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The nest is changing – Final, printed Belvoir Eagle

By Margaret Steele
Fort Belvoir Public Affairs Office

Today's issue of the Belvoir Eagle is the last as a printed version of the paper. The Eagle will transition to an online version within the Fort Belvoir webpage (home.army.mil/belvoir).

We spoke with former Eagle editors, some now public affairs officers at posts

around the National Capital Region, about their time at the Eagle.

Rick Arndt became the Eagle editor just after he'd retired from active duty as a public affairs NCO, in the early 2000s. "I met with Don Carr, then-public affairs officer, and one-time Eagle editor, who hired me on the spot," he said, adding the two had had worked together at the Army Newspaper Branch.

"I think they had an editor and one staff writer and I was able to build the staff and the paper," Arndt said, adding Carr and then-garrison commander, Col. T.W. Williams, were very supportive.

Arndt is now public affairs officer for the Army's Combat Capabilities Development Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Chad Jones, PAO at Fort Meade, Md., served as editor after Arndt, for nearly two years.

See Nest, page 4

Just a note, before we go...

By Terry Ruggles
Managing Editor

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of you, our readers, for choosing to read the Belvoir Eagle each week, whether it was the newspaper version or online. We tried to bring you stories that were relevant to you, our audience, and our Army.

Many have held the title 'editor' for the Eagle during my time here.

Carl Purvis, Kyle Ford, Margaret Steele, Eliza Cantrell, Gail Cureton, Ganesa Robinson and myself have all had the responsibility of bringing you the paper each week since 2008. Rick Musselman, who sadly passed way too early, was our Eagle Sports Editor for many years and he was preceded by Tamika Matthews. In addition we've had many, too many to mention each by name, dedicated young reporters, photojournalists and layout/design artists who wrote the stories, took the

photos and put together the final paper you would read each week.

I want to thank each of you for your dedication to our readers and your efforts on their behalf. It was a pleasure to work with each and every one of you.

Bringing our readers the Belvoir Eagle each week was a team effort. As we move the Eagle and our communication efforts to the digital side, the team may change but our foundation is solid, made by those above who set the standard that we will continue in our digital Eagle.

Armed Forces Wellness Center preps for May opening

By Paul Lara
Belvoir Eagle

Many on Fort Belvoir's stand to benefit from the new Armed Forces Wellness Center, slated for a May 18th virtual opening, according to AFWC lead health educator Nicole Leth.

"The great thing about the virtual opening is that it will allow a lot more people to participate in the event, and everyone can participate with us," Leth said. "We provide health and wellness services for active duty of all branches, family, veterans, retirees, and DoD civilians – anyone eligible for benefits – they can come in and see us."

Body Composition Testing

"We will have the bod pod in the new building," she said, explaining that "It measures your body fat and lean mass percentages, which is important to understand whether it's a healthy range or excessive."



Photo courtesy
Armed Forces Wellness Center

From left, Nicole Leth, Armed Forces Wellness center lead educator; and health educators Kellie Hundemer and Amber Scharbo next to the Bod Pod.

Metabolic Testing

Measuring exhalation, they can get an accurate reading of a person's resting metabolic rate, and then calculate how many calories are being burned during exercise. That information can tell you how many calories it takes to lose, maintain or lose weight, along with an understanding of how to hit that goal.

Health Coaching and Stress Management

The new center has a classroom, and for a first visit, Leth said they will cover basics of calorie expenditure, sleep, and diet.

"Sometime they don't know what their goals are. It helps to take that hour and just talk about sleep, stress, activity, and decide what assessment is best for them," said Leth. "We want people to leave feeling motivated and fired up. We want to build a relationship and figure out their barriers to success."

The wellness center has two dedicated stress management rooms, with elaborate massage chairs, and the team can monitor heart rate variability, and learn the benefits of deep breathing.

