



LEGACY[®]

NEWSLETTER

2025 Volume 1, Issue 44



**RISING THROUGH THE STORM:
NMCRS PROVIDES RELIEF IN THE
AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE HELENE**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR SAILORS, MARINES, AND THEIR FAMILIES

From the Signal Bridge



As we move into 2025, you can be proud of our incredible accomplishments in the past year. Your support throughout 2024 truly allowed Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) to make a difference in our Sea Service community.

Thanks to your generosity, we not only provided emergency financial assistance but also achieved remarkable milestones, including assisting over 208,000 Sailors, Marines, and their families through our programs and services. We could not do this without the help of our 3,400 volunteers who donated their time to support these efforts.

In this edition of Legacy®, you'll read about recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene and how NMCRS sprang into action to assist over 1,000 Sailors, Marines and their families. Our dedicated staff worked tirelessly providing assistance after the massive storm caused severe damage and power outages, devastating communities.

At the forefront of our efforts are our thousands of volunteers. On page 5 you'll read about Annemarie Jorenby and her lifetime of service and selfless dedication to NMCRS. She received the prestigious Mrs. Grace Glenwood Higginson Lifetime Achievement Award, honoring her 24,000+ volunteer hours during her 24 years

of involvement. Her heartfelt and tireless efforts on behalf of Navy and Marine Corps families led to this well-deserved recognition.

This edition also highlights some details about our outstanding programs and services. Don't miss details about the Daisy Award honoring Visiting Nurses and the upcoming scholarship deadline—please share with those who may qualify! And mark your calendar for our “Make A World of Difference” NMCRS Ball on March 15, an inspiring celebration of NMCRS' global mission. We hope to see you there!

These are just a few examples of the great stories that embody the spirit of service and generosity that we aim to bring into the new year. In 2025, our goal is to build on our legacy and commitment to service. We are dedicated to providing support and deepening our impact in the lives of those we serve. Together, we can create a brighter future for Sailors, Marines and their families.

Thank you for your amazing support!

Semper Fidelis and Very Respectfully,

LTGEN ROBERT R. RUARK, USMC (Ret.)
President & Chief Executive Officer

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All articles written by LCDR James E. Brooks, USN (Ret.)

Cover photo: Jevan Alves

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Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's Legacy® Newsletter allows us to share the impact of your gifts. It also informs active duty and retired Sailors, Marines and their families about the programs and services available to them. We value your privacy. The Society does not rent or sell names, addresses, or e-mails to third parties.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is a 501(C)(3) tax-exempt organization (Tax ID #53-0204618).

When the Storm Hits: NMCRS Steps Up for Sailors and Marines After Hurricane Helene



Photo Courtesy: Petty Officer 2nd Class Simon Pike

Days after Hurricane Helene whipped across Florida and Georgia in September of last year, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society headquarters breathed a tentative sigh of relief. Reports from Jacksonville, Mayport and Kings Bay indicated the storm did

not have a devastating impact on military families like it did for those at MacDill Air Force Base near Tampa, FL. That feeling lasted less than a week.

“By the middle of the week, we started getting some calls from the American Red Cross who, by a formal agreement, help Navy and Marine Corps families where there isn’t an NMCRS office,” said Winnie Ursini, Casework Division Manager for NMCRS HQ. “Then we got a call from our office in Kings Bay who received an urgent call for assistance from Master Chief Ken Walton at U.S. Army garrison Fort Eisenhower near Augusta, GA.”

Fort Eisenhower may be home to the Army’s Cyber Center of Excellence, but it’s also home and a tenant command to more than 1,300 Sailors and Marines actively supporting the U.S. Navy’s cyber warfare and defense missions.

“At 3 a.m. Sunday, the hurricane really hit,” Walton recalls. “There were massive winds for 45-60 minutes and reports of over 27 tornados making landfall during the storm. Everyone lost power. The roof of my house was torn off. Fortunately, no one was injured or killed.”

Across town, Petty Officer Second Class Cory Shula was

also awake at 3 a.m. when Helene hit. He was taking care of his newborn son who arrived in May, two months prematurely. Upstairs, his wife tried to sleep.

