really need to call my mom now!"

After graduation, PFC Hoefer was assigned to Intelligence School at the Information Warfare Training Command (IWTC) located at the Naval Air Station Oceana Dam Neck Annex in Virginia Beach, VA. He then went to Aerial Intelligence School at Marine Corps Air Station

Cherry Point, in North Carolina.

Now a Lance Corporal, Trevyn Hoefer is stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and will soon deploy to Europe. He is an Intelligence Specialist (MOS 0231).

Congratulations Lance Corporal Hoefer! We are all very proud of you.

LCpl Trevyn Hoefer, USMC.



Three Weeks in Wyoming's Wilderness

By YM/SSgt Christopher Quach
Golden Gate (CA)

This three-week excursion in the canyons of Utah and the mountains of Wyoming was an unforgettable experience, which I had the opportunity to take part in. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and the meaningful bonds I forged.

I'd like to preface this by saying that this event was unlike any I've attended before. It was solely focused on us, Young Marines, having fun. The first week primarily focused on white water rafting and the "river life", being on or by the river 24/7 and chilling and relaxing (I call it *chillaxing*).

The thrills and excitement that the unpredictable wakes offered were the best. The third week was by far my favorite as we were able to rock climb on the Grand Teton in Wyoming. One of the biggest challenges I faced was backpacking in Wyoming. It was exhausting and the constant rain and thunder was not fun at all.

Being away for three weeks was difficult. Four weeks including being away for SLS. It didn't help that I was home-



sick, either. At that time, I did not want to be there. Despite my homesickness, I decided to view the situation from a different perspective. There will always be things that you dislike, but it's what you decide to take away that makes you a better person. Be present in the moment and just enjoy yourself to the fullest. I thought to myself "when will I ever be able to be in this spot again?" One of the things I am most grateful for was that during this SPACES event I was able to meet four amazing and unique Young Marines and two wonderful Adult Volunteers who lead different paths in life and offered different perspectives from mine. I cherished the time I spent with each of them. I was able to develop closer bonds with those around

me and I'm grateful for that. I had a blast on this trip and would encourage every Young Marine to take advantage of this program as it can do so much for you. The doors are wide open if you choose to go through them.

WHAT WE DO



Young Marines National Executive Director Col Bill Davis accepts the donation from MajGen James A. Kessler, USMC (Ret.) at Young Marines National Headquarters.

On December 28, 2021, MajGen James Kessler, USMC (Ret.), a member of the Board of Directors, Young Marines National Foundation, presented a \$25,000.00 donation to the Young Marines to support registrations for Young Marines who are qualified to attend the June 2022 National Leadership Academy in Warrenton, Oregon, and to offset any costs incurred by Young Marines participating in Junior Leadership Schools hosted at the Division level.

DONATION TO SUPPORT

2022 National Leadership Academy

In accepting this donation, Col William P. Davis, USMC (Ret.), National Executive Director of the Young Marines, said, “The generous donation by the Young Marines National Foundation will help send more than 160 youth members to the National Leadership Academy. Our leadership training is a primary strength of the Young Marines. The more kids who are able to participate in advanced leadership training, the stronger our program and community impact can be.”

Youth members of the Young Marines from across the country will train for two weeks to become better leaders. Practical classes are designed to promote a high level of student morale, teamwork, and decisive thinking. After leadership classes, physical and written tests, and close order drills, Young Marines learn to lead other Young Marines.

National Leadership Academy objectives include:

- examine leadership styles to which students aspire
- display qualities of two or three leadership styles
- develop a plan to build leadership skills
- display basic understanding of event planning and organization, including lesson development and encampment planning.
- recognize others’ differences and create a plan for working with diverse groups
- develop communications skills with superiors, peers and subordinates

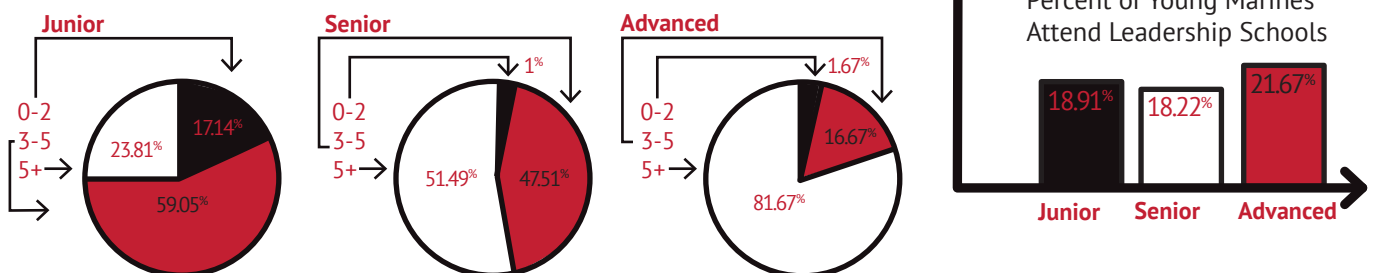
“On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, and especially those Young Marines attending the National Leadership Academy next summer, and those Young Marines participating in regional Junior Leadership Schools, we thank the Young Marines National Foundation for this generous donation,” said William L. Smith, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Young Marines.