ACFT Prep

Karen Shepherd, the supervisory sports specialist at Specker Fieldhouse, said the renovations will be completed this summer, and will play

a collaborative role with the Wellness Center, especially for helping everyone prepare for the Army Combat Fitness Test.

"I'm a tactile strength coach, and our focus is strength and conditioning, and all the things necessary for people to be prepared on ACFT," Shepherd said.

"When we collaborate with Belvoir as a whole – behavioral health, fitness, I think we can ensure overall wellness is being captured in that; not just the physical aspect. If I can change the way you think about your Army status and overall wellness, mobility, and stability, we can help you build up a good foundation so you can move forward in whatever the Army has in store for you," Shepherd said, adding that "We're doing what we can do to help the warfighter. That's our mission"

The Wellness Center would be happy to help you with your unit, or work with anyone individually. For more information, email Nicole.e.leth2.ctr@mail.mil or call 571-231-1323.

Telemedicine advances put to the test during pandemic; great lessons learned

By National Museum of Health and Medicine Public Affairs

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center continues to develop technology that increases medical capabilities and provides rapid, flexible critical care expertise at the point of need.

During a recent Medical Museum Science Café, held virtually by the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Silver Spring, Md., TATRC director Col. Jeremy Pamplin described the implementation of the National Emergency Tele-Critical Care Network and how telemedicine can improve outcomes for disaster response.

COVID-19 has led to the need for physical distancing and has overwhelmed the capacities of health systems, compelling many to adopt telehealth solutions. Clinicians discovered how telemedicine can enhance communication efforts, reduce exposure and personal protective equipment consumption, improve efficiency and quality of care, increase access to specialty services, and in some cases lower costs and optimize the use of resources.

However, as Pamplin mentioned, the findings fluctuated due to the complex nature of the U.S. health system, which is an intricate mix of local, state, and federal policies and diverse expectations, cultures, and belief systems. For example, the implementation of telehealth may improve outcomes for one organization, whereas the same



Courtesy U.S. Army
Virtual health exercise at Madigan Army Medical Center.

implementation elsewhere may not.

Pamplin described how he and his colleagues studied the implementation of telemedicine in a military environment.

“Telemedicine in the military has consistently enabled military clinicians around the world to work beyond their typical scope of practice while deployed in austere, resource limited environments by providing reach-back capability to military experts working in referral centers across the globe,” he said.

Pamplin then looked at the potential use of a telecritical health system for large-scale military operations. According to Pamplin, telehealth technology could be adapted to a variety of care contexts including large-scale combat situations or natural disasters that rely on military aid.

Partnering with the civilian sector, Pamplin and his colleagues developed NETCCN, a telehealth system that could consolidate telehealth networks and manage a high patient capacity during an emergency or a national crisis.

When COVID-19 emerged, Pamplin and his team began the implementation of NETCCN to help respond to the current stressed health care system. According to Pamplin, the network brings remote critical care expertise to the point of care, providing e-consult support, remote home monitoring, relief coverage, tiered staffing, and specialty services.

“The NETCCN addresses the lack of critical care clinicians across our

nation by shifting these resources where and when needed,” Pamplin said. “In a dynamic, flexible fashion, NETCC links remote expertise to frontline providers, often working beyond their scope of training, using secure, HIPAA compliant applications on mobile devices, thus bypassing the lengthy process of purchasing and installing expensive hardware packages.

Said Andrea Schierkolk, NMHM’s public programs manager: “TATRC’s efforts to address the benefits and challenges of telemedicine were put to the test during the COVID-19 pandemic, and documenting these innovations in military medicine contributes to NMHM’s mission to share the value of the nation’s investment in programs like those of TATRC.”

For more information on TATRC and its initiatives, visit at www.tatrc.org.




