

Kaanan Mackey-Fugler is the Healthcare Navigator in the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Department for Volunteers of America South Central Louisiana (VOASCLA). She is the surviving spouse of SSG Matthew Mackey, who died 18 days after an active-duty accident on July 28, 2010. She is also the mother to 5 Gold Star Children. In 2017, she remarried and became the wife of a disabled veteran, Joshua. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Southern New Hampshire University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Louisiana State University.

Before joining the VOASCLA staff, she had spent the last 13 years and counting, advocating to protect and improve the rights and earned benefits of surviving families and veterans. She has spent much of her free time making phone calls and sending emails to legislative representatives advocating for a change of policies that have impacted countless veterans and military surviving families. She continues this advocacy today. .

The longest piece of legislative effort was fruitful in FY2020 NDAA when the Military Widow's Tax was eliminated. She has written several testimonies about the impacts of current laws on her family that Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) has read/written for testimony before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Veteran Affairs. Other efforts include: Home Base Iowa, that allowed survivors to obtain property tax exemptions; SIT-REP, changing Veteran Education Benefits; SECURE ACT, led a grassroots effort to fix the "kiddie tax" penalty under Tax Credit and Jobs Act. The most recent was testimony supporting the Love Lives On Act of 2023 (LLO). She is the co-administrator of a facebook group that is advocating for LLO, composed of over 700 military widows, VSO's, and partners advocating for parity in a surviving spouse's right to choose how they move forward. Through her remarriage, she brought attention to the need for surviving spouses to maintain DoD access to minor children's records upon remarriage that was included in NDAA FY 2023.

She is active in several Gold Star communities. Sat on the Gary Sinise Foundation's Alumni Committee for Snowball Express, last year. She has also spent time in the past traveling for the Folds of Honor Foundation, as an event speaker. Helping raise donations that supported scholarships for families of the fallen and wounded service members. At VOASCLA, she advocates for and assists homeless and at-risk veterans in obtaining the resources to remove barriers in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.