“The house was ‘talking’ a lot,” Shula said. “The power went out, flickered a couple times and then went out for good. The alarms on my son’s oxygen support started going off. We had back-up oxygen for travel, but I had to go out the next day and buy a generator.”

That was just the tip of the iceberg for the Shula family. There were big trees down in the yard and they were four days away from closing on the sale of their former house across town where a large tree had fallen through the roof. This stopped the sale of the home and also affected another Navy family who was set to buy it.

Altogether, the power was out for more than two weeks, and local water services stopped because of the storm.

“It was a very frustrating time,” Walton said. “I had Sailors asking to take leave so they could take care of their families and move them to hotels or elsewhere where there was power. It seemed like no one knew there was more than 1,000 Sailors and Marines affected.”

Coordinating assistance was also difficult because communications were almost non-existent with the loss of the cell phone towers. Sailors couldn’t access relief organizations at Fort Eisenhower because they were overwhelmed by Army families.

Walton remembered Beverly Cooper who ran the NMCRS office at Kings Bay and phoned her. They met several years earlier when he helped run the annual Active Duty Fund Drive to benefit NMCRS when he was stationed there.

Cooper called NMCRS headquarters and explained the situation and a decision was made to send volunteers

from Camp LeJeune and Cherry Point to help.

Bill Kampa, Deputy Director at Camp Lejeune and Ava Holmes from MCAS Cherry Point met up with Ursini and Susan White from NMCRS HQ.

“Ava and I got there on Tuesday and went over to the Navy Fleet and Family Service Center,” Kampa said. They helped us out with everything from workspace to crowd control. It was truly a team effort.”

In total the NMCRS team saw over 1,000 clients in the aftermath of the storm.

“It was an amazing experience for me to see first-hand what NMCRS does for service members,” Holmes said. “Even people who manage their money couldn’t have planned for what happened in this storm.”

But the most appreciative people were, by far, the Sailors and Marines who asked for help and received it on-the-spot.

Petty Officer Shula was on baby duty, so his wife stood in line to wait her turn.

“Storm recovery was a big financial issue because repairs were needed to our house, but we also had medical appointments scheduled for our son that we had to travel to,” Shula said. “The very day my wife was seen, she got two checks. One was a \$600 grant that was given to every Sailor and Marine to cover loss of food and temporary

#NATIONALVOLUNTEERWEEK
APRIL 20-26, 2025

We love
NAVY MARINE-CORPS
RELIEF SOCIETY
Volunteers

The banner features a red heart shape on a dark blue background. Inside the heart is the NMCRS logo, which includes an anchor and the text 'NAVY MARINE-CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY' and '1904'. The text 'We love' is in a white script font, 'NAVY MARINE-CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY' is in a white sans-serif font, and 'Volunteers' is in a white script font.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

HOW DID THE NMCRS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HELP YOU?

“This scholarship from Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is incredibly valuable as I pursue my bachelor's in nursing as a military spouse. It supports my academic journey financially and serves as a beacon of encouragement during this challenging yet rewarding time. By alleviating financial pressures, this scholarship allows me to concentrate fully on my studies and clinical experiences, preparing me to make a positive impact in healthcare. With the Society's support, I am inspired to excel, knowing that my hard work and dedication are recognized and supported by a community that understands and values military families like mine.”



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THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION
OPENS MARCH 10TH



lodging. The other was for our unique situation with our home damage and caring for our son. Those people made everything possible, and I didn’t expect that.”

“The initial feeling I got from my Sailors and Marines is they were utterly awestruck,” Walton said. “At first there seemed to be no one helping them after the storm and then NMCRS arrived. You could see and feel the gratitude.”

NMCRS provided more than 1,000 Sailors, Marines and their families with \$630,000 in assistance following Hurricane Helene.

“This recovery effort speaks to many of the NMCRS qualities: the agility and flexibility of NMCRS to meet the immediate needs of our clients; the dedication of our NMCRS volunteers who are willing to drop what they're doing and go to where they are needed; and the importance of our network in the Fleet,” NMCRS’ Chief Operating Officer, Dawn Cutler said.