Call if you have unresolved health or safety concerns:
1-800-984-8523



LEARN MORE

Visit the Housing Resident Portal on the Fort Belvoir Website

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Installation Management Command

How to Resolve Housing Concerns

LEVEL 1 – SUBMIT YOUR WORK ORDER


- Online - www.villagesatbelvoir.com
- In-Person - Maintenance Facility Building 1108
- Phone - 24-Hour Emergency Maintenance Request Line: 703-619-3880

LEVEL 2 – MAKE CONTACT

- Villages at Belvoir Management: 571-318-7546
- Contact Your Chain of Command
- Fort Belvoir Housing Office: 703-805-3018/3019

LEVEL 3 – CONTACT GARRISON COMMANDER

- Garrison Commander's Housing Hotline: 571-259-9867
- Submit concerns to the Fort Belvoir Interactive Customer Evaluation ICE System: <https://ice.disa.mil>



Residents with health concerns related to housing conditions, call Fort Belvoir Community Hospital Rapid Hotline: 571-231-2004

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Army Emergency Relief Office to reopen on Belvoir

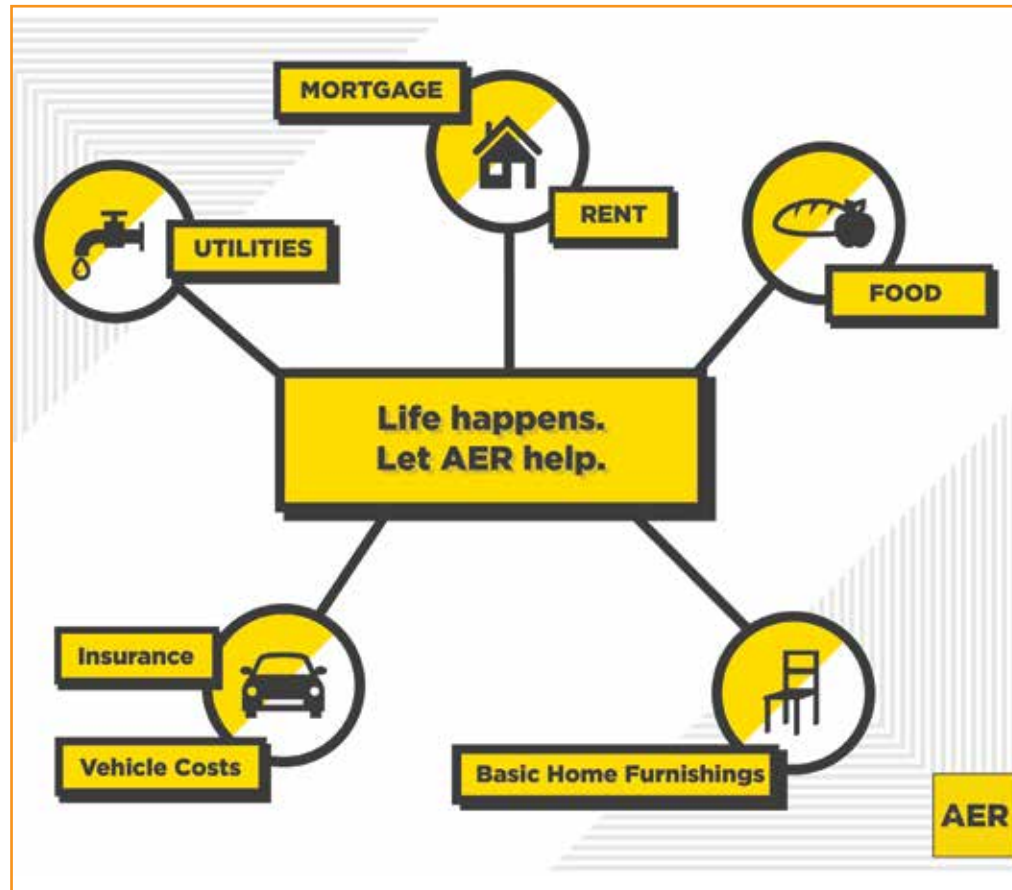
By Paul Lara
Belvoir Eagle

Fort Belvoir Army Community Services is in the final phase of re-opening its Army Emergency Relief Office, and needs your help in boosting contributions to this vital program, according to Madeline Pastorella, the new AER officer, who has 12 years of experience in seeing how AER changes lives.

