

**Cindy McGrew**  
**Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee**  
**Hearing on Veterans Suicide**  
**March 16, 2023**

Cindy McGrew is the proud mother of one daughter, three sons, eight grandsons and two granddaughters. She began her mission of assisting wounded service members when her friend, a Montgomery County, MD Police Officer, went to Iraq as a civilian contractor in June of 2004. Her friend was an International Police Advisor working for DynCorp and assigned to the Stryker Brigade Combat Team, in Mosul Iraq. When Cindy learned about service members getting wounded from her friend's unit, she wanted to help. Each day after work, Cindy traveled to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC to visit the soldiers, offering any assistance to the wounded veterans and their families that she could. It became apparent to Cindy that she needed to do more. In January of 2005, she began the process of setting up a 501 (c) 3 non profit organization, and was approved in March 2005.

To this day, OSC is dedicated to assisting our wounded veterans, and fills in the gaps when funding is needed. Operation Second Chance has assisted more than 15,000 individuals in the past eighteen years. Cindy credits her patriotism and love of country to her four older brothers that served in various branches of the military and also by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance each day at school. Most importantly, she gives all the credit for Operation Second Chance's existence to the many wounded, injured and ill veterans that she has had the honor to meet. Their sacrifices really drove home, the strong need to do more.

**Our Mission Statement:**

*"We are patriotic citizens committed to serving our wounded, injured and ill combat veterans. We support Veterans and their families by building relationships and identifying and supporting immediate needs and interests. We are dedicated to promoting public awareness of the many sacrifices made by our Armed Forces."*

Cindy learned that 'Great determination can overcome most odds.' These service members are living proof of this. We have a new generation of veterans and OSC wants to help as many of them as we can.

Little did Cindy know that by wanting to help a few service members that thousands more would also pass through her life and be in need of some type of assistance. Removing as much stress from family's lives remains a priority and is the core of OSC's mission. We want our families together while their loved ones are here recovering at WRNMMC and other military hospitals, and as they transition back to civilian life.

OSC recognizes the many sacrifices made by our Armed Forces, and has provided over \$12 million dollars in assistance and morale events since inception, to families struggling to make ends meet and coping with life after war.

With the funds from an Estate that was left entirely to Operation Second Chance, OSC was able to purchase a 275-acre retreat center, known as Heroes Ridge. Situated at the top of a mountain are four cabins, a dining hall, recreation center, pool and pool house, horses, and miles of trails for horseback riding, ATVs, and hiking. The property also has the original homestead which dates to the Civil War.

Since purchasing the property in October 2020, with the grand opening May 1, 2021, OSC has hosted more than 320 Veterans, their family members, Gold Star Moms and First Responders. The property, rich with its history is a wonderful place for our nations wounded, injured and ill Veterans, LEO's and First Responders to feel safe, continue their healing and thrive.

Some of Cindy's accomplishments include:

All American Hero Award at the All American Inaugural Ball in 2017  
2013 Dunkin Donuts Hometown Hero Award – Maryland  
Person of Distinction Award, 2006 – Mt. Airy Rotary Club  
Citizen of the Year Award, 2006 – The Knights of Columbus, Mt. Airy, MD  
WJLA & Toyota's Tribute to Working Women Award, 2006- Nation Press Club  
Honored at PEPCO's Volunteer Luncheon as the guest speaker  
Citizen of the Year Award, 2007 – Maryland State Council Knights of Columbus  
Attendance at USSOCOM Care Coalition Conferences 2007- present  
2008 – Rotary – Paul Harris Fellow Award  
The County Executive of Montgomery County, Maryland in Recognition and Appreciation of Operation Second Chance  
2013 Soroptimist Ruby Award  
2013 Paul Harris Fellowship Award – Carroll Creek Rotary  
State of Maryland Proclamation Day, October 5, 2014  
Montgomery County Maryland Proclamation Day November 10, 2014  
All American Hero Award Republican Inaugural Ball 2017  
Lion's Hero Award presented by Lions District 22W October 1, 2022

Cindy also received and accepted an invitation from Former President George W. Bush to The White House, and to this day, remains a very proud American moment!