



# Annual Report

August 2019 – August 2020



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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

# The last two years have made me incredibly grateful.

That may seem like an unusual response for someone who came forward as a victim of sexual violence, but I feel more fortunate than many survivors. Along with my sister survivors, we have been able to stand strong together and make our voices heard.

I know that I stand with an Army of others who are seeking the same goal: to better the outcomes for those who experience sexual violence so that they find justice.

Being a survivor of sexual abuse and institutional betrayal is a shared experience that creates bonds that cross all boundaries—boundaries of where and when and by whom the violence was committed, boundaries of race, age, or cultural background.

Our experiences have shown how much society needs to examine how we treat those who

come forward, and the systems of privilege and power that institutions have over athletes that lead to abuse.

We must examine why certain groups are marginalized, why there is disproportionate representation in the prosecution of cases, and why young athletes aren't helped and supported. All of these issues beg for us to examine our culture and how we exist in it. If anything, this past year has shown us even more the power of those who stand up and tell their stories.

We know that even with the growing number of victims willing to come forward, there are abusers who have yet to be reported, more survivors waiting to use their voices, and even more institutions that need the light of day shown on abuses past and present in their own systems.

I know that The Army of Survivors is making a difference by what we do, particularly through our focus on abuse in sport. By taking on one aspect of sexual violence against children, The Army of Survivors can fill a small niche to make a bigger difference.

I am grateful for what we already have achieved as an organization through the hard work and dedication of volunteers and the community's generosity. And I am grateful for the opportunities I see ahead to help those who have experienced trauma to find their own voices and to improve the culture in sport.

The goal remains steadfast: to eliminate sexual violence against athletes. TAOS seeks to change the system, not just the symptoms, to prevent abuse in sport by focusing on education, advocacy, and resources.

As an organization, we stand with survivors. We are beside them in the fight for justice.

We thank every one of our supporters for their help over the last year as The Army continues to make strides toward a safer environment in athletics for our children. And we know that together we will find ever more reasons to be grateful through the work that we do.

**Grace French**

*Founder and President*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



### Grace French

#### FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

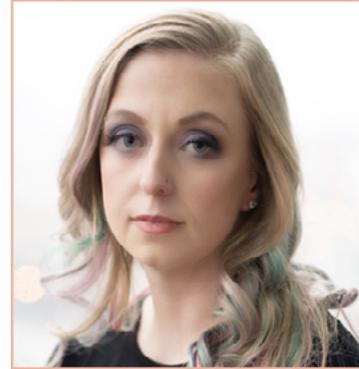
Grace is Director of Brand Development at a national financial services company, working in the Ann Arbor, Michigan, headquarters. She received her bachelor's degree in business administration with honors from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, and minored in dance.



### Louise Harder

#### STRATEGIST

Louise is a public health educator and fierce advocate in the field. She has a degree in wellness, health promotion, and injury prevention from Oakland University and has several years professional experience creating, planning, implementing, and evaluating prevention programming.



### Danielle Moore

#### SECRETARY

Danielle is a Witness and Victim Crisis Counselor with the Department of Prosecuting Attorneys with the city and county of Honolulu, Hawaii. She has a master's in clinical psychology and a doctorate in clinical and forensic psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, as well as a master's in forensic psychology from the University of North Dakota and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Central Michigan University.



### Kris Burak

#### SECRETARY

Kris is a financial advisor and managing principal for Rehmann Financial based out of the Lansing, Mich., office. Kris graduated with honors from Grand Valley State University and holds various security and insurance licenses.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



### **Curtis Hertel Jr.**

Curtis was elected in 2014 to serve Michigan's 23rd Senate district, which encompasses most of Ingham County. Prior to serving in the State Senate, Hertel was an Ingham County Commissioner, legislative liaison for the Department of Community Health under Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, and Ingham County Register of Deeds.



### **John-Michael Lander**

John-Michael was an elite athlete and experienced sexual abuse. Now a writer, speaker, and consultant, John-Michael helps individuals and organizations identify the signs of grooming, manipulation, and stigmatizing of sexual abuse.



