



NATIONAL BIG DIPPER AUXILIARY NEWSLETTER



August 2025

Hello, my name is Connie Shuck (Moler), and I've been a proud member of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. since March 11, 2018.

My daughter, Jeanette, is the reason "Why" I became a Blue Star Mother. She is serving in the Navy as an Aviation Maintenance Administration Second-Class Petty Officer (AZ2).

I am also blessed with another military connection through my son-in-law, Chris Schei, who is married to my daughter Krystin. They live in San Diego with my two beautiful grandchildren, Kristofer and Christyann. Chris serves as a Torpedoman First Class (TM1) and has goals of becoming a Limited Duty Officer (LDO).

I am honored to be your National Big Dipper President; I welcome your suggestions and questions.

Connie M. Shuck
president.bd@bluestarmothers.us
408-807-8564



National Big Dipper Auxiliary Board



Elections for the National Big Dipper Auxiliary were held at the National Bluestar Mother's annual convention in Milwaukee, WI.

A big thank you to those who served during 2024-2025.

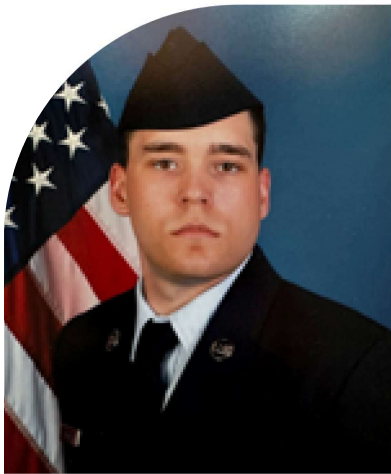
Congratulations to these new officers.

Penni Holmes 1st VP



In 2013, when my son joined the United States Air Force, it sparked something inside me. As a mother, I was proud, but I also wanted to find a way to support not only him but all those who serve our country. That's when I found Blue Star Mothers, it quickly became a passion - an opportunity to give back and connect with other moms who understood the unique experiences of military families.

As time went on, my commitment to serving grew. When my second son joined the Air National Guard, I found myself stepping into a leadership role and eventually became president of my local chapter. Each step was fueled by one simple truth: My children are my "Why."



Their courage, sacrifice, and commitment to our country inspire me every day to do more. Through Blue Star Mothers, I've found a second family - a group of incredible women who share the same pride and concerns. We lift each other up, offer support, and celebrate the service of our children together.

Serving others, especially those who serve, is my way of honoring my sons and their dedication. Through Blue Star Mothers, I'm able to serve my country and the military community in a meaningful way, just as my children do.

They are my "Why," and that's why I continue to serve.

I am honored to serve as Big Dipper 1st VP for 2025-2026. I am excited to grow our membership and educate everyone about the Josephine Calenda Educational Assistance award and convention fun night.

Penni

Rebecca Collins Financial Secretary

My WHY, My SON

My journey with Blue Star Mothers of America (BSMA) began unexpectedly, sparked by the profound experience of my son's military service. If it wasn't for our children, we would not have this title and be part of the 1 %.



In 2002, my “WHY”; – my son – was born, a vibrant, blond-haired, blue-eyed boy who, even as a toddler, captivated everyone with his imaginative games of jungle warfare, complete with camouflage gear and a BB gun.

My “WHY” - my son followed in his grandfather's footsteps, a path that eventually led him to the US Army as a Calvary Scout in the spring of 2022. This marked a pivotal moment.

My “WHY” - my son - departed for a 22-week training program in Georgia. The quiet that settled over our home after he left was profound. It was a silence punctuated only by the absence of his joking laughter and the echo of his footsteps. He left that cool dark morning in his grandpa's 1970 chevy not knowing this would be his last ride with him. His grandpa passed soon after him leaving, this remains a cherished memory.

Around that time, a former grade schoolteacher suggested I join BSMA. After reaching out to several chapters, only one responded—and that response changed everything. Two welcoming members invited me to dinner, setting the stage for a journey that would reshape my life. While my “WHY” - my son- pursued his dream, I found solace and camaraderie. My “WHY” -my son- Did not write. Making Each Sunday call very special, bridging the distance and providing moments of connection during his training.

My “WHY” - my son-
I eagerly awaited his return from camp to formally join BSMA at OK20.

Rebecca Collins continued



However, fate intervened. My son's deployment came sooner than expected, throwing us into a whirlwind of uncertainty. He was stationed overseas, leaving me with little information or support. The

experience was isolating until I connected with another mother whose son was also deployed. She, too, had joined BSMA, and together we found purpose in the shared mission, spending months packaging hundreds of Freedom boxes for deployed service members. Over the next two years, as we worked side-by-side supporting our military families, my "WHY" -my son- evolved into "our WHY" - our son. The BSMA network expanded beyond simple support. We've forged bonds of unbreakable kinship, becoming a support system that encompasses not just mothers, but also fathers, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles—an extended family unified by a shared experience and commitment. It is a family dedicated to ensuring that no military family walks this path alone. We continue to work tirelessly towards that mission making "OUR WHY".