"I've had homeless, medically retired folks who don't have a place to live, but they didn't have the first month's rent, they came to AER, asking 'can you help me?'" Pastorella said. "I then got on the phone to find a room for the night until we got it resolved. During Superstorm Sandy, when Service members lost all their uniforms, AER was there to replace them."

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston agrees that AER is a lifeline when tragedy strikes.

"Army Emergency Relief is about Soldiers helping Soldiers, and that's what we do in my squad. As the only non-profit that's 100% focused on our Army,



AER provided \$70M to over 40,000 Soldiers and families," Grinston said in a promotional video. "For 77 years, AER has helped with auto repair, PCS moves, and more. AER helps our Army keep people first."

"It's more than what people understand," stressed Pastorella. "During the COVID pandemic, they were able to help with computers, educational materials, helping out with immigration for someone's spouse to get a

permanent resident card – it's about so much more than funeral costs and car repair. They can always come into AER for assistance, because we find ways to help the Soldier."

Pastorella said the new office is reaching out to units in the area, to raise awareness that AER is back on post, and said that there are new categories of assistance.

"In my experience as an AER officer, I've met with widows, retirees and Service members who lost a family member, but when you're sitting across from someone asking for assistance, it's sometimes hard to ask for help. AER is not a band-aid; we're here to help you through it. We want to be sure they're not back again with the same problem later."

You can make a one time donation online with credit, PayPal or EFT, and active duty and retired Soldiers can donate by payroll allotment as approved by Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

The AER office is located at 5965 6th Street, Room 129, or you can call 571-231-7025.

To donate to AER, go to armyemergencyrelief.org/donate.

“The Belvoir Eagle job gave me a lot of insight about working on an installation,” Jones said. “More importantly, I learned about the people involved in making Fort Belvoir such a great community and I really enjoyed the time with the team we built.”

Jones said his time as Eagle editor helped him in his career and will always be special, adding the Eagle logo will remain iconic for him. “When you saw it on the newspaper stands, it just popped,” he wrote.

Joe Richard, Belvoir Garrison director of public affairs since late 2014, said, “The Belvoir Eagle has been a long-standing icon in Army newspapers. The Eagle was preceded by the Belvoir Castle, when Fort Belvoir was home to Army Engineers.

“Soldiers, civilians, families and local community members would, week after week, regularly get their news and information from The Castle and the Eagle,” Richard said. “We’re fortunate, throughout the years, to have them as loyal readers.”

According to the National Archives, the Reference Staff at the Library of Congress’ Manuscript Division and the University of Wisconsin Library Catalog, the Belvoir Eagle was preceded by The Castle, which

ended publication March 20, 1992. The first Belvoir Eagle issue hit the newsstands the following week, March 27.

Richard said the end of the Belvoir Eagle as a print newspaper is part of an industry-wide trend to go digital, but public affairs will transition to more digital information platforms, especially the Army-wide, Digital Garrison App.

“The Belvoir Eagle is not going away, but will be available differently, through our website,” Richard said. “We’ll keep communicating with our audiences by using social media more, including the app, our website and our new podcast, Belvoir in the Know,” he said.

“Garrison Public Affairs will continue to tell the stories of Fort Belvoir, its military members, leaders, mission partners and service population, by using new media, more,” Richard said.

“We are adapting, to ensure we are on the cutting edge of digital technologies, to better serve the community” he said.

Editor’s note: The Eagle was printed through a commercial publisher and printer, which received ad revenue through a no-cost contract. The publishing industry’s printing and advertising costs were affected, even before COVID.

Fort Belvoir Community Hospital's COVID-19 vaccinations move on to Tier 2

By Paul Lara
Belvoir Eagle

Fort Belvoir Community Hospital has announced that the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at the Community Center has begun DoD Tier 2 administration of vaccines. This means that all TRICARE beneficiaries age 16 and older are eligible to make an appointment, according to a revised command staff announcement, Tuesday.