### **Alex S. Rusek**

Alexander Rusek is an associate attorney with White Law PLLC in Okemos, Mich. His practice focuses on complex mass action and class action civil litigation, business law and litigation, criminal law, and appellate law.

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*In 2020, three members of the board completed their terms. Their service as founding board members was invaluable, and The Army will forever be grateful for their contributions. Thank you to Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, Sara Teristi, and Olivia Venuto.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART / CHAIRS AND LEADS



**Lyndsy Gamet**  
GRANT PROCUREMENT

Lyndsy works as stakeholder manager at Elder Law of Michigan and has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She also volunteers as an ambassador for Child USA.



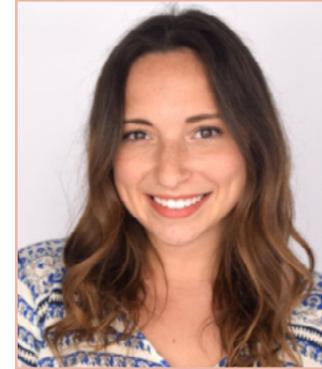
**Natalie Hawkins**  
GRAPHIC DESIGN

Natalie is a visual and user experience design consultant for tech startups, nonprofits, and small businesses. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art with concentrations in graphic design and photography from Michigan State University.



**Melissa Hudecz**  
REPORTING AND RESEARCH

Melissa is an occupational therapist in Grand Rapids, Mich., where she has specialized in NICU. She earned her master's degree from Grand Valley State University and is a retired professional ballerina.



**Jennica Lurie**  
DEVELOPMENT &  
COMMUNICATIONS

Jennica has a bachelor's degree in journalism from The Ohio State University, specializing in strategic communication. She currently lives in Austin, Texas, where she works at Austin Pets Alive.



**Angelika McGhee**  
REPORTING AND RESEARCH

Angelika received a bachelor's degree in Emergency Medicine from the University of Pittsburgh and is currently a paramedic and Registered Nurse.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Army of Survivors (TAOS) works to bring about greater public awareness of the systemic affliction of sexual violence against athletes at all levels, to strengthen accountability by addressing not only perpetrators but organizations and institutions that enable them, and to increase transparency by creating a culture where victims feel comfortable reporting abuse.

Competitive sport often breeds a culture in which athletes are valued for their achievements while their personal well-being is overlooked. In the United States alone, an estimated 3.75 million athletes (both minors and young adults) are survivors of sexual violence in youth through elite

athletics, based on the prevalence rate found by the National Institute of Health Quebec. After just two years, volunteers with The Army of Survivors have logged over 4,565 volunteer hours, the equivalent of a full-time staff person for the time we have existed.

When athletes do not fear retaliation for reporting abuse, when institutions and organizations have the courage to admit to, uncover, and prevent wrongdoers in their midst, and when community members recognize and respond to prevent sexual violence, voices from The Army of Survivors no longer will be needed.

## MISSION

The mission of the Army of Survivors is to bring **awareness, accountability,** and **transparency** to sexual violence against athletes at all levels.

Three pillars support us in reaching our goals:

**ADVOCACY**

**EDUCATION**

**RESOURCES**

### **Awareness**

of the level of sexual violence in sport, and the systemic affliction of sexual violence against athletes at all levels.

### **Accountability**

through the justice system for perpetrators and institutions that enable them.

### **Transparency**

so athletes do not fear retaliation when reporting abuse and institutions do not cover it up.

# ADVOCACY

**The Army of Survivors advocates nationally and internationally for survivors of sexual violence, focusing on young athletes at all levels. Because of the organization’s profile, Army leaders have had opportunities to speak out about abuse in many venues.**

President and Founder Grace French addressed world leaders at the United Nations’ first survivor summit in New York in 2019 about the need for a global bill of rights for survivors. Rise Justice Labs invited participants to discuss the need to improve survivors’ rights.



