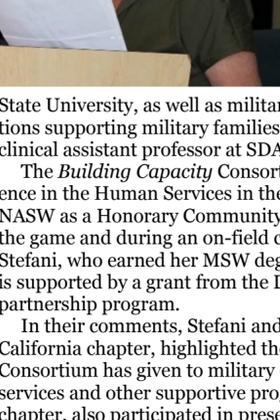


Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools

Building Capacity Consortium Honored at Petco Park

Baseball fans not only enjoyed the Padres-Dodgers game Saturday in San Diego, but they also shared in showing appreciation for local military members and the hundreds of school principals, teachers, superintendents, military school liaison officers, universities, and social workers serving military children and families.

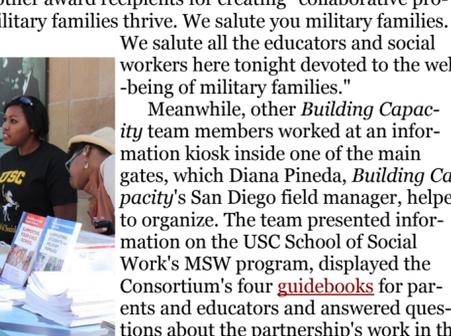


The *Building Capacity* Consortium was one of several honorees which joined together for Military Social Work Awareness Day, a collaborative event organized by the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The Schools of Social Work at the University of Southern California San Diego Academic Center (SDAC), California State University San Marcos, Point Loma Nazarene University and San Diego State University, as well as military school liaison officers and collaborative organizations supporting military families, participated in the event, which Omar Lopez, a clinical assistant professor at SDAC, helped to coordinate.

The *Building Capacity* Consortium, which includes the Hamovich Center for Science in the Human Services in the USC School of Social Work, was recognized by NASW as a Honorary Community-Wide Partnership during a VIP gathering prior to the game and during an on-field ceremony. The awards ceremony was led by Tera Stefani, who earned her MSW degree from USC as part of *Building Capacity*, which is supported by a grant from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) partnership program.

In their comments, Stefani and Janlee Wong, the executive director of the NASW California chapter, highlighted the more than 70,000 hours the *Building Capacity* Consortium has given to military children and families through internships, tutoring services and other supportive programs. Shirley Gentilini, the president of the state chapter, also participated in presenting the awards.

San Diego-area Congresswoman Susan Davis, pictured above, then presented an official Congressional recognition to the *Building Capacity* Consortium,



which consists of eight military-connected school districts and USC. "I know that you are needed now more than ever," Davis, a trained social worker and a former school board member, told the educators, social workers, military school liaison workers and others gathered at the pre-game awards ceremony. "You are the safety net for millions of families across the country."

Those being honored, along with the community and military partners, were invited and then escorted to the field where they stood along the first base line as the flag was presented by the Junior ROTC Color Guard, above, from Oceanside High School—one of our DoDEA Consortium schools.

"We are here tonight to honor all the military families that have served our nation with grace," the announcer said before the 43,000-plus fans in attendance, also recognizing the universities and other award recipients for creating "collaborative programs dedicated to making military families thrive. We salute you military families. We salute all the educators and social workers here tonight devoted to the well-being of military families."



Meanwhile, other *Building Capacity* team members worked at an information kiosk inside one of the main gates, which Diana Pineda, *Building Capacity*'s San Diego field manager, helped to organize. The team presented information on the USC School of Social Work's MSW program, displayed the Consortium's four **guidebooks** for parents and educators and answered questions about the partnership's work in the schools. Former Marine Giovanni

Penate, above, stopped by to learn more about USC's program in military social work.

In addition to the superintendents, teachers, principals, pupil support personnel, military school liaison officers and other supportive community partners, military families from Consortium schools received free tickets as part of this special opportunity presented by the Padres organization.



Carissa Story, whose children Destiny and Tristian attend Mary Fay Pendleton School, part of the Fallbrook Union Elementary School District, said she appreciates the teachers' sensitivity to her children's individual needs. Her daughter, for example, is strong in math so the teachers have given her additional support and materials for higher grade levels so she can keep progressing.

"They understand that being military that children have different emotional needs as well as educational needs," Story says. "They help you not only if you're struggling, but also to succeed."



Receiving the award from the California Chapter of NASW on behalf of the Building Capacity Consortium are, from left, Dr. Ron Astor, USC Professor of Social Work and Education, Bill Billingsley, director of special programs for the Fallbrook Union Elementary School District and Dr. Francisco Escobedo, Superintendent of the Chula Vista Elementary School District.



The on-field ceremony