A Lifetime of Warmth: Annemarie Jorenby's Legacy of Service



Photo Caption: Annemarie Jorenby with the Kia sedan she donated to NMCRS

Every spring for the last 38 years, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society recognizes a volunteer with at least 10 years of service for the Society's highest award, the Mrs. Grace Glenwood Higginson Lifetime Achievement Award. It's dedicated to the memory of

Grace Glenwood Higginson, the first president of the newly formed Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society in 1904 who set the high standards of service for the many volunteers that followed her example.

This year's honor was presented to Annemarie Jorenby on her 90th birthday. Her legacy of service with over 24,000 volunteer hours began simply by offering a homemade blanket to a young woman with a baby at a bus stop.

"I looked out my window and saw a young woman and her child who were waiting for the bus," Jorenby said. "They looked cold, and I took a blanket I had crocheted and gave it to her to keep her baby warm. She was so thankful. When I told her I loved crocheting blankets, hats and booties for young children, she said I should go to Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society on the Navy base, so I did. It took me three visits, but I finally got through!"

Kathy Phillips, Director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Bangor, Washington Office, still laughs about their first meeting 24 years ago.

"The first time she came to the office she brought 10 blankets," Phillips said. "I think I was in a meeting and so I didn't get to see her. She said she'd come back. The

second time she showed up, I think I was on leave, and we missed each other a second time. We finally met on her third visit, and she looked a little upset about the first two visits. I sat her down, poured her a cup of coffee, and that's when I learned there was a very determined and dedicated person in front of me."

Twenty-four years later and many more cups of coffee, Jorenby still calls Phillips to volunteer or drop off baby blankets she finished.

Annemarie was no stranger to the military life, Phillips learned. Her husband was a U.S. Army Soldier but died of cancer when he was only 30 years old. Annemarie had a passion for crochet and sewing. It was something she learned in a German orphanage where she lived after her parents were killed in World War II. After the war, her grandfather later tracked her down. She left to live with him until she grew up and met her husband who was stationed near where they lived.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society became a place for Annemarie to fuel her passion for helping young families. As it turned out, Bangor's NMCRS eagerly accepted her blankets. The Society's Budget for Baby®



Photo Caption: Annemarie Jorenby with Kathy Phillips receiving the Mrs. Grace Glenwood Higginson Lifetime Achievement Award

workshop sought volunteers to make baby blankets for Navy and Marine Corps parents who took the workshop.

But over the next two decades, Jorenby did more than just crochet blankets. She started to volunteer at the NMCRS Thrift Shop where she would help sort the donated items. She coordinated with other local charities to receive excess donations or anything the thrift shop didn't use. She worked in that capacity until the thrift shop closed in 2005.

Her reputation as a dedicated volunteer was recognized in 2009 when she was presented with the Gold Presidential Service and the Presidential Call to Service Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Annemarie is a hard-core volunteer. I can still count on her. At 90, she is still active, independent and crocheting," said Phillips.

While the exact number of baby blankets crocheted by Annemarie is going up every day, Annemarie has a pretty good idea of how many have been given to Navy and Marine Corps families.

"I know I've done 750 blankets. I'm not as fast as I used to be. My eyesight isn't as good, but I keep trying," Annemarie said.

Adding to her hundreds of crocheted baby blankets,




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Share your story of how an NMCRS Visiting Nurse demonstrated compassionate care!

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Annemarie made one other large contribution to Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society this summer.

"Annemarie stopped driving because of her eyesight, and she decided to donate her 2010 Kia sedan to Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society," Phillips said.

NMCRS has a relationship with a non-profit who auctions donated cars for various charity organizations. The proceeds from the sale of her car at auction were donated back to NMCRS in her name.

While Annemarie Jorenby is very honored to be named the recipient of this year's Mrs. Grace Glenwood Higginson Lifetime Achievement Award, it's not the accolade she is most appreciative of. She says one other award is more important.

"I received a book full of thank you notes and photos of the babies and parents who received my blankets. I love that book very much and like looking through it today," she said.