TAOS leaders traveled to Washington, D.C., to speak with members of the United States Senate about the Empowering Olympic and Amateur Athletes Act of 2019. In 2020, the Army of Survivors joined with national organizations, athletes, coaches, sport governance leaders, academics, survivors, and lawyers for athletes to support passing this legislation. Senate Bill 2330 and HR 3303 would begin to remedy the governance and system deficiencies in the Olympic structure.

The Army has publicly supported and spoken out on behalf of the hundreds of male athlete survivors of sexual abuse at the University of Michigan, including at a news conference in August 2020.

TAOS President and Founder Grace French was a keynote speaker at the 2019 Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests conference in July 2019 in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Danielle Moore, TAOS’ secretary, will keynote at the 2021 Safe Sport International Conference in Montreal, Quebec. The event was postponed due to the global

pandemic. The title of her talk is "Prevention, Intervention, and Response to Sexual Violence in Sport."

U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin appointed TAOS President Grace French to Slotkin’s Title IX advisory board in 2019. The committee worked on recommendations for the Michigan State Board of Education, identifying four

policies not being adequately implemented. The committee suggested changes to Rep. Slotkin’s proposals and worked with her on suggestions after U.S. Sec. of Education Betsy DeVos rolled back survivor centered rules in Title IX. TAOS has actively spoken out against DeVos’ changes to Title IX, changes that attack survivors’ rights to

education, personal safety, and mental health. TAOS has made public statements, posted on social media, and participated on legislative advisory boards to advocate against these changes.

**“CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE EXPLOITED FOR THEIR LOVE AND DEVOTION TO SPORT.”**  
**DR. DANIELLE MOORE**

# ADVOCACY



The Army advocated for mental health services for survivors of abuse at Michigan State University, speaking publicly to the Board of Trustees and appealing for improvements behind the scenes. The board created a fund to provide mental health care to survivors and their families; however, within months, the university's interim president shut down the fund without an announcement, stranding victims who were relying on it to pay for counseling, therapy animals, medications, and more. In 2019, The Army pressed MSU to honor its promise, leading to reinstatement. The Army continues to work to hold MSU responsible for meeting the terms it originally publicized to help survivors. Thus far, the

university reinstated reimbursement for prescriptions and added telehealth to covered expenses pre-COVID-19 at The Army's behest.

The Army has partnered with 15 organizations to further its mission and advocate for survivors. With its partners, TAOS has co-hosted educational events, including an exhibit about institutional betrayal and sexual violence at the Michigan State University museum, presented information to world leaders with Rise Justice Labs at the United Nations, and worked with the Victims Rights Center to create a resource for survivors, allies, and professionals called "What Now?" located on the TAOS website. TAOS' most recent collaboration brings together 40 organizations in an effort to have Congress approve additional funding under the HEROES Act to provide more trauma-informed care for survivors and support the professionals who protect children.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019-2020 ADVOCACY

- Addressed the United Nations in New York to seek global survivor rights
- Met with Senators in Washington, D.C., about reforming the Olympic structure
- Advocated for athletes abused at the University of Michigan, including a public statement in August 2020
- Keynoted at Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests 2019 national conference
- Keynoting at the 2021 Safe Sport International Conference in Montreal, Quebec
- Fought rollbacks of Title IX policies
- Gained back mental health services for Michigan State University survivors
- Joined with 15 partner organizations to make athletes safer

## EDUCATION

**We made great strides in educational programming in 2019 and 2020, with the high point of our efforts being the launch of the Campus Ambassador Program. By mentoring advocates on five campuses, The Army works to distribute resources and support survivors where young people are more vulnerable. Our educational programming focuses on bringing awareness to the systemic affliction of sexual violence against child athletes and the intersectionality of other identities.**

With campus advocates, The Army coordinated four educational events at St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind., Grand Valley State University and the University of Michigan.