"Our Service members, retirees, families and DoD civilians and contractors are understandably excited to be vaccinated, and we're equally pleased to open up availability to everyone, and we are administering the vaccine as fast as we receive it," said Cmdr. Gabrielle Crane, chief of Ambulatory Nursing.

According to the announcement, other eligible personnel include DoD Civilian employees and select contractor personnel who usually receive influenza vaccines as part of a DoD occupational health program.

You can schedule an appointment online to receive the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at informatics-stage.health.mil/BelvoirCOVIDApp/ or by scanning the QR Code on the left.



Sign up today for
your vaccination



Photo by Paul Lara

Mark Chen receives a COVID-19 vaccination from Hospitalman Daniela Ortiz, at the Community Center in this January file photo.

More information, including a link to the appointment portal, can be found on the Hospital's Facebook page, and on its website at belvoirhospital.tricare.mil/. No walk-ins are allowed, and appointments are released weekly based on vaccine supply.

The move to Phase 2 throughout the Military District of Washington comes as vaccine distribution across the nation has ramped up significantly. Dr. Cyrus Shahpar, the White House's COVID-19 data director, announced April 10 that 4.08 million doses were administered in the U.S. in a 24-hour period, which also brought the daily average to more than 3 million doses for the week of April 4.

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has announced that Sunday is when all Virginia adults will be eligible to register for vaccinations.

"The COVID-19 vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel—and that light is getting brighter every day as more and more Virginians get vaccinated," said Northam. "Expanding vaccine eligibility to all adults marks an important milestone in our ongoing efforts to put this pandemic behind us, and I thank all of the public health staff, health care workers, vaccinators, and volunteers who have helped make this possible."

Similarly, Maryland is urging the general population, including healthy adults 16+ to register now for vaccination, which is expected to expand to all adults by the end of April, according to Governor Larry Hogan's office.

"Everyone has been waiting their turn, and we are on the cusp of 'open season', and it seems the supply is matching the demand to get vaccinated sooner and quicker," said Holly Mann, Garrison emergency manager.

According to the hospital announcement, anyone who received their first Pfizer vaccination should return on the date written on the CDC Vaccination card for the second dose. If you have misplaced your card, you're asked to return to the vaccine clinic 21 days after your first dose.

"Thank you for your patience, and we look forward to caring for you," said Crane.

'Military Brat:' Do You Know Where The Term Comes From? Maybe the British!

By Katie Lange
DoD News

We've all heard the term "military brat" before. It pertains to those children who grew up in military families. "Brats" wear the name like a badge of honor, often because of the moves, stressors and cultural experiences that make them more resilient than their civilian counterparts.

But outside of the military, the word brat is often considered derogatory. So it made me wonder – where did the term "military brat" originate?

To find out, I reached out to the folks at National Defense University Libraries, who did some research for me. It turns out the origin of the term is still pretty unclear, but there are a lot of interesting theories behind it, and most of them originate in Britain.

Since we couldn't find anything definitive, I figured I'd tell you about some of those theories.

BRAT could be an acronym for British Regiment Attached Traveler

I first found this theory published in a 2011 blog by retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael M. Dunn, who was the president of the Air Force Association at the time. Dunn, who had also been the president of NDU, had asked a researcher to find the origin of the term.

One came through, discovering a book published in 1921 that attributed the saying to the



Photo by Sgt. Steven Galimore
A Soldier with the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, embraces her daughter during a homecoming ceremony on Pope Army Airfield Green Ramp, Feb. 11, 2017.

British army. It explained "BRAT" as a status standing for British Regiment Attached Traveler, and it was assigned to families who were able to travel abroad with a soldier. Eventually, it just referred to military children. But the term stuck, and was adopted in many places around the world, including in the U.S.

