2019/2020 SEASON
MILITARY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
IMPACT REPORT

You make it possible for military personnel to create new memories with their families.
This past season, the Playhouse’s Military Outreach Initiatives grew exponentially. Thank you to everyone who partnered with us. This increase is a direct result of your support!

As the daughter of a U.S. Army Veteran who served in the Vietnam War, I could not be prouder of the Playhouse for prioritizing San Diego’s military personnel, families and veterans.

Like many in the military community, these programs have helped me in ways that I did not expect. My father hardly spoke about his time in the service while I was growing up. Although my family knew that he was a combat veteran and a Purple Heart recipient, we truly did not understand what that meant. Through my work with these various initiatives, I can now engage my father in thoughtful conversations about his time in the military. This is just one small way in which this program has impacted my life – and I know that there are many others who have benefited from it immensely.

Gregory, an active member of the Navy, shared with the Playhouse how one Military Night Out brought his family closer, “Attending the performance was incredibly special. The Luckiest is very powerful and initiated some deep discussions within my family. Thank you for enabling such an amazing experience. We also really enjoyed the presentation on theater props prior to the performance.” These events bring loved ones together for a night of community, enjoyment and theatre – often sparking deeper conversations and building stronger relationships.

A.D. Brown, a member of the Veterans Playwrighting Workshop, shared how she grew over the weeks of the workshop, “The facilitators were extremely patient with me, they challenged me and helped me to overcome my anxiety over sharing my work. What I most love about the class is the environment, it’s a safe space for the writers to fully express ourselves.” What started as a writing class became a breakthrough moment of self-growth for A.D.

Programs like Military Night Out, Military Family Day and the Veterans Playwriting Workshop all have made a deep and lasting impact both externally in the community and internally at the Playhouse.

We are excited to continue these programs and expand the reach to more participants in the seasons ahead. We look forward to partnering with you again in the 2020/2021 Season and are thankful for your shared passion in establishing theatre as a creative and restorative place for so many in the military family.

With gratitude,

Jacole Kitchen
Artistic Programs Manager
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SERVING THE MILITARY: AN OVERVIEW

The military community plays an important role in the San Diego community, and the Playhouse is proud to acknowledge their service with dedicated programming. The Playhouse’s Military Outreach Initiatives connect, inspire and entertain local active-duty service members, veterans and their families through programs like Military Night Out, Military Family Day, the Veterans Playwriting Workshop and education programs targeted for military children.

Military Night Out at the Playhouse
With a pre-show reception and tickets for a Playhouse performance, Military Night Out creates magical moments of reconnection for military members and their families. Each year, more than 500 military guests attend one of these special nights. Together, loved ones can create new memories, helping to make up for just some of the holidays and celebrations they have missed throughout the years.

Veterans Playwriting Workshop
La Jolla Playhouse strives to enhance the quality of life for the San Diego military community through meaningful experiences. In the Veterans Playwriting Workshop, veterans work with teaching artists for numerous weeks to craft and share their story. Throughout the process, many find community and healing in ways they did not expect. Every two years or so, a new cohort of veteran playwrights come together to work through Phases I, II and III of the program.
SERVING THE MILITARY: AN OVERVIEW

Military Family Days at the Playhouse
Like Military Night Out, Military Family Days provide an opportunity for families to gather and enjoy a day of theatre. In the 2019/2020 Season, more than 120 family members attended the Military Family Day for *Fly*. The group included children of active-duty personnel, veterans and those whose parents died while in service. After seeing the new musical, *Fly*, families enjoyed a post-show reception featuring food, carnival games and numerous post show activities – all for free! These activities helped guests unleash their artistic side, as they designed masks, painted flowerpots, created a boat (like the one in *Fly*) from recycled materials, and even built a quilt.

Scholarships for Military Children
The Playhouse offers scholarships for Youth Summer Programming to students with family in the military. This is to ensure that children of some of our most dedicated community members can participate in summer classes.

POP Tour for Young Audiences and Military Families
Each year the Playhouse makes a dedicated effort to bring the Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour to military families. Traveling across San Diego County since 1987, each play highlights a new theme for students to discuss. This year’s play, *Emily Driver’s Great Race Through Time and Space*, shared the story of 12-year-old Emily and her journey for a wheelchair. Along the way, Emily learns the power of speaking up, and how one voice can inspire others to create a more accessible world. This year, military families experienced the joy of the POP Tour at the Playhouse.
YOUR IMPACT

During the 2019/2020 Season, 570 Playhouse donors contributed a collective total of $116,798 to the Military Outreach Programs. Their dollars helped to underwrite the cost of tickets, workshops and education and outreach programs for military families. A big thank you to all who supported these programs – it truly made a difference!

Highlights from Last Season

I. Three (3) Military Nights Out and One (1) Military Family Day.

These events were hosted for the following shows:

- *Put Your House In Order* on June 7, 2019
- *The Coast Starlight* on August 23, 2019
- *Kiss My Aztec!* on September 13, 2019
- *Fly* on February 22, 2020 (Military Family Day)

II. More than 600 tickets collectively given to the military community through Military Night Out, Military Family Day, and for other events given throughout the season.