At St. Mary's, The Army held a screening of the documentary "At the Heart of Gold: Inside the USA Gymnastics Scandal" which was followed by a panel discussion that included three survivors and Michigan



30th Circuit Court Judge Rosemarie Aquilina. More than 200 members of the public and school officials attended the screening and panel to discuss institutional betrayal, toxic sports culture, and key actions to effect change.

The Army invited panelists and hosted the first public screening of the documentary "Athlete A." Panelists included Olympian and attorney Tasha Schwikert; survivor and athlete John-Michael Lander; producer and former gymnast Jennifer Sey; CEO and Founder of Child USA Marci Hamilton; and director Bonni Cohen. This event was conducted virtually in July 2020 due to crowd

restrictions resulting from COVID-19. Almost 100 people attended live, with more watching the recorded event.

The Army led a course in Mental Health First Aid from the National Council for Behavioral Health in January 2020 to teach participants to respond to common signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance abuse, as well as how to interact with a person in crisis. Twenty-one people from throughout Michigan in professions including child advocacy, social work, medical professionals, athletic administrators, and community

members took part. These individuals became certified in mental health first aid and now know how to interact appropriately with a person in crisis and connect them with resources.

The Army partnered with I'm a Survivor Inc., She Will Speak Series, Voices of Hope, Voices Beyond Assault, and author Astrid Ferguson for an educational event titled *Shades of Racism in Rape* about the intersectionality of race and sexual violence. The event panel comprised representatives of I'm a Survivor, Inc.;

**"THE ARMY OF SURVIVORS' ONGOING WORK IS SUCH A RESOURCE, AND I APPLAUD THEIR SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY."**

**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE ELISSA SLOTKIN**

# EDUCATION

She Will Speak; Voices Beyond Assault; Voices of Hope; The Army of Survivors; and author Astrid Ferguson. The event discussed racism in sexual violence, the underrepresentation of victims of color in the justice system, and how best to support survivors of color.

The Army shared statistics about sexual assault and abuse in sport with LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities through social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, for two months. Resources from this campaign are available now on the website. We partnered with organizations including She Will Speak to host "Instagram Takeovers" to promote more voices from among less-heard communities across the country.

In 2019, members of The Army co-curated a well-attended exhibit, "Finding Our Voice: Sister Survivors Speak," with the Michigan State University Museum. At The Army's invitation, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer opened the public event. The Army co-hosted and participated in five public panels in East Lansing in conjunction with the exhibit, reaching hundreds of attendees on topics related to sexual abuse and assault in association with the exhibit.

In 2019, The Army recognized a need for survivors to understand how financial settlements can create a range of emotions. As a result, The Army reached out to a nationally recognized financial therapist, and with support from a Michigan credit union, developed and hosted a webinar for survivors presented by Dr. Megan McCoy, secretary of the Financial Therapy Association, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and professor of practice at Kansas State University. The session explored individuals' deeply held and sometimes unconscious beliefs around money and the emotional consequences of receiving money as the result of a painful experience. The webinar allowed survivors to ask pre-submitted and live questions and provided resources for survivors to understand their personal approaches to money management.

In 2020, The Army outlined a Mission Ambassador program to bring notable voices from athletes, Olympians, scholars, actors, activists, and musicians into the conversation to spread awareness of the issue of sexual violence in sport. The process of designating Ambassadors is underway.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019-2020 EDUCATION

- Started a Campus Ambassador program to reach survivors at colleges and universities
- Screened and hosted a panel discussion of "At the Heart of Gold: Inside the USA Gymnastics Scandal"
- Held the premiere screening and panel discussion of "Athlete A" documentary
- Provided a Mental Health First Aid course in Michigan
- Created a Shades of Racism in Rape educational event
- Generated Instagram Takeovers and shared information with LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities
- Co-curated "Finding Our Voice: Sister Survivors Speak" exhibit
- Produced a financial therapy webinar for survivors coping with emotional fallout from financial settlements
- Set up a Mission Ambassadors program to extend the brand mission



# RESOURCES

**Throughout the last year, The Army developed printable and digital resources to educate survivors and allies, reaching more than 3,000 individuals with information about the phases of trauma, the science behind trauma, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, and more.**

The Army of Survivors identified and disbursed research-based policies for sports organizations to protect athletes' welfare. The group comprising more than 50 international organizations, International Safeguarding Children in Sport Working Group, reviewed research and met regularly over two years to outline a set of actions that all sport governing organizations, club, elite, or recreational teams should implement to ensure athletes are free from abuse in their sport.

