



Chris de Haan  
AFTRA  
323-634-8203  
[cdehaan@aftra.com](mailto:cdehaan@aftra.com)



Sahar Moridani  
DGA  
310-289-5333  
[smoridani@dga.com](mailto:smoridani@dga.com)



Kelly Mullens  
PGA  
310-477-4442  
[kkmullens@42west.net](mailto:kkmullens@42west.net)



Pam Greenwalt  
SAG  
323-440-2892  
[pgreenwalt@sag.org](mailto:pgreenwalt@sag.org)



Gregg Mitchell  
WGAW  
323-782-4651  
[gmitchell@wga.org](mailto:gmitchell@wga.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 13, 2011**

## **MILITARY FAMILIES TELL THEIR STORIES TO HOLLYWOOD**

### **FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA LEADS EVENT IN SUPPORT OF *JOINING FORCES* INITIATIVE**

**LOS ANGELES** – Writers, actors, recording artists, news persons, directors, and producers answered the call today from First Lady Michelle Obama and joined with her in the Writers Guild Theater in Beverly Hills to hear inspirational stories of the service and sacrifice of active duty service men and women, veterans, and the military families who serve alongside our soldiers. The event is part of *Joining Forces*, a national initiative spearheaded by the First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden to mobilize all sectors of society to give American service members and their families the opportunities and support they have earned.

Nearly 500 members of Hollywood's creative community attended this morning's panel discussion moderated by writer/director J. J. Abrams (*Super 8*, *Fringe*) and featuring *Army Wives* creator Katherine Fugate, whose landmark Lifetime drama series follows the lives of several fictional military families. The discussion was designed to create a dialogue on ways to share the stories of military families through film, television, and digital media.

Launching the discussion, the First Lady told the audience: "We're going to make sure we keep shining a light on these families. I want to ensure that these families feel support on the ground. This isn't about politics. This isn't about red or blue. I want to make sure we're doing our part to step up so they don't feel alone."

Joining the First Lady on stage in conversation were military personnel and family members to share their personal stories and unique perspective, including Arnita Brigman Moore, wife of Marine Staff Sergeant Moore, who has served in the Army for 16 years; retired Sgt. Bobby Jarman, a 22-year Army veteran whose wife Dorothy Jarman is an 18-year Army vet currently deployed overseas; and Capt. Kelly Smith, a National Guard Aircraft Commander who is one of three sisters who are military pilots.

"The military is not just a job, it's a lifestyle – you're on call 24/7," said Brigman, adding that, now that both her husband and her daughter, Alexandria Moore, are serving their country, she has "two heroes at home."

In an emotional moment, Cpt. Smith was connected live via Skype with her sister, Army Chief Warrant Officer Lacey Smith, currently serving as a combat helicopter pilot in Afghanistan.

"When the White House reached out to Hollywood to get involved, all five guilds answered the call to help present the heroic stories of several military families at today's event," said Inter-Guild Task Force Coordinator and Academy Award-winning producer Bruce Cohen (*American Beauty*, *Milk*). "I am proud to be playing even a small role in the task force's continuing mission to shed light on the issues facing military families and encourage Americans to volunteer to help."

"The Writers Guild of America, West feels privileged to work in support of military families through the Joining Forces initiative so that creative artists will be empowered to tell the important stories of these everyday heroes, whose daily sacrifices, triumphs, and tragedies continue to inspire us all," said Fugate. "One of the first things the Inter-Guild task force has done is to create three different Public Service Announcements hosted by well-known entertainment industry artists that feature the stories of military families."

As announced at today's panel, *Joining Forces'* upcoming series of targeted PSAs will star Academy Award-winning actor Tom Hanks, Emmy Award-winning talk show host Oprah Winfrey, and Academy Award-winning director/producer Steven Spielberg and are set to air starting this July. Hanks' PSA was written by Damon Lindelof, directed by Steve Carr and Joanna Kerns, and produced by Jason Taragan; Spielberg's PSA was written by Katherine Fugate, directed by Joanna Kerns, and produced by Marshall Persinger; Winfrey's PSA will be directed by Tom Shadyac (producer and writing credits TBD); all three PSA's were executive produced by Lori McCreary.

In addition, Grammy Award-winning and Oscar-nominated songwriter Dianne Warren has donated an original, unreleased song, entitled "Compass" and performed by Grammy and CMA Award-winning country superstars Rascal Flatts, to JOINING FORCES for use in the PSA campaign.

Academy Award-winning screenwriter Geoffrey Fletcher (*Precious*) told the audience: "Look around this room – we're all storytellers. We all know the power that our words and images have, and it's our turn to answer the call."

"Screen Actors Guild is honored to be a part of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's important national effort to recognize and salute the military family members who serve alongside their loved ones. The experiences and insights that the families shared today are evidence of their extraordinary commitment to our country and to each and every one of us. Through the work of JOINING FORCES we can bring greater awareness to the families' experiences and a new dimension to our long history of support for, and engagement with, American service men and women," said Screen Actors Guild National President Ken Howard.

"The Directors Guild of America proudly joins our entertainment industry colleagues in supporting the White House's Joining Forces initiative to highlight the stories of the military families living and working in communities across the nation. These families struggle and triumph every day in service to our country, and as members of the creative community, we have the opportunity and the obligation to acknowledge their sacrifice and do what we can to support them. It is a privilege to help tell their stories to the American people and to the world," said DGA Secretary-Treasurer Gil Cates.

"Producers always seek rich real-life stories to draw from for film, television and new media projects. The Producers Guild is honored to be a part of the JOINING FORCES initiative, and we will continue to treasure the important stories of American service men and women by sharing these experiences directly with audiences through creative, impactful storytelling," said PGA Co-President Hawk Koch."