While the researchers I spoke to at NDU couldn't find that particular citation that Dunn mentioned, it's a pretty interesting

story. And other published researchers have also traced the acronym to the phrase British Regiment Attached Traveler.

Earliest References Were From the 18th Century

Dr. Grace Clifton, a professor at Open University in the UK, has done research with the U.S. Army's Dr. Becky Powell into the origins of the term.

Clifton found reference to a song written in 1707 for a satirical play called "The Recruiting Officer" that described soldier life and that of their dependents. Back then, married soldiers were divided into two categories: the lucky few who were allowed to have their families live in the barracks and be taken care of by regimental funds, and those whose families had to live outside the barracks. The song referenced the latter as being "brats and wives."

The lyrics may have been the first reference to brat in relation to military families. But it also may have referred to any children. So, that's still a bit of a mystery.

A Contraction for 'Barrack Rat?'

Clifton said the term "barrack rat" was also used at the end of the 18th century in the U.K. when discussing stories about the lives of children in army barracks, so

it's possible that the two words were turned into a contraction to create the term brat.

"Barrack rat" also surfaced in "A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English." It cited the book "Old Soldier Sahib" written in 1936 by Frank Richards, a British soldier who detailed his experiences while stationed in India and Burma during the early 20th century. In that book, Richards said "children born in barracks were referred to as 'barrack-rats.' It was a wonder to me how the poor kids survived the heat, and they were washed-out little things."

Army Brats

Researchers at NDU also told me they were able to trace "Army brat" back to 1942, where it appeared in a military slang publication called "The War Dictionary." It defined the term specifically in regards to the children of Army officers, and it said the term was one of endearment.

Still No Clear-Cut Answer

Trent University's Dr. Jennine Hurl-Eamon has also been researching childhood during the wars of the 18th century.

"I must confess that I have come across no archival or early print material as yet that offers a clear indication of how the term 'brat' emerged," she said.



Photo by Sgt. William Begley
Col. Jeff A. Becker, commander, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, captures the attention of a little boy before Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade's welcome home ceremony Feb. 8, 2017, on Hunter Army Airfield.

MOMC: Children's well-being contributes immeasurably to total force readiness

By Military Health Services Communications

Military Service members are not the only ones serving their country. Their families – especially their children – do so as well, showing resilience, support, and strength.

In April, the Department of Defense celebrates military children for their essential role in the force's readiness – and the Defense Health Agency joins in that celebration with its "Celebrating the Mighty" campaign.

"Military kids are the cornerstone of military families worldwide," said Kelly Blasko, who has a doctorate in counseling psychology and is the DHA's Connected Health Branch lead for mobile health clinical integration. "Helping ensure their health and mental well-being enables military parents to focus on serving the country."

Patti Johnson has a doctorate in clinical psychology, specializing in pediatrics, and supports the DHA's Behavioral Health Clinical Management Team.

"Military children and youth show their resilience each day by making sacrifices small and large in support of the mission success of their Service member parent," she said. "Their health and well-being contribute immeasurably to the readiness of the force."

Challenges: Glass half full

Military children face unique challenges, including psychological challenges related to military life, explained Blasko.

However, Johnson said, they also experience relatively unique events in comparison to their non-military peers that can positively impact their development and functioning.

"Military kids are more likely to move multiple times during their grade-school years and have a parent absent for long periods of time in potentially dangerous locations," said Blasko. "Unfortunately, they also may learn about difficult topics like injury or death at an early age, but they tend to also learn how to function well in stressful situations."

Though these factors may greatly stress military kids' mental health, their resiliency depends on the support they receive. Preparing for deployment as a family can help families handle the stress and changes of separation, noted Blasko.

Still, separations are not new



Photo by Airman 1st Class Helena Owens, 36th Wing Public Affairs

Members from all different squadrons on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, came together to put on a parade for the children on base April 30, 2020. April is Month of the Military Child throughout the military.

for military kids. Because of continuous permanent changes of station or parental deployments, they know how to keep connected through letters, video chat, and other means, she added.

