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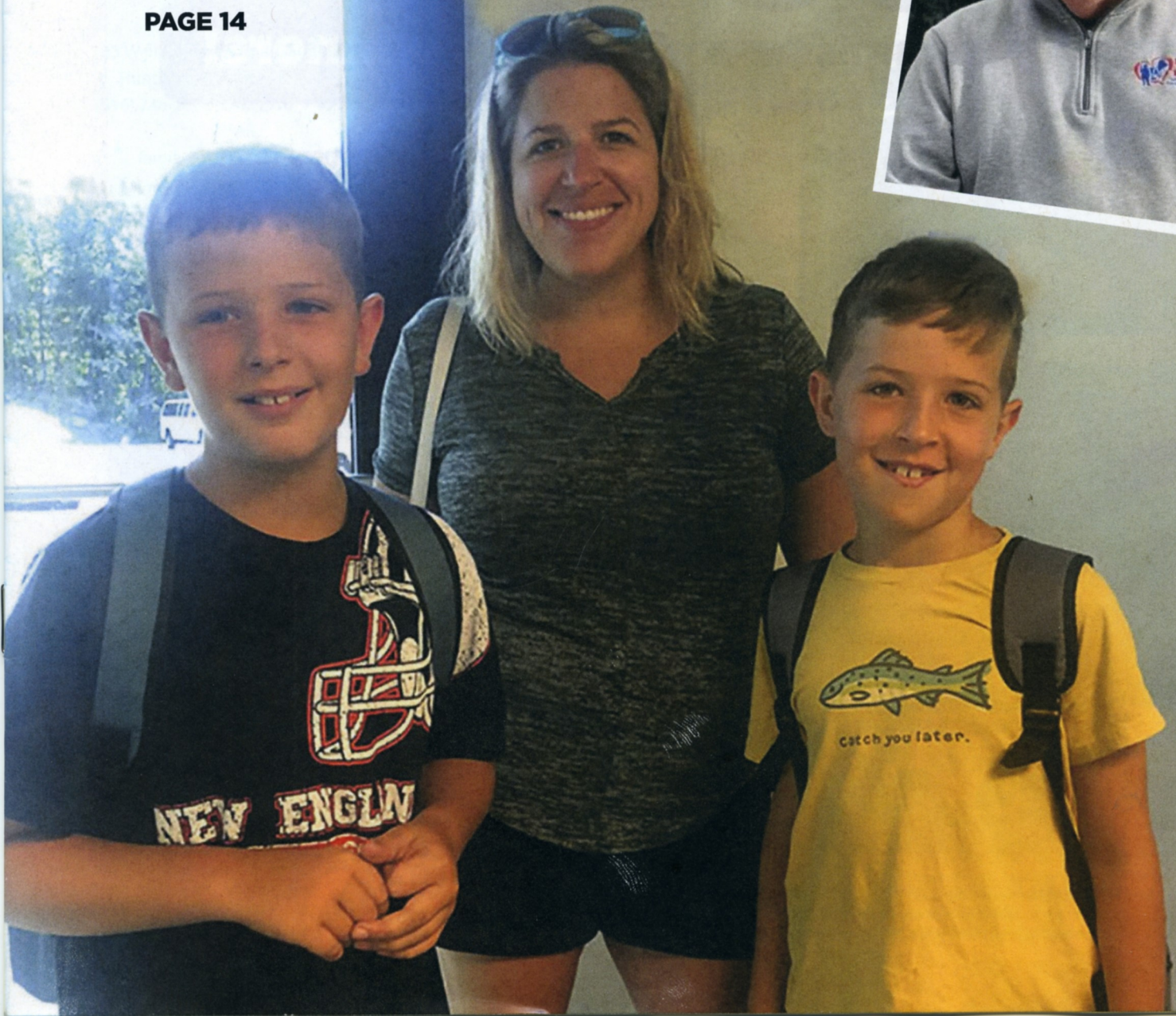
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The Magazine For Military Families

School Days

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Every military family understands the law of the five Ps: "Proper preparation prevents poor performance." But preparing for the back-to-school season can be a tricky proposition for many financially stressed military families, who often are navigating the combined challenges of relocation, new schools, changing social environments, and parental deployment. One volunteer non-profit organization, Project New

Hope, is dedicated to providing military and veteran families with the supplies and resources they need to help them start the school year off right through its annual campaign, the Back-To-School Brigade.