“This is only the first of many monetary contributions that the Foundation hopes to forward to the Young Marines to enhance opportunities for their members,” said Michael B. Kessler, Chairman of the Board, Young Marines National Foundation.

“Today there are more young people who need leadership more than ever before,” said Michael Zelfiff, National Executive Director of the Young Marines National Foundation. “We are excited to offer more kids the opportunity to grow and develop into responsible citizens and leaders of tomorrow, and to actively promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.”

Leadership Schools

Young Marines Years In Program Per School



A SCHOOL FOR YOUNG MARINES DRILL AND CEREMONIES

Learning from a few of the best

By YM/Sgt Garrett Frans
Northern Kentucky (KY)

Why do we do drill and is it important that it is done correctly?

This summer I had the wonderful opportunity to go on my first SPACES trip, Drill and Ceremonies School. I had the opportunity to fly for the first time and learn to navigate an airport. It also presented a challenge of being able to pack a sea bag and pack it properly. After arriving in Washington, DC, an adult staff member from my unit, Ms. Calero, and I stayed behind at the airport to wait for other Young Marines arriving from across the country. This time at the airport allowed me to meet several other Young Marines attending the program.

Once everyone was accounted for, we were taken to the Hilton Garden Inn in Woodbridge, VA. Although we stayed in a nice hotel, we were still expected to be up every morning at 5:30 and be downstairs for PT by 6:00. After PT and chow, we learned conduct of drill for the rest of the day from amazing instructors including SgtMaj Overstreet, the 12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, and SgtMaj Maness, USMC (Ret). We learned how to teach drill, beginning with the position of attention and working our way to advanced movements. We were instructed on how to call drill and how



YM/Sgt Garrett Frans and 12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt Maj Overstreet.

to perform color guard correctly. I did find out several things that our unit could do differently to align with the USMC drill manual.

Over the course of this trip, I met many Young Marines from across the country and made some new friends. At the end of the week, drill and color guard competitions were held between the three Young Marines squads and the adult staff squad. My squad took second place. After this friendly competition, we officially graduated from the school and received a certificate. The quality of instruction will help me to retain the information and be able to instruct others within my unit.

The last evening, we attended a special parade at the oldest Marine Corps post in the country, Marine Corps Barracks, Washington, DC. We saw the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon. It was amazing to see them perform in person (I am still not completely convinced they are not robots.) I met two former Young Marines, one who is now part of the silent drill platoon and one who was the honor graduate of her boot camp.

Why do we do drill? I have now learned that drill isn't just turning and moving in different directions, it instills discipline, builds teamwork, and when done properly, can look absolutely amazing.

JLS: Lead and Learn to Look After Fellow Young Marines

By YM/Cpl Mariah Whalen
North San Diego (CA)

Junior Leadership School was an amazing experience! The first thing we did was report to Mr. Grimes, who was the school director. After we reported in, we started off with the PFT. We got in our positions and started running the one mile. Right when we took off, it started to rain and then it began hailing, but that didn't stop us. After we finished, there was still a Young Marine at the end, and we all motivated her to cross the finish line. This helped me learn the importance of teamwork. I was proud to see her finish strong and make it to the end because of her endurance and the motivation from her fellow Young Marines.

After we finished the rest of the PFT, we did the uniform inspection and ate afternoon chow. It was nice to sit and talk after all of our physical work. Following chow, we went on to our drill evaluation. We practiced for two hours, then it was time to take our evaluation. When it was finally my turn, I was nervous but confident. I performed the entire drill, and when I finished, my cadre had some very helpful advice to give me. Then it was almost the end of our time at the first day of JLS. We had our last meal and finally it was time to go home. We all left, excited to go back home to our unit and share what we learned.