Campus Ambassadors helped to distribute resources, including reading lists, a list of helpful hotlines and websites, posters, and informational materials to at-risk communities on five college campuses in three states.

TAOS shared healing and mental health tips on social media.

TAOS created Spotify playlists targeted at survivors to use in times of stress.

Volunteers wrote cards to send to women and children in Michigan domestic violence shelters for the holidays.

TAOS created a children's reading list with recommendations for age-appropriate materials that parents, teachers, therapists and other professionals can use to teach children about consent and how to talk about their emotions.

TAOS developed lists of LGBTQ+ resources, along with resources for BIPOC survivors, that focus on the additional needs and traumas of traditionally unrepresented and marginalized groups.

TAOS held a digital work-out class in partnership with 305 Fitness to assist in healing for survivors with attendees from Hawaii to New York City.



Throughout the year, the organization developed and shared digital educational materials about the phases of trauma, the science behind trauma, and complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019-2020 RESOURCES

- *Distributed research-based policies for sport organizations to support athlete welfare*
- *Provided resources to college communities*
- *Used social media to share healing and mental health tips*
- *Created Spotify stress-relief playlists*
- *Sent cards to domestic violence shelters*
- *Developed a children's reading list to teach consent*
- *Produced resources for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC survivors*
- *Targeted East Lansing survivors with a work-out class*
- *Originated digital educational materials on relevant topics*

## SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

The Army's annual operating expenses are approximately \$3,000 per year, covering costs of operational software including Quickbooks, Hootsuite, Squarespace, Google Suite, Neon, and Name.com.

The Army received \$6,055 in donations in the period 8/1/18 to 7/30/19. From 8/1/19 to 7/30/20, The Army received \$38,761.91, a fivefold increase in contributions.



Of the 2019-2020 total, \$15,000 is a dedicated gift from an anonymous donor.

Cash on hand is \$30,268 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, including \$15,000 for a planned project.

The average gift amount was approximately \$25.

PROGRAM EXPENSES:

**\$4,890.11**

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES:

**\$3,000**

FUNDRAISING EXPENSES:

**\$287.89**

FUNDS RAISED:

*More Than a Medal 5K*

**\$5,300**

*Giving Tuesday*

**\$15,000**

FUNDRAISING EFFICIENCY:

**14 CENTS PER \$1 RAISED**

## IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

In the United States alone,

# 3.75 MILLION

athletes, both minors and young adults, are survivors of sexual violence

TAOS volunteers have logged

## 4,565 HOURS

to build the organization's foundation over its initial two years, organizing to prevent future sexual violence against athletes

Printed resources were distributed to nearly

## 3,000 SURVIVORS & ALLIES

Reached more than **300 PEOPLE** who attended live panel discussions after screenings of the documentaries "At the Heart of Gold: Inside the USA Gymnastics Scandal" and "Athlete A," with others viewing recordings of the events.

We developed relationships with

# 15 NATIONAL PARTNERS

In 2019-2020, The Army worked with

## 8 CAMPUS AMBASSADORS AT 5 UNIVERSITIES

to distribute printed and digital resources to nearly

## 3000 SURVIVORS AND ALLIES

TAOS certified

## 21 INDIVIDUALS

in Mental Health First Aid

### WEBSITE

Average number of people TAOS reaches each day on our website

## 2,652

Number of countries individuals access information and resources from on The Army's website.

