DAV presents $10,000 entrepreneurship award to Texas Navy veteran

ORLANDO, Fla. – DAV (Disabled American Veterans) has awarded the Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Top Venture Impacting Veterans Award and a $10,000 prize to Navy veteran Ericka McKim, founder of And I Like It, a bakery based in Dallas that specializes in keto-friendly cheesecakes and all-natural sweeteners. The award was formally presented to McKim during the 2022 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Orlando, Florida.

McKim was selected from participants of the Acceleration Challenge at the Veteran EDGE conference, hosted by Syracuse University’s D’Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families (IVMF).

“We are thrilled to recognize and champion McKim as a disabled veteran who has shown phenomenal promise as a new entrepreneur,” said DAV National Commander Andy Marshall. “Through this annual award and programs like DAV Patriot Boot Camp—a new venture that DAV launched in January 2022—we are committed to expanding support for veterans and military spouses to become entrepreneurs, innovators and difference makers. We know that doing so can dramatically improve the lives of veterans and their families.”

McKim founded And I Like It as a result of her experience with severe gluten and sugar sensitivities that led to extensive health issues. Her products now help others with similar
challenges.

“The purpose that I felt in the Navy, I finally feel that purpose again with this job,” McKim said.

According to the 2021 National Survey of Military-Affiliated Entrepreneurs from IVMF, entrepreneurs indicated that a lack of financing and access to capital were two of the leading barriers to business ownership. McKim said the $10,000 DAV award will allow her to significantly scale her business and meet demand.

The IVMF study also found that of those surveyed, nearly half said entrepreneurship made the transition from the military easier, and most said entrepreneurship helped them find new purpose after service.

About DAV

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: keeping our promise to America’s veterans. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them, fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill, providing employment resources to veterans and their families, and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a nonprofit organization with more than 1 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at DAV.org.