"AFTRA is honored to be a part of Joining Forces," said AFTRA National President Roberta Reardon, "and I applaud First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden for creating it. Every day, America's service men and women give their best to keep us safe, and when they come home, they deserve no less from us. , and Union and Guild members who work in entertainment and news media can be powerful advocates for this initiative: the scripted programs, news stories and music that our members create bring the stories of men and women in the Armed Forces from the battlefield into our hearts and minds."

Also attending the event were WGAW host committee member Damon Lindelof (*Lost*, *Star Trek*), KCBS anchor Laura Diaz, actor and Screen Actors Guild Secretary-Treasurer Amy Aquino, actors Michael Chiklis, Chaz Bono, Lily Tomlin, Blair Underwood and J. R. Martinez, directors Jon Amiel, Allan Arkush, and Rod Holcomb, director/actor Carl Weathers, and Grammy-nominated singer Janelle Monae.

Following today's event, Mrs. Obama taped an appearance on the AFTRA-covered Nickelodeon program *iCarly* to talk about her Joining Forces initiative. The show's leading character, Carly, played by Miranda Cosgrove, is the daughter of an American service member currently stationed overseas.

### **About the JOINING FORCES Initiative**

For more information about the First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden's JOINING FORCES initiative visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces>

### **About the Inter-Guild Task Force and its Members**

AFTRA, DGA, PGA, SAG and WGAW have joined forces in an Inter-Guild Task Force to bring awareness to the First Lady's JOINING FORCES initiative that she launched with Dr. Jill Biden in April. The Inter-Guild Task Force will provide creative and production support for the JOINING FORCES initiative and will inform and inspire their memberships and the entertainment industry about the service of America's military families.

**The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, AFL-CIO**, are the people who entertain and inform America. In 32 Locals across the country, AFTRA members work as actors, broadcasters, singers, dancers, announcers, hosts, comedians, disc jockeys, and other performers across the media industries including television, radio, cable, sound recordings, music videos, commercials, audio books, non-broadcast industrials, interactive games, the Internet and other digital media. The 70,000 professional performers, broadcasters, and recording artists of AFTRA are working together to protect and improve their jobs, lives, and communities in the 21st century. From new art forms to new technology, AFTRA members embrace change in their work and craft to enhance American culture and society. Visit AFTRA online at <http://www.aftra.com>, and follow AFTRA on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/#!/aftrafanpage> and Twitter <http://twitter.com/#!/aftra>.

**The Directors Guild of America** was founded in 1936 to protect the economic and creative rights of directors. Over the years, its membership has expanded to include the directorial team - Unit Production Managers, Assistant Directors, Associate Directors, Stage Managers and Production Associates. Today, 75 years after its founding and through the collective voice of more than 14,000 members, the Guild continues to protect the rights of directorial teams, contend for their creative freedom and strengthen their ability to develop meaningful and lifelong careers in film, tape and digital media. For more information on the DGA, please visit: [www.dga.org](http://www.dga.org).

**The Producers Guild of America** is the non-profit trade group that represents, protects and promotes the interests of all members of the producing team in film, television and new media. The PGA has over 4,500 members who work together to protect and improve their careers, the industry and community by providing members with health benefits, employment opportunities, the creation of fair and impartial standards for the awarding of producing credits, as well as other education and advocacy efforts such as promoting sustainable production practices. Visit [www.producersguild.org](http://www.producersguild.org) and [www.pgagreen.org](http://www.pgagreen.org) for more information.

**Screen Actors Guild** is the nation's largest labor union representing working actors. Established in 1933, SAG has a rich history in the American labor movement, from standing up to studios to break long-term engagement contracts in the 1940s to fighting for artists' rights amid the digital revolution sweeping the entertainment industry in the 21st century. With 20 branches nationwide, SAG represents more than 125,000 actors who work in film and digital television programs, motion pictures, commercials, video games, music videos, industrials and all new media formats. The Guild exists to

enhance actors' working conditions, compensation and benefits and to be a powerful, unified voice on behalf of artists' rights. SAG is a proud affiliate of the AFL-CIO. Headquartered in Los Angeles, you can visit SAG online at [SAG.org](http://SAG.org) or at <http://www.facebook.com/screenactorsguild> and on Twitter @screenactors.

**The Writers Guild of America, West (WGAW)** is a labor union representing writers of motion pictures, television, radio, and Internet programming, including news and documentaries. Founded in 1933, the Guild negotiates and administers contracts that protect the creative and economic rights of its members. It is involved in a wide range of programs that advance the interests of writers, and is active in public policy and legislative matters on the local, national, and international levels. For more information on the WGAW, please visit: <http://www.wga.org>.

For press photos from today's *Joining Forces* panel event, please visit:  
[http://press.wgaw.org/photos/joining\\_forces/](http://press.wgaw.org/photos/joining_forces/)

**\*Photos credit: Michael Jones**

**Forces1**

**First Lady Michelle Obama**

**Forces2**

**(L-R): Moderator J.J. Abrams and First Lady Michelle Obama**

**Forces3**

**First Lady Michelle Obama**

**Forces4**

**(L-R): First Lady Michelle Obama, Capt. Kelly Smith, Bobby Jarman, and Arnita Brigman Moore**

**Forces5**

**(L-R): First Lady Michelle Obama and Capt. Kelly Smith**

**Forces6**

**(L-R): J.J. Abrams, First Lady Michelle Obama, Capt. Kelly Smith, Bobby Jarman, and Arnita Brigman Moore**