## 99

Traffic to the website increased

## 43%

The number of followers increased

## 70%

Engagement across all of The Army's social media platforms saw a

## 500% INCREASE

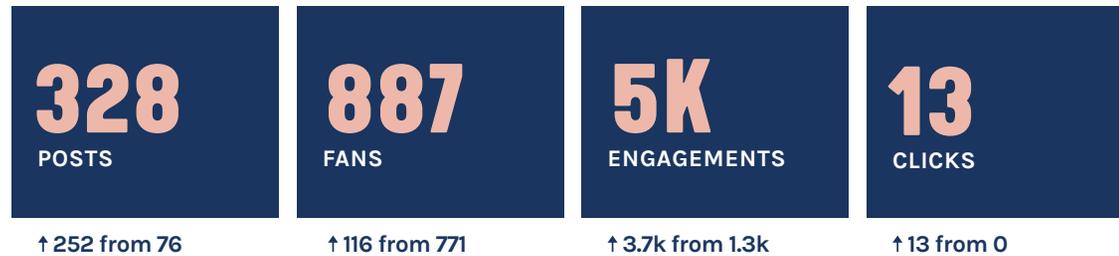
## SOCIAL PRESENCE

The Army of Survivors maintains social media accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, with Instagram having the greatest reach.

### Instagram



### Facebook



### Twitter



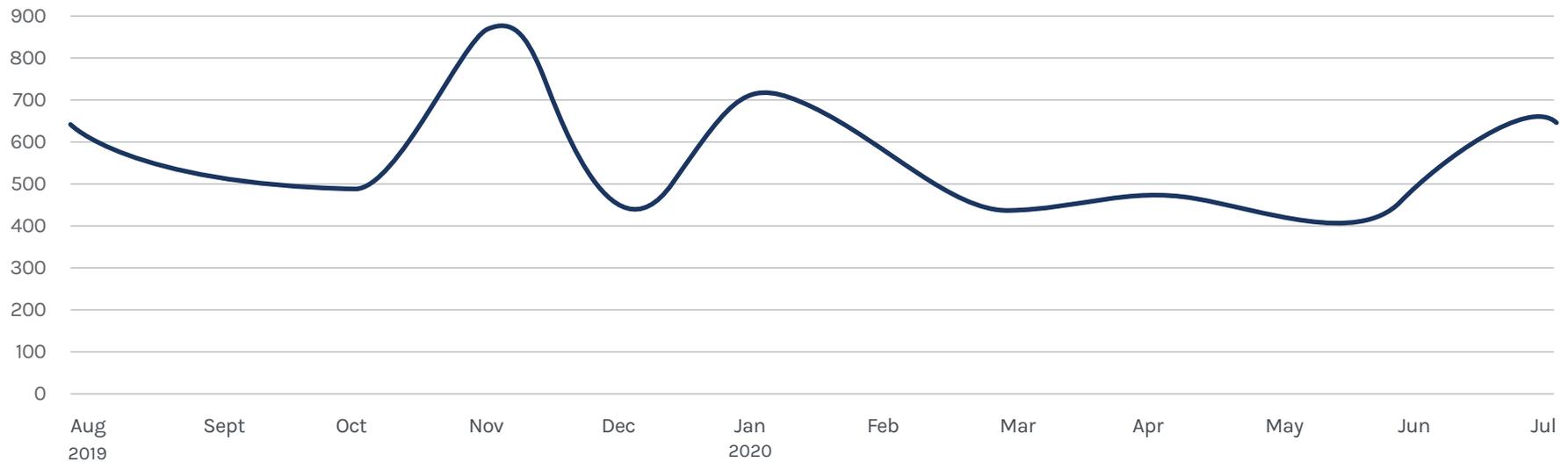
## ONLINE PRESENCE

Our organization saw a 43% increase in website visitors year over year.