III. The Playhouse hosted a reading of *Radioman* by James McManus, a play based on interviews with veterans. Inspired by a true story, *Radioman* details the journey of how veterans came together to build an exact replica of Abraham Lincoln’s funeral hearse for a celebration commemorating the 150th anniversary of his death. Once completed, the veterans flew out to Springfield, Missouri, and finally received the hero’s welcome they always deserved. This reading was open and free to the public.

IV. Staged a reading of *Tampons, Dead Dogs and Other Disposable Things* by veteran playwright Shairi Engle. Shairi’s play follows Jen as she takes a journey through the mountains of Alaska. While hiking, Jen finds herself battling with a personal traumatic event from her past. A member of the first cohort of Veteran Playwrights, Shairi’s play *Tampons, Dead Dogs and Other Disposable Things* was the 2019 winner of the Arts in the Armed Forces (AITAF) Bridge Award. Shairi then went on to create a piece for our Without Walls (WOW) Festival; her piece was one of the 10-minute plays in *Written In Stone*.

V. In Fall 2019, the Playhouse welcomed its second cohort for the Veterans Playwriting Workshop. Expanding on the program, this cohort includes both veterans and spouses of veterans. This group will work together until the final phase, which will conclude at the end of 2020.

VI. The 2020 POP Tour, in partnership with National Disability Theatre (NDT), brought the joy of live theatre to military children. This year, 60 complimentary tickets were given to military families to enjoy the public performance of the POP Tour, *Emily Driver’s Great Race Through Time and Space*. 
**Sharing Shairi’s Story**

When we announced La Jolla Playhouse would be offering a free playwriting workshop for veterans, U.S. Air Force Veteran Shairi Engle was among the first to join. At the time, she was beginning to develop her voice as a storyteller and loved theatre but had never written a play. Through the program, Shairi received amazing resources to support her goal of playwriting. Over a year, she worked closely with a cohort of Veterans, Playhouse staff, teaching artists and experts in new play development. The words came pouring out, and her story, *Tampons, Dead Dogs and Other Disposable Things*, was finally down on paper.

With the encouragement of her friends and colleagues at the Playhouse, Shairi submitted her play to a competition held by Arts in the Armed Forces (AITAF), a nonprofit co-founded by actor and U.S. Marine Corp. Vet. Adam Driver. Each year, AITAF selects one play to receive their prestigious Bridge Award, and in 2019 they chose Shairi’s play as the winner! Since then, her piece has received two workshops (one at The Public Theater and one at the Playhouse) and she is now enjoying mentorship by Pulitzer Prize finalist Heidi Schreck (*What the Constitution Means to Me)*.

In deep appreciation of the Playhouse, Shairi is now giving back to us, mentoring the newest group of Veteran Playwrights.

“Not to put too fine a point on it, but the Veteran Playwriting Workshop saved my life. While I went through a PTSD treatment program at the VA Hospital, I was also attending the writing workshop. It always struck me that the exit sign for the hospital off the I-5 also pointed to La Jolla Playhouse, which is where the real therapy took place.”

- Shairi Engle, Veteran Playwriting Participant and AITAF 2019 Bridge Award Winner

**What’s Next for 2020/2021**

I. Continuing the series of Military Night Out for the 2020/2021 Season.

II. Close to 700 tickets are estimated to be dedicated to members of the military community. These tickets will be spread throughout all six (6) shows.

III. The Playhouse will host a special weekend in late 2020 of readings from the Veterans Playwriting Workshop. This will culminate a year’s work, celebrating their dedication and growth.

IV. The 2021 POP Tour will visit students on military bases in February/March of 2021.
SHARING THEIR THANKS

We had a wonderful evening. The performance was moving...from laughter to sadness. A real-life issue and how it effects so many people differently. Thank you. I guess I was THE LUCKIEST.

- Denis, Navy Veteran

It was really nice to take the family out and enjoy the afternoon. I’m happy the girls had this experience. Thank you.

- John, Marine Veteran

Thank you, La Jolla Playhouse, for the opportunity to have a great night out with my daughter. We loved the play!

- Michael, Air Force

Thank you so much for the tickets to this performance, we thoroughly enjoyed it. This was a great experience and it allowed us to invite and reconnect with some old friends.

- Ed, Navy Veteran

We love the plays that we attend. Just amazing. Thank you for hosting Military Night and providing military tickets as well. We introduced our oldest children to the Playhouse last night. They asked to see more plays! We’ll see you soon!

- Nancy, Veteran
THANK YOU TO OUR 2019/2020 SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

Thank you to the many people who generously contributed to our military programs between April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020.

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John & Ofelia Alksne
Marilyn Allotta
Amnon & Claire Altman
Terry Joseph Amdur
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