



DCFS AT WORK

Investing in Los Angeles County families every day

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As the youngest of 10 children, Caleb Beyah had the good fortune of many positive role models in spite of growing up in an area where young people often fell victim to drugs or gangs. Early on, he learned the value of hard work and the importance of helping others. After graduating from San Fernando High School at 16, Caleb's parents allowed him to join the U.S. Army Reserve two months later once he turned 17, setting in motion his life in public service

"It's all connected, and the steps you take today will undoubtedly impact your tomorrow," said Caleb, who was the youngest person in his company when he first enlisted. "The military

showed me opportunities that my fellow neighbors didn't have. It taught me discipline, strengthened the morals and values that I learned growing up, and instilled in me a deep sense of service that I carry with me still."

The Cal State Northridge and University of Southern California alum joined the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services in 2000. He credits his mother, who delivered meals to homebound seniors, for infusing him with a deep appreciation for those who care for people in need.

Twenty years later, Caleb is now an assistant regional administrator at the Palmdale office. His military training and studies in social work and psychology have guided him in various roles, including helping others develop coaching skills, assisting colleagues through the peer support counseling program and facilitating parent groups for the Effective Black Parenting and Father Strong programs.

Caleb views the department's efforts to improve father engagement as particularly important. You can hear the smile on his face as he recounts one former youth tracking him down years later to thank him for being there during a tumultuous time in her life.

"She said she thinks of me in a fatherly role because she didn't have a positive male figure in her life at the time to ensure that she was on the right path," Caleb said.

He strives to support and inspire all children he works with in this way, while doing what he can to encourage and strengthen the involvement of fathers and other male role models in the lives of vulnerable youth. Caleb also participates as part of a collaborative effort with the research organization Mathematica and child welfare jurisdictions across the nation to identify ways to better engage fathers and paternal relatives.

"This is a perfect example of an effort that can bring about true practice and policy change," Caleb said. "If more of us were committed to improving systems rather than just seeing them as a means to an end, I think our country would be in a better place."

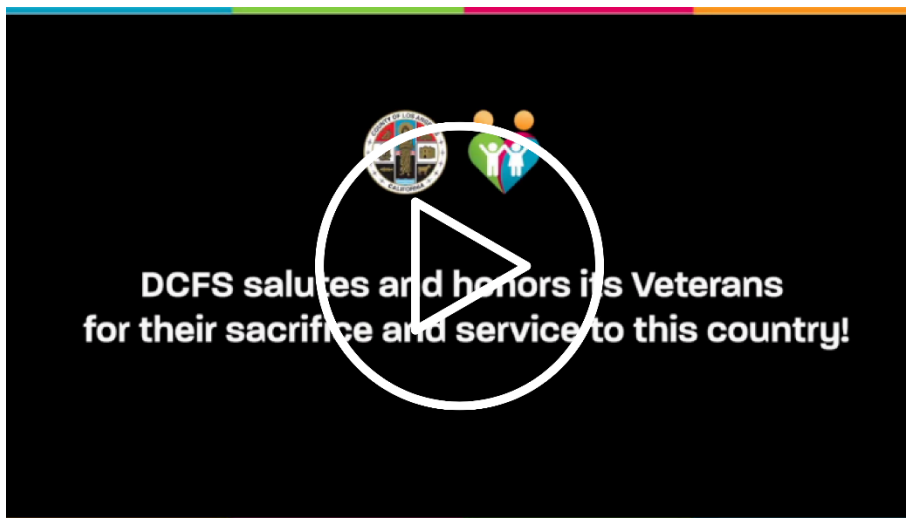
Caleb, who twice served overseas in Iraq, retired from the Army in 2013 at the rank of captain after 24 years of service. On the eve of Veterans Day, Caleb reflects on how his military service has shaped who he is and how he approaches his work with DCFS.

“The military and social work aren’t for everyone, but for me it was life changing,” Caleb said. “My experience in the Army showed me that there are things you have control over and things you don’t. It helped me be accepting of things outside of my control so I can focus on areas where I can have an impact. What makes social work challenging is that it’s inherently more personal than military service, but I know that I’m working for the greater good and helping those who are marginalized and vulnerable.”



As he thinks back on his public service career, Caleb says his experiences have highlighted the importance of teamwork when it comes to strengthening families and ensuring the well-being of children.

“Like the military, our work at DCFS requires collaboration,” Caleb said. “As a team, we can thrive if we engage each other in a constructive and purposeful manner. We don’t always have to agree, but the way we treat each other is paramount to our success. I owe a debt of gratitude to everyone I’ve worked with over the years. I had people who believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself, and I hope I am able to do that for others.”



Take a look at some of the military heroes who walk among us!

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