



## **FORCE BLUE Co-Founders Establish Advisory Board; Re-launch Apparel Store; Plan New Missions and Initiatives to Commemorate America 250**

Mt. Pleasant, SC. – June 1, 2026 – In celebration of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and in an effort to capitalize on the excitement surrounding America's semi-quicentennial, the Co-Founders of FORCE BLUE recently announced several changes to the organization's operations for 2026.

"Many non-profits fail to survive one year, much less ten," said FORCE BLUE Executive Director and Co-Founder Jim Ritterhoff. "We thought it was important to mark this milestone, but to do so in a way that sets us up for even greater success."

This spring, FORCE BLUE will be establishing its first ever advisory board, a consortium of individuals with experience in all aspects of FORCE BLUE's mission set – marine science and conservation, veterans affairs, mental health, youth mentorship, etc.

"Now that we have proven our concept, the goal is to expand our family" said Co-Founder Rudy Reyes. "To bring on board the best minds and the biggest hearts to assist us in our mission to preserve and restore, not just the marine environment, but our veteran community as well."

2026 will also be a banner year for FORCE BLUE's National Marine Sanctuaries "Tour of Duty", a program launched in 2023, which, to date, has seen FORCE BLUE veterans complete marine conservation missions and community engagement events in five (5) of NOAA's eighteen (18) currently designated marine sanctuaries. FORCE BLUE plans to visit three more sanctuaries this year, missions that will find the team splashing in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as well as in the Great Lakes.

"As we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of our country, it's especially important that we call attention to these national treasures and the steps being taken to protect them," said Keith Sahm, FORCE BLUE's Chief Operations Officer and Co-Founder.

In yet another expression of FORCE BLUE's commitment to the National Marine Sanctuary system, FORCE BLUE will be moving its highly-successful Ocean Conservation School (OCS) to Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Alpena, Michigan beginning in August.

(CONT.)

## FORCE BLUE, INC.

Giving warriors a cause.  
Giving a cause its warriors.



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The program, which provides NAUII open-water dive certification training and marine conservation education to Gold Star children, children of wounded and severely injured veterans and veteran families was previously held in Florida and has, to date, graduated over 50 students.

To further commemorate its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, FORCE BLUE will be relaunching its on-line store this summer. FORCE BLUE hats, t-shirts, hoodies, etc., all emblazoned with the organization's signature "10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" logo, as well as rash guards from some of our previous Super Bowl missions, will be available for anyone who believes in FORCE BLUE's mission and would like to proudly represent it to the world.

Lastly, the organization has set October 22<sup>nd</sup> as the date for this year's annual gala celebration, the 2026 FORCE BLUE Tattoo, at the Yale Club in New York City. Those who are interested in sponsoring a table or purchasing their tickets in advance should visit [www.onecau.se/tattoo2026](http://www.onecau.se/tattoo2026)