Additionally, living in geographically diverse locations – whether in the United States or other countries – exposes them to people who have different world views, perspectives, histories, and knowledge sets, added Johnson.

"This widens their opportunities to learn about different backgrounds, cultures, experiences, languages, and so on," she said. "While moving frequently can provide some challenges, research suggests that as a result of military relocations, many military-connected children develop advantageous social skills needed to readily connect and engage with peers as well as adults."

Their experiences encourage many military-connected children to embrace positive military values such as patriotism, honesty, selflessness, and honor, said Johnson. "The adoption of positive core values likely contributes to enhanced self-worth and promotes healthy social and emotional development in many military youths."

This can result in kids with strong resilience skills that help them adjust and cope with military-related stressors, explained Johnson.

"These resilient kids adapt to new environments, put themselves out there to make new friends, and sometimes pick up more responsibilities at home," added Blasko.

Said Johnson: "Overall, the military lifestyle can be a very positive experience for many military-connected children. Military lifestyle experiences can instill a sense of responsibility, independence, tolerance,

and maturity."

However, both experts agree that for some, it can prove stressful, and parents and other important adults should be aware of this possibility and provide support as needed to help all children adjust to this lifestyle.

The whole family must adjust to many new experiences, so planning, communicating openly, creating new routines, and having a plan for keeping connected to the deployed parent are important, explained Blasko.

These can include letter writing, preparing care packages, and connecting via technology when possible, added Johnson.

Other ways families can assist children adjust to deployment and other military-related stressors include:

- Developing and maintaining healthy family routines and traditions.
- Maintaining boundaries and limits for children; they need to know that parents and other adults are in charge and can provide for their social and emotional needs.
- Helping children and youths sustain friendships and other social supports.
- Helping children and youths sustain normal activities such as church, clubs, sports, etc.
- If possible, keeping children in the same school during deployments. If the family moves during deployment, preparing the child and ensuring a smooth transition by requesting school record transfers, researching the new school online, visiting the new school, principal, and teacher(s) ahead of time.

"Parents and other caregivers also need to find ways to take good care of themselves so that they are physically and emotionally available to support their children," said Johnson.



Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs

To celebrate Month of the Military Child last year, children at the Fort Drum School Age Center and Chapel Child Development Center, about 85 miles north of Syracuse, New York, participated in a sidewalk chalk art project.

Resources for military families

There are multiple resources available for military children, youths, and families:

- Installation-based recreational resources, sports teams, psychoeducational or support groups, child and youth services, and family support services are available to help them connect to the military community.
- Military Kids Connect and Sesame Street for Military Families are online resources for military children and youth with multimedia information and activities to help them cope with the military lifestyle and its challenges.
- National organizations, such as the Military Child Education Coalition, National Military Family Association, Blue Star Families, etc. provide educational resources and information for military-connected youths and families.
- Military and family life consultants are available on most installations to assist families with adjustment issues and coping strategies.
- Military One Source offers online resources and can connect families to professionals who provide short-term counseling to children, youths, and families.
- Many military treatment facilities offer behavioral health services to children, youths, and families.
- TRICARE providers are another resource for families with mental and behavioral health concerns.

Social Worker starts kindness challenge for Belvoir elementary school students

By Paul Lara
Belvoir Eagle

This pandemic has taken so much, and sapped so many of a sense of well-being, perhaps none more than children, according to Noreen Hill, a social worker at Fort Belvoir Elementary School. Hill said her clinical team was trying to think of ways to boost spirits, and they decided to give students a challenge each week – to be kind.

“It’s a really simple thing, such as ‘smile at five people today’ to teach them that one small act of kindness can have a big impact,” Hill said. “We’re doing this at both the primary and upper school, and the incentives are the class who earns the most points in a month, gets to donate three books to the school library, that we purchase for them. There is a note inside the book that ‘this book was donated by Ms. Cotton’s class’ for example.”

The challenge started in February, and Hill said the teachers get the slide