"Our goal is to ensure that children of military and veteran families begin the school year with the tools they need to

succeed—mentally, emotionally and materially,” explains William H. (Bill) Moore, MA, President and Chairman of the Board at Project New Hope Inc., based in Worcester, MA. “The Brigade provides free backpacks filled with school supplies, but more than that, it offers a sense of stability and recognition for families facing unique pressures. We aim to expand this program annually through community partnerships, sponsor support, and volunteer engagement.”

Project New Hope serves thousands of individuals each year through wellness retreats addressing post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma,

moral injury and grief for veterans and their families; food assistance through Sully’s Veteran Food & Baby Pantries; emergency utility and financial assistance; SNAP enrollment and benefits navigation; peer support for caregivers, Gold Star families, and survivors; and seasonal programs like holiday meal support and the Back-to-School Brigade. The programs are available to active-duty service members, veterans of all eras, National Guard and Reserve members, and their immediate families.

“Military families face frequent relocations, deployments, mental health challenges and financial stress,” Moore points out. “These stressors can be isolating. Project New Hope addresses these issues through peer support, trauma-informed retreats, food assistance, mental health resources, and programs designed to strengthen family bonds and build community.”

Moore has a firsthand understanding of some of the challenges facing military families. “I am a proud disabled U.S. Air Force veteran who served as a crash rescue firefighter from 1976 to 1980,” he notes. “After my military service, I earned a master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts until retirement.”

In December 2010, after attending a weekend retreat with Project New Hope of Minnesota and talking with founder Bruce Billington, Moore established his own independent 501c3 non-profit in Massachusetts in January 2011. Project New Hope Inc. is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting veterans, service members, and their families through a range of free programs and services designed to promote healing, connection, and resilience. “As the organization’s volunteer president and executive director, I am committed to ensuring no veteran or military family is left behind,” Moore declares.

Moore cites his own personal experience in transitioning



back to civilian life as being instrumental in developing many of the initiatives under the Project New Hope umbrella. “I recognized the gap in services available for veterans and their families, especially those coping with the invisible wounds of service,” he points out. “Our mission is to foster healing, resilience, and purpose beyond military service—honoring their service while strengthening individuals, families, and communities.”

According to Moore, the Back-To-School Brigade was born out of a conversation with several military families who shared the financial stress of prepar-

ing for the school year. “We saw an opportunity to ease that burden while also showing these families they are supported and appreciated,” Moore recollects. “For example, one mother of three children told us the backpack drive gave her kids confidence and helped them feel just like their peers.”

Project New Hope Inc. is funded through private donations, grants, sponsorships and fundraising events. “We are proud to partner with organizations like The Cecile H. Murphy Charitable Foundation and local donors who believe in our mission,” Moore comments, adding, “All programs are offered at no cost to the recipients. We promote these programs through outreach to veteran service officers, social media, community partnerships, word of mouth and direct communication with registered families.”

Moore says helping other veterans and military families is very personally fulfilling. “One of our most rewarding moments was when a Gold Star mom attended one of our Survivor Family Retreats,” he remarks. “She shared that for the first time since her loss, she felt seen and supported in her grief. Another veteran attending one of our retreats for the first time said it was the first time he had truly felt understood since leaving the military.

“Another veteran, after participating in a Project New Hope retreat, said it was a turning point in his recovery from PTSD,” Moore adds. “These moments reaffirm why we do what we do.

“We want all veterans and their families to know you are not alone,” Moore asserts. “Our mission is to walk beside you as you heal and grow. Project New Hope is always evolving to meet the needs of those we serve, and we welcome collaboration and community involvement to expand our impact.”

For more information about Project New Hope Inc., please visit the organization’s website at: www.projectnewhopema.org