I learned many things at JLS, but I think that the most important ones are looking after your Young Marines and



YM/Cpl Mariah Whalen

setting an example for them to follow. As a leader, people are looking up to you and are going to follow in your footsteps. For example, a good leader demonstrates they are hard working, motivational, and dedicated to their peers and unit growth. We need to be mindful of what we do and how we do it, because other youth will be watching you.

Another important principle I learned is when you are a lead-

er you need to make sure your Young Marines have everything they need to reach their goal or complete their task. Whether it is making sure your Young Marines are properly fed and clothed, or knowing how to perform the task at hand, it is the job of the leaders to make sure everyone is in a position to be successful. JLS was one of the greatest experiences I have had! I was able to know, and bond, with many Young Marines.

We also learned many skills as a team that we will take back to our home units. I give a special thanks to Mr. Danny Chinchilla and Mr. Chris Chinchilla for going through the drill card with me until I got it down. And I also thank YM/MSgt Destini Bocanegra for teaching me how to be a Junior Leader!

Insight: My Six Years of Progress in the Young Marines



By YM/GySgt Eric Deschene
Imagine at North Port (FL)

I have been in the Imagine School Young Marines for six years. I am now a senior in high school and will soon be graduating out of the program. Let me give you a bit of insight on my six years of progress.

I started in the program six years ago in the seventh grade. I was always the troubled Young Marine. I was always the one having to sit with my Unit Commander and talk about what I needed to change. I sat at the rank of Private for a full year and then another year at PFC before I finally went into high school. At this point, my attitude turned completely around. I made it to YM/Lance Corporal and went through JLS, and came out of JLS as the Honor Graduate for the school. My promotions followed as I was promoted to YM/Sergeant. Going to SLS, I came second in the school. After that, I was promoted to YM/Staff Sergeant and then YM/Gunnery Sergeant.

The Young Marines at Imagine has been nothing less than a family for me. There has always been encouragement from every single Young Marine. Every leader in my unit has always pushed me to do better and to be a better person. One person that was always there for me was my Unit Commander, Dr. Steve Black. At every turn, he was always the one pushing me to do better.

Now I sit as the billet of Unit First Sergeant. Unfortunately, I will be graduating out of the program in a few months, otherwise I would love to go to ALS. Before I graduate out, I have been working on my Drug Enforcement Administration Device to become a Master Sergeant. However, I just served as Academy First Sergeant for the 2021 First Florida Regiment JLS/SLS. I Even had the honor of working under the Division 3 Young Marine of the Year, YM/SgtMaj Jason Glaskox.

Overall, the Young Marines have been a huge part of my life and I am proud to say that I was a Young Marine. This program will always be something for me to remember and to reflect upon as the greatest part of my life.



Training with a partner is an excellent way to be able to stay motivated while training for the PFT.

HELP US LEAD



Coming from very humble beginnings, our rise has been significant. But we still have a long way to go, and every bit of help we can get is welcome. Young Marines currently boasts 280 units across the country, and it operates in 92% of all states and territories.

