**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Gold Star Mom is “Running Fir Wreaths” to Honor her Son and all of America’s Fallen Heroes**

*Cathy Powers’ goal is to run 1,000 miles in 2019, while raising awareness and funds for veterans’ wreaths to be placed in December as part of Wreaths Across America*

**COLUMBIA FALLS, Maine — Feb. 12, 2019 —** Gold Star Mother Cathy Powers is “Running Fir Wreaths” in 2019. Her goal is to run a total of 1,000 miles (with a portion in every state) in honor of her son, Senior Airman Bryce Kenneth Powers, U.S. Air Force. She’ll do this while raising funds to sponsor veterans’ wreaths to be placed at Arlington National Cemetery next December as part of Wreaths Across America. Each live balsam fir veteran’s wreath costs $15 to sponsor on her fundraising page: [**www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/VA0627**](http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/VA0627).

Bryce passed away on April 26, 2013, 6.5 months after a motor vehicle accident in Japan placed him in a coma. He is now buried in Section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery, where Powers was first introduced to the Wreaths Across America program. After the death of her son, Powers struggled with grief and her own health and happiness. She turned to food, her lifelong drug of choice, overeating in an attempt to numb her pain. She gained weight, (reaching nearly 300 lbs.) and lost hope of ever having a good, healthy life again. She had concluded, “it was too late to change and it didn’t even matter anyway.”

During these dark years, Powers went to Arlington and found a beautiful live balsam fir wreath on her son’s grave, along with thousands more covering each of the headstones at the cemetery. It made an impact on her. In time, her heart began to heal and her hope returned. In December of 2016, Powers traveled in the Wreaths Across America escort from Maine to Arlington, and has done so for the last three years. She stated, “I learned so much from the mission of Wreaths Across America. This is not about decorating graves, it is about honoring and remembering their lives, and my son’s life … being part of the escort makes me feel like I’m alive.”

And that feeling has continued to grow. Today, Powers is 140lbs lighter, runs regularly and not only lives for herself, but for her son. “One day I woke up and came to the realization that I am not being true to myself - I am still alive and he isn’t here. I realized I needed to live for Bryce and for me,” said Powers. “When I run, I think of my son and all the things I need to be thankful for. I want everyone to know it is never too late to be the best you.”

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day is **Saturday, December 14, 2019**. Powers’ goal is to raise awareness in each community and state she runs in, and in doing so, earn the support needed to sponsor **7,777 veterans’ wreaths –** in honor of each day Bryce was alive on this earth – to be sent to Arlington National Cemetery this December.

Powers’ running journey kicks off on Sunday, Feb. 17, in Fortuna, Calif. She will present a veterans’ wreath to the community at 2:00 p.m. in front of the Veterans’ Building, before running with members from the local community. From there, she’ll travel to Hawaii to run with one of Bryce’s doctors. To follow Powers’ journey, visit [www.facebook.com/WAAHQ](http://www.facebook.com/WAAHQ) or listen in at [wreathsacrossamerica.org/radio](http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/radio).

“The Wreaths Across America mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach, has resonated with millions of Americans in ways we could never have imagined or planned,” said Karen Worcester, volunteer executive director, Wreaths Across America. “Knowing Cathy’s journey, and now watching her take on this incredible challenge… it gives me hope that this mission is making an impact on people’s lives. She has motivated me in so many ways and we are so proud to be supporting her as she sets and reaches this amazing goal.”

In 2018, nearly 1.8 million veterans’ wreaths were placed on headstones at 1,640 participating cemeteries around the country in honor of the service and sacrifices made for our freedoms. Each veteran’s name is said out loud as a wreath is placed in their honor. At Arlington National Cemetery specifically, more than 60,000 volunteers, including Powers, placed wreaths on 253,000 headstones.

**About Wreaths Across America**

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization’s mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at more than 1,600 participating veterans’ cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and overseas.

For more information or to sponsor a wreath please visit [www.wreathsacrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org).

**Press contacts:**

Amber Caron

(207) 513-6457

acaron@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Alexandra Desaulniers

(207) 598-7645

adesaulniers@wreathsacrossamerica.org