Rebecca

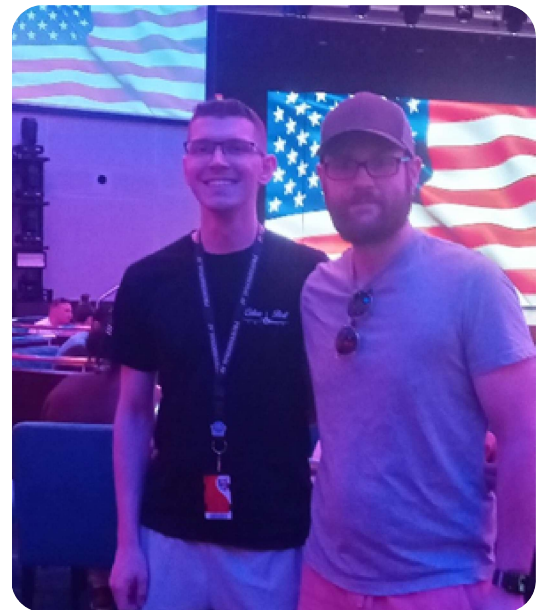


Marie Taylor Treasurer



My name is Marie Taylor and I was elected as the National Big Dipper Treasurer for 2025-2026. I have been a member of Blue Star Mothers since June 2020. In my chapter I have held the offices of Financial Secretary, 2nd VP, 1st VP, and Recording Secretary. For the Department of Ohio, I am finishing my second year as the Financial Secretary. For my full time job, I have held a few different accounting positions in my over 20 year career. I am currently the Corporate Accountant for a plastic recycling company.

My first why is my son! My whole life was turned upside down when in a matter of 3 weeks he went from having a paid apprenticeship to enlisting in the Air Force. We navigated his leaving in July 2019, his graduation, his first duty station and COVID. During COVID and hitting a low point I knew I needed a support group, so I went back to the card on my calendar from his honor cords at graduation.



Finally, I took the leap and went to my first meeting. I knew I was where I was meant to be. During this time, I also had the pleasure of gaining my second why, my Bonus son. My daughter got engaged to my amazing bonus son during this time and it was then I knew even more why I was where I needed to be. My sisters had my back through every twist, turn and knot that has happened!

Thank you all for voting me as your Treasurer for the next year. I appreciate it and am open for any questions you may have.

Marie



Julie McGaha Recording Secretary



I have been blessed with a wonderful husband of 42 years, three amazing sons, three equally amazing daughters-in-law, and six beautiful grandchildren who bring endless joy to my life. My oldest son has proudly served in the Marine Corps for 15 years as a Cobra Z helicopter pilot and is currently stationed at Camp Pendleton. His wife, a dedicated Navy nurse, is also stationed in the San Diego area. I deeply love my family and my country, and it is my Christian faith that anchors me and guides me through each day with purpose and gratitude.

May 2022, we celebrated at our youngest son's wedding. This Thanksgiving, after 3 ½ years, we'll finally all be together again. This is one reason why Blue Star Mothers are so important – they understand the pride, sacrifice, and longing that come with having a child serving our country.



Julie

pajama party fun





**BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC
BIG DIPPER AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP
APPLICATION/RENEWAL 2025-2026**



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

CHAPTER STATE & NO: _____ DEPARTMENT: N/A

**** If you belong to the Department of Michigan or the Department of Ohio, please send your membership form to your Department Big Dipper Financial Secretary****

Send form and check for \$10.00 payable to the order of: "Big Dipper Auxiliary" to

Big Dipper Financial Secretary-

Rebecca Collins

P.O. Box 74331

Afton, OK 74331

OR

If paying through PayPal, please fill out this form and email it to
finsec.bd@bluestarmothers.us or 1vp.bd@bluestarmothers.us

For Big Dipper Use Only: ↓

Amount Paid: _____

Processed: _____

Method of Payment: ____ Check Check # _____

Deposited: _____

____ Card Last 4 Digits on Card _____

____ Cash

Congratulations to Central Valley Blue Star Mothers – CA10 Fresno / Jackie Trafton

Thank You for Your Generous Donation!

Dear Central Valley Blue Star Mothers of CA 10,
On behalf of National Big Dipper Auxiliary, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your generous donation. Your support helps us continue our mission through the Josephine Calenda Educational Assistance, providing awards to outstanding candidates. Your contribution makes a meaningful difference, and we are profoundly grateful for your commitment to our cause. Together, we can help those in need. Thank you once again for your generosity and support. We value your partnership and sisterhood, and we look forward to continuing our work together.

With gratitude,
Connie M. Shuck
Big Dipper Auxiliary, National President
2024-2026



Contact the Big Dipper Board

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