For NMCRS, the Mrs. Grace Glenwood Higginson Lifetime Achievement Award is bestowed only when all other accolades have already been given. For many like Annemarie, the simple thank you notes from the Sailors and Marines who benefited most from her time means more than anything else.

Thank You For A Successful 2024!



NMCRS ANNUAL IMPACT



208,000 Sailors, Marines and family members assisted through NMCRS programs and services



Visiting Nurses
Over 12,000 patient contacts completed, held 290 classes and 250 support groups sharing educational, wellness and referral information



Budget for Baby®
Provided in-person and virtual financial education workshops to 4,200 expectant parents



Thrift Shops
144,000 patrons provided affordable uniforms, clothing and household items



Financial Education
Over 5,900 clients provided 1-on-1 budgeting assistance, information and resource referrals to enhance their financial knowledge



Education Assistance
348 grants and interest-free loans provided for undergraduate and graduate studies for active duty and retired spouses and children

Over \$50 Million in financial assistance:

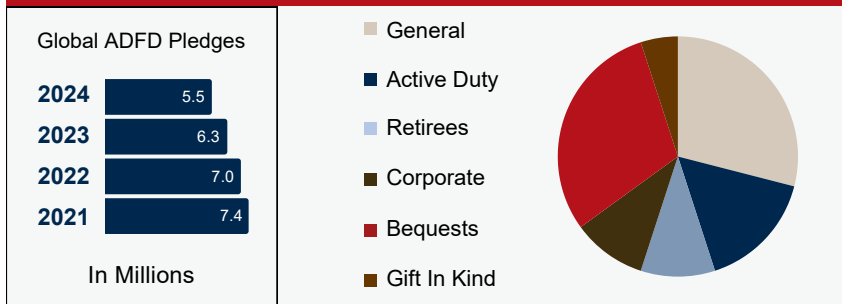
	Clients Assisted
Basic living expenses (food, lodging, utilities, household set-up)	24,395
Transportation (car repairs, insurance, car payment, rental)	13,234
Family emergency, funeral, medical/dental	5,255
Transportation due to family member illness	1,373
Other	860



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– LTGEN ROBERT R. RUARK, USMC (Ret.)

2024 Contributions by Type



LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME?

A charitable gift annuity with Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society could provide you with steady lifetime income and tax savings—all while making a meaningful difference for Sea Service families.

A charitable gift annuity might be a great option if:

- ★ You want to make a generous gift of \$10,000 or more to NMCRS.
- ★ You're at least 65 years old.
- ★ You're looking to maintain or increase your cash flow.
- ★ You value the security of fixed, dependable lifetime payments.
- ★ You'd like to reduce income taxes or capital gains taxes.
- ★ You'd appreciate partially tax-free income.

The NMCRS Development Team can provide a no-obligation, personalized illustration of your payment rate, annual income and potential tax savings. Not available in all states. To learn more, contact us at (800) 654-8364 or [GIVING@NMCRS.ORG](mailto:giving@nmcrs.org).

MARK YOUR
2025
CALENDARS!

3/1 – ADFD to benefit NMCRS kicks off

3/10 – Applications for education assistance opens

3/15 – NMCRS Make a World of Difference Ball, Arlington, VA

4/5 – NMCRS at Heroes Among Us, Quantico, VA

4/6 - 4/9 – NCMRS at Sea-Air-Space Expo, National Harbor, MD

4/20 - 4/26 – National Volunteer Week

4/29 - 5/1 – NMCRS at Modern Day Marine, Washington D.C.

5/15 – Applications for education assistance closes



NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY BALL



Learn More and Get Tickets

Ticket sales close March 7th, 2025.

NMCRS does not receive any government funds, we operate entirely on private donations. Thank you for your support!

To explore ways you can support Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, please contact NMCRS Development Department at giving@nmcrs.org or (800) 654-8364.



NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY®

875 N. Randolph Street, Suite 225, Arlington, VA 22203-1767
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR SAILORS, MARINES, AND THEIR FAMILIES