



## AFTER HER SERVICE PROGRAM

### Personal Readiness & Professional Success



MARIA  
RETIRED  
ARMY  
VETERAN



ANGELA  
RETIRED  
AIR  
FORCE  
VETERAN



JULIE  
AIR  
FORCE  
VETERAN

**AFTER HER SERVICE** is a program for Post-9/11 female veterans designed to build personal resilience and foster professional success. The program begins with a skill-building retreat focused on increasing resiliency and positive coping strategies. Following the retreat, participants engage in 12 sessions of one-on-one coaching to set and meet career goals.

In Summer 2020, 29 women completed their journey with After Her Service, bringing the total number of graduates to 79 since the program started in 2017.

*Below, three of the women from the most recent cohort share some of the ways the program has impacted them:*

#### How the resiliency and mindfulness skills they learned have helped them

**MARIA:** "The most valuable thing I've learned has been the different resiliency skills. Now I always focus on looking for the good stuff. And just gaining confidence and self-awareness, all of that is a package."

**ANGELA:** "It's allowed me to stop focusing on negative stuff, because I do suffer from depression and anxiety. With mindfulness especially, it's about looking around and taking in what you see and not just breezing through things. I'm really trying to stay grateful and see the beauty in life."

#### How it felt to spend a weekend with so many other female veterans

**ANGELA:** "I retired from the military in 2003, and was kind of disconnected, and then finding out about this program, I said, 'Wow, something just for women!' Before the retreat I'd never been in a room with that many females who've served in the military."

**JULIE:** "Just being in that room with all of those accomplished women was insanely empowering. It was nice to see so many women doing well and wanting to better their lives."

#### How it helped them identify and achieve professional goals

**JULIE:** "I was in a delicate place in my professional life and having a really hard time trying to figure out whether I was going to go back to school, so my goal was to figure out exactly what I wanted to do professionally. For me, the highlight of my professional coaching was figuring out what I want to do."

**MARIA:** "From the coaching, I worked on 'what is it that you want to do?' I'd never really had that kind of honest conversation. I love doing what I do now, but if I didn't have it, what would I want to do? That's something I got a lot of reflection on and a lot of figuring out where my strengths are."

#### How they enjoy being a part of a nationwide network of female veterans

**MARIA:** "It's a great way to get to know people from other backgrounds and with different experiences. I liked that there was a variety of backgrounds among all the women."

**ANGELA:** "The network I built was the most valuable part of the program for me. I'd describe the retreat as a weekend of rejuvenation and relaxing, but the main purpose is to build that network from all over the country!"

Learn more about the program: [afterherservice.org](https://afterherservice.org)



[m-span.org](https://m-span.org)

### M-SPAN Updates

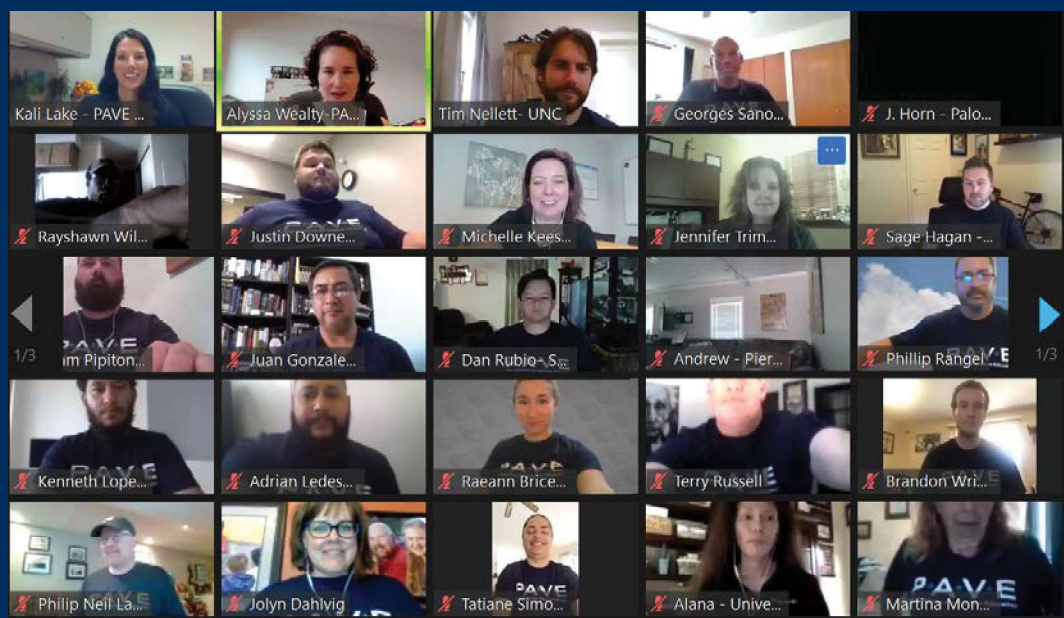
#### The Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE)

Program recruited 19 new partner campuses and trained representatives from those institutions to launch the program at their schools in the Fall 2020 semester. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, the program is now offered at 42 colleges and universities across the country, with the latest expansion made possible by grants from the May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

#### The After Her Service Program

team began hosting weekly resiliency and positive coping sessions via Facebook Live to connect with and support the 29 female veterans who most recently completed the program. Planning is underway for a new virtual delivery of the program for the next cohort of women.

After the coronavirus pandemic made offering in-person groups impossible, the **HomeFront Strong** Program recruited a record number of military and veteran spouses and partners for the online version of its resiliency program. The program will launch virtual groups for military and veteran spouse caregivers later this year.



## PAVE Program Virtual National Training Conference

Once the coronavirus pandemic began, it became clear that it wouldn't be possible to conduct the **Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE)** program's National Training Conference in person as usual. So Associate Professor of Psychiatry Michelle Kees, Ph.D., and the PAVE program team put the Marine Corps ethos of "improvise, adapt, and overcome" into practice and converted the training to a fully virtual delivery. Ninety-five representatives from PAVE's partner campuses across the country participated in the two-day online training in August 2020. In the post-training evaluation, training participants gave the conference rave reviews, with one participant saying, "It has been amazing to see the expanse of the PAVE network! The interaction and conversation going on has not been dampened by the fact that we are virtual!"

This autumn, PAVE will be active on 42 campuses nationwide, supporting student veterans and their path to academic success. A void has been creatively filled and it's paying off.

Learn more about the program:  
[paveoncampus.org](http://paveoncampus.org)



# "Improvise, adapt, and overcome."