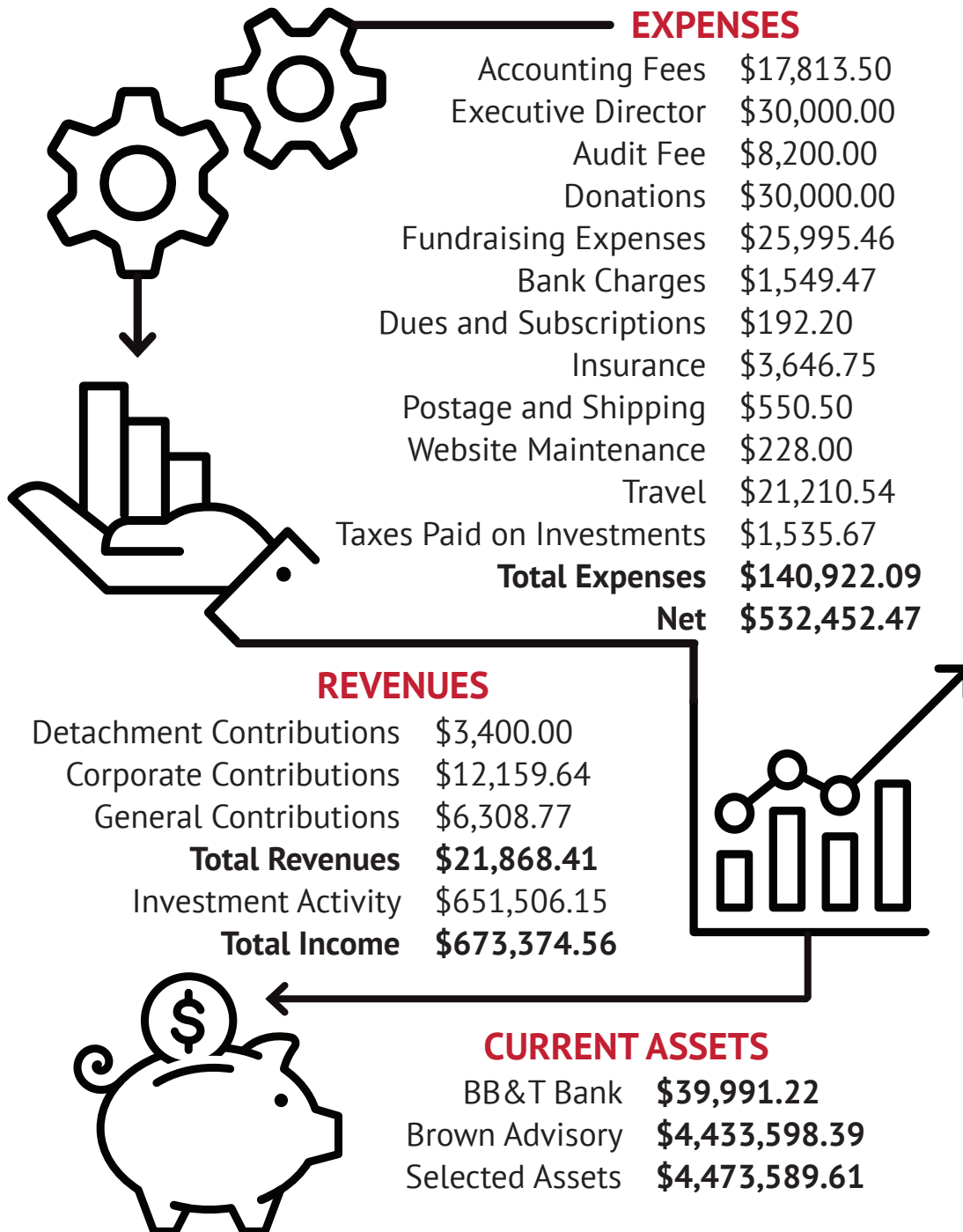
Whether you give personally or through your company, we hope you'll consider joining one of our Leadership Annual Fund societies. We are happy to work directly with you to deliver the benefits that best suit your needs.

To inquire about becoming a partner, write to us at giving@ymfoundation.org.

YOUNG MARINES NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Statement of Financial Position

Year ending December 31, 2021



The presentation above is consistent with prior year annual reports and may differ from the presentation on the audited financial statements.

A DAY TO REFLECT ON THE SACRIFICES OF OTHERS

Memorial Day

NOTE: The Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation requested YM/MGySgt Sophia M. Righthouse (Miramar Young Marines), who serves as the 4th Battalion Young Marines Sergeant Major, be the guest speaker for their 2021 Memorial Day video program. The program was filmed at the Veterans Memorial Building located in Balboa Park in San Diego, California. Their Memorial Day video presentation may be viewed on their website: Miramarcemetery.org

Through the Young Marines program, Naval Junior ROTC, and my “Valuing our Veterans” program in which I donate flagpoles to veterans, I have had the honor of meeting and working with many current and past service members.

I have a family history of service members dating back to the American Revolutionary War. Both my grandfathers served, one in Vietnam as an Army helicopter pilot and the other in the Air Force. My great uncle served in Vietnam in the Marine Corps. Both my parents served full careers as police officers. I understand what it means to dedicate yourself to protecting others while putting oneself in harm’s way. It is to be admired and respected.

I know the feeling of loss. In a very short time, two close friends of mine, Command Master Chief Tom Lingley, a retired Navy veteran who served in Vietnam and Desert Storm, and Sgt. Matthew Lowenthal, an active-duty Marine, both passed away.

Lingley was my neighbor, and the first person I donated a flagpole to. He was proud of the flag we presented him and flew it every day. Over the years, Lingley often spoke to me about service and sacrifice. He eagerly awaited our conversations and always wanted me to update him on my Young Marines and Naval Junior ROTC careers. He became very ill and telephoned me just before his passing. Lingley told me he was proud of me and to keep up the good work; words I feel I must honor.

I met Sgt. Lowenthal when he joined my Young Marine unit on MCAS Miramar as a volunteer. As our unit training officer, he and I worked side by side for several years and we became close. We had a great deal in common as he was a former Young Marine and Junior ROTC cadet.

We often shared stories of our common experiences and had many good laughs. Sgt. Lowenthal passed away from injuries sustained in an accident. He was a proud Marine and a true friend. I am so very grateful for having known them both. I value their memories.

Memorial Day is a time to remember the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation; it is also a time that all Americans should reflect on the freedoms afforded us by this great nation, and how those freedoms have been preserved for us. It is a time to contemplate the bravery and unselfishness of the veterans who gave up all of their to-



tomorrows so that we could enjoy our lifetime of tomorrows, benefiting from the freedoms we enjoy; the very freedoms secured by their sacrifice.

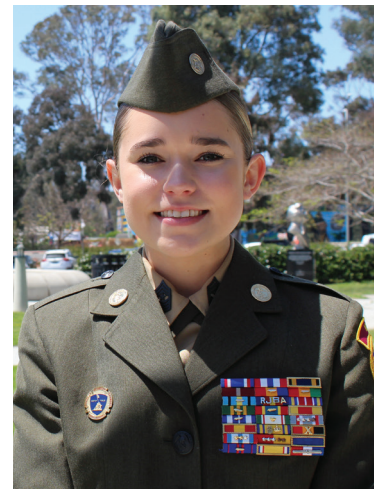
With others paying such a high individual price to secure the freedoms we all enjoy, Memorial Day is a time to consider how you will use your freedom; the freedom that was purchased for you with American lives from 1775 to this very day. Your freedom is a unique gift not afforded to everyone in our world. Use your freedom wisely..

Remember the high cost of your freedoms when you exercise your rights. Use your freedom of speech for the betterment of all, not to hurt others. Use your freedom of religion to be inclusive and to help others in their time of need, not to distance them.

Use your freedom of assembly to come together peacefully as one mighty nation in support of all, not by using violence or hatred against your fellow Americans. Use your freedom of the press to morally, ethically, and without bias report the issues at hand, not to push a political agenda, spreading disinformation and causing distrust. Your treasured freedoms come with great responsibilities.

Memorial Day is a time to remember the honor and pride held by so many who gave their lives for our freedom. It is also a time to remind you to live your life with that same honor, having dignity and compassion for others. It is a time to think about what you in turn owe to future generations of Americans and to the great nation in which you live. Honor those who gave up their tomorrows by using your freedom to make America a better place.

Walk a mile in their combat boots. Serve, volunteer, and give back to your community to honor their sacrifice. We owe our respect to those brave veterans of all our armed forces who came before, and made the ultimate sacrifice so that we may live free. Semper Fi, Oorah.



A Respectful Salute for the Flag and for Its Meaning

By YM/Sgt Gilberto Berrios

Imagine at North Port (FL)

On the morning of January 30th, 2021, my unit conducted a flag retirement ceremony. During this, we retired more than 20 old and distressed American flags that were given to us over a period of time. For those who don't know what a flag retirement ceremony is, it is when we ceremoniously (and respectfully) retire a flag by burning it. We do this out of respect for the flag and its meaning.

The ceremony began at 0900 hours. We formed into three lines. We had many Young Marines present and many flags to retire. We followed a specific procedure to bring the flags down the line and into the burn barrel. We all faced away from the barrel, and the Young Marine at the start of the line was given a flag. Before taking the flag, each Young Marine would first salute, then take the flag. The Young Marine who was giving the flag would then salute, then only after the second Young Marine drops their salute would the first Young Marine do an about face and then repeat the process to pass the flag down the line.

When the flag reaches the last Young Marine, they would hand it off to an adult unit staff, who would then say a short



paragraph thanking the flag for its service and then carefully and respectfully placed it into the barrel.

Overall, the ceremony was a great experience. Afterward, we all felt a sense of pride knowing that we retired all those flags with the honor and respect they deserve. We had a large audience of parents. We conduct flag retirement ceremonies on a regular basis.

Toys For Tots: A Great Way to Serve Your Community



By YM/LCpl Angel Ocampo
Eagle (CA)

I'm in 7th grade. I joined the Young Marines on September 15, 2019. My favorite subjects in school are Math, P.E, and Reading. My favorite thing is coming to Young Marines and spending time with my friends.

I see some families living on the streets. Some of their kids go to our School. During November and December our Eagle (CA) Young Marines unit teamed up with the Marine Corps Reserves and conducted Toys for Tots.

When our Unit Commander explained what Toys for Tots was, I immediately remembered the families living on the streets. I care about people who are not able to celebrate Christmas. For me, I know how wonderful Christmas Day is. I like Christmas because it gives me joy for seeing my family members giving presents to each other. During the weekdays and weekends we would be in uniform standing outside the stores with United States Marines in their Dress Blue Uniform. Shoppers would come out of the store and put Toys in our collection boxes. Each toy meant that

another child would receive a toy for Christmas. In Young Marines, we help the people who are not able to celebrate Christmas. My dream is that these people can get presents from their loved ones or someone who cares about them. Working alongside the Marines, I learned that not only are Marines always ready to fight for America's Freedom, but Marines are very caring and help to make sure that American children can have a Christmas.

I want to thank everyone who's taking care of me at home, at school, and at Young Marines. I want to thank my Grandpa, Grandma, and my uncle Robert for having a home. At school, I thank my teachers. At Young Marines I also like to thank the volunteer adults and Mr. and Mrs. Siegmann.

--Submitted by Duane Siegmann, Eagle (CA) Young Marines

*In Young
Marines,
we help people
who are not able
to celebrate
Christmas.*



Honoring Veterans

MIRAMAR YOUNG MARINES HONOR AREA VETERANS WITH PERSONAL FLAG DEDICATION CEREMONIES

On May 8, 2021, Division 6 Young Marines from the 4th Battalion, 2nd California Regiment, honored 6 veterans in the Rancho de los Penasquitos neighborhood of San Diego, CA as part of 4th Battalion YM/SgtMaj Sophia M. Righthouse's Valuing our Veterans program (See Article, "A Flag for Your Service" in *Esprit* Volume 3, 2020).

The Young Marines participating were from the Miramar and Temecula Valley units. A donated 20' flagpole was installed by the Young Marines at the homes of each veteran prior to the event. At 0900 hours on this sunny Saturday morning, the Young Marines, directed by Battalion YM/SgtMaj Righthouse, formed an honor guard that included a color guard detachment (YM/GySgt Jacob Arvizo, YM/Sgt Tristan Vuong, YM/Sgt Rebecca Castillo, and YM/PFC Aidan Stewart) and a drum corps (YM/GySgt Ethan Mayer, YM/GySgt Andrew Mayer, and YM/SSgt Jonathan Zhou). The Young Marines marched behind the 4th Battalion Guide, YM/LCpl Isabella Tinoco, through the residential neighborhood to the beat of the drums and to the commands of YM/Sgt Olivia Kries, the event Platoon Sergeant.

Many neighbors clambered out of their houses to see what was occurring and to follow the Young Marines down the streets. The Young Marines marched to the home of each veteran, where



during a formal service, a brief overview of the veterans' careers was announced and they were thanked for their service.

The Young Marines then raised an American flag and a military service flag in their honor while the National Anthem played, followed by the veterans' military branch service song. Applause echoed down the streets from spectators who had followed the Young Marines.

The veterans honored on this special day were Steven Desjardins, Captain, US Navy (Ret), Richard Luczak, Major, US Army (Ret), Victor Bergado, Master Chief, US Navy (Ret), Ted Garcia, Master Chief, US Navy (Ret), Cesar Bagsic, Chief, US Navy (Ret), and the late Tom Lingley, Command Master Chief, US Navy (Ret) who was the first recipient of a Valuing our Veterans flagpole.





Grateful Young Marines and Veterans' Tears of Pride and Happiness

CMDCM Lingley passed away in 2019 (See article, “*Young Marines: Our Program Touches and Enriches Lives*” in *Esprit* Volume 4, 2019). The Young Marines replaced his worn flag for his widow, Ronnie Lingley.

All of the veterans were touched by the ceremonies and by being honored by the Young Marines; several were moved to tears filled with pride and joy. Chief Bagsic said,

“This is so wonderful. This is the greatest feeling. The Young Marines have made me feel so proud! All of this has made me cry.” After his ceremony, Master Chief Victor Bergado lifted his sunglasses and said, “I want you to see my tears. They are of happiness and pride. I can’t believe this! I can’t believe they did this for me!”

Our country is full of fantastic people that have lived a life of service, giving back more than they take. Whenever you see one, thank them. The Young Marines program teaches our youth many important traits; but being grateful, respect-

ing others, and learning how to give back to their nation and community through their own service holds a predominant position on the list.

All of the Young Marines were professional, exuberant, and looked outstanding during the six events. I am proud of our Young Marines!

-- Submitted by Bret A. Righthouse, Commanding Officer 4th Battalion, 2nd Ca. Reg, D6



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