### Traffic

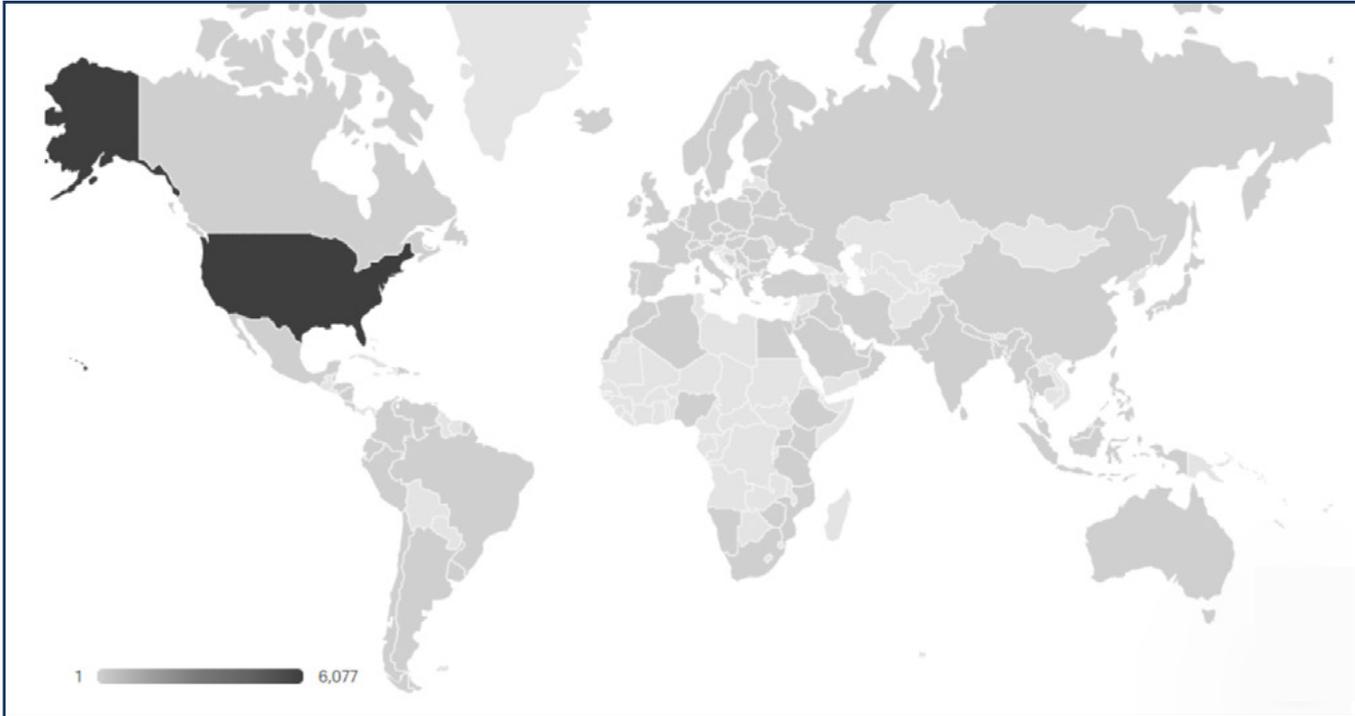


### Visits

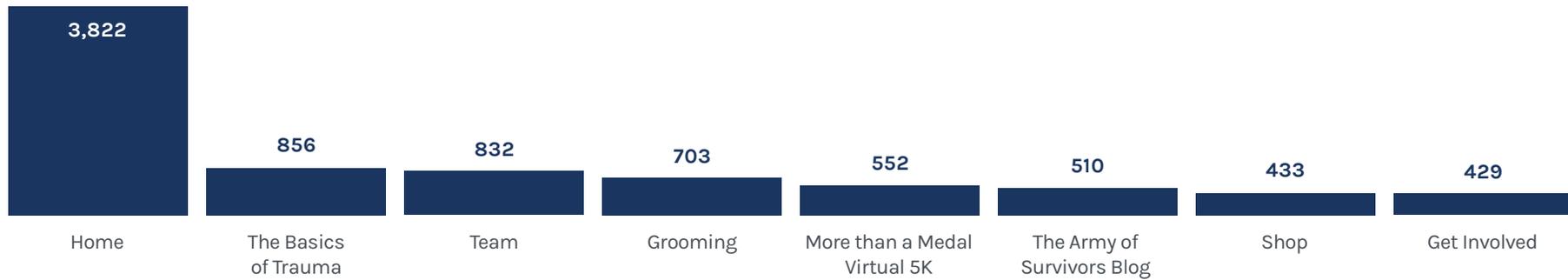


## ONLINE PRESENCE

Individuals in nations across the world viewed The Army's online content.



Popular Content Thu, Aug 1, 2019 - Sat, Aug 1, 2020



## **MEDIA AND MENTIONS**

The Army of Survivors was mentioned in multiple outlets across the state and nation in the last year. Some highlights include:

**Global Sports Development**

**Nassar Victims, Judge Speak At Saint Mary's College In South Bend**

**Slotkin, Pressley, Speier, Kuster Introduce Bill To Prevent Secretary Devos Rolling Back Title IX Survivor Protections**

**2019 Snap Conference – The Army Of Survivors: Sport Culture, Abuse And Lack Of Accountability**

**Sign Now And Tell Congress To Vote "Yes" To Support Team USA Athletes!**

**'Let's Eradicate This Together': Judge Rosemarie Aquilina And 'Sister Survivors' Discuss The 2018 USA Gymnastics Sex Abuse Scandal, Moving Forward With The Army Of Survivors**

**Former Larry Nassar Patient Turns Abuse Into Advocacy With 'Army Of Survivors'**

**Following Two Years Of Advocacy, These Groups Are Continuing To Fight For Cultural Change**

**Nassar Survivors Supporters Light Hundreds Of Luminarias Outside MSU President's Meeting**

**A Guide Dog For Nightmares How A Dog Named Bentley Helped A Young Dancer Heal From The Abuse Of The Former Physician Larry Nassar**

**Twisted: The Story Of Larry Nassar And The Women Who Took Him Down Audio Cd – Mp3 Audio, Unabridged, Audiobook, 14 April 2020**

**Putting A Price On Suffering Negotiating A Settlement In Sexual Abuse Cases Often Brings More Pain**

**Dog Save The People Source Of Therapy W/ Grace French**

**Nassar Survivors Speak Out After Offensive Banner Hung On U Of M Fraternity House**

**Snap Conference Speech**

## **FINAL THANK YOU**

In two short years of existence, our organization has adapted quickly to a changing landscape as the #MeToo movement has continued to gain momentum. Survivors are finding their voices and speaking out. Chanel Miller, initially anonymous after being sexually assaulted at Stanford University, revealed her name in a memoir.

The social pressures from the movement have led to some high-profile accountability. Hollywood movie producer Harvey Weinstein was sentenced to 23 years in prison for raping and sexually assaulting young actresses and employees. Jeffrey Epstein, financier, was convicted for child sex trafficking and died in jail. His accomplice, the British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell, was arrested.

Media attention on sexual violence has increased. Following the release of the documentary "Athlete A", and "At the Heart of Gold," gymnasts across the country spoke out about abuse within the sport. The documentary "The Weight of Gold" highlighted Olympic athletes' mental health challenges and the lack of support for them.

We are learning more about the prevalence of sexual violence against children. New research from Child USA suggests that nearly 12% of elite athletes in the United States experience physical and/or sexual violence in their sport.

The Army's work is more important than ever. TAOS is committed to changing these statistics and building a society in which predators cannot thrive. We continue to speak out against abuse and give survivors a voice on our social media, blog, panel discussions, and other outreach efforts. We have countered the new Title IX ruling issued by the Department of Education and provided resources to K-12 and college survivors. We create and share new resources regularly. We advocate for child safety. We stand with and believe survivors.

We could not do this work without support. Our organization currently operates entirely on private donations and volunteer efforts. We look forward to continuing our work, with growing support.

**Louise Harder**

*Board Member and Strategist*