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## **MILITARY VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM ARE FOCUS OF TEACH FOR AMERICA CORPS MEMBER AND ALUMNI SUMMIT**

*Army General (Ret.) Dennis L. Via, One of Highest-Ranked African American Military Leaders in U.S. History, is Keynote Speaker at Summit to Connect Participants of Teach For America's Military Veterans Initiative From Across the Country*

**SAN ANTONIO, Texas., May 20, 2019**—Teach For America hosted its 2nd annual Military Veteran and Spouse Corps Member and Alumni Summit May 17-19 in San Antonio, Texas.

Teach For America's Military Veterans Initiative began in 2012 to recruit military veterans and their spouses, and has expanded to create a supportive community for over 400 current corps members and alumni. Nearly 100 members of the initiative gathered at the summit, all of whom are either incoming, current, or former Teach For America educators who have previously served in the armed forces or are married to a member of the military.

"The unique leadership skills and deep commitment to service which military veterans and their spouses bring to Teach For America is a vital part of our work to ensure educational equity and excellence for all children," said Teach For America CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard. Teach For America educators—known as corps members—commit to teaching in low-income communities for two years, followed by a lifelong commitment to leadership in the effort to improve education for all students.

The summit focused on exploring veterans' unique contributions to the movement for educational equity, as well as offered professional development tracks to help veterans continue their leadership inside and outside of the classroom after their time in the corps.

"Never underestimate the life-changing impact you can have on a student," said General (Ret.) Dennis Via in his keynote remarks. "Talent is universal. Opportunity is not. Address the shortfall." General Via—one of only ten African American four-star generals in Army history and the first Signal Corps officer to achieve the rank—was commissioned in the Signal Corps in 1980 upon completing his B.A. as a distinguished military graduate from Virginia State University. After an illustrious 36-year military career, he joined Booz Allen Hamilton as a fellow for Defense Futures and a senior executive leader in Booz Allen's Joint Combatant Command business.

IDEA Public School's El Paso Executive Director Ernesto Cantu, an Army veteran who is currently in his thirteenth year at IDEA, also spoke about the unique role military veterans and their spouses have in the classroom.

"We wanted this summit to create an environment that affirms the unique leadership skills and mindsets of our military veteran and spouse corps members and alumni," said Eryn Mounticure, who leads Teach For America's Military Veterans Initiative. "I want to ensure the military veterans and spouses that join our network are able to continue serving and leading inside and outside of the classroom beyond their two years in the corps."

For more information about Teach For America's Military Veterans Initiative, [please visit our website](#).

**About Teach For America**

Teach For America works in partnership with urban and rural communities in more than 50 regions across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today Teach For America is a force of nearly 60,000 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they're reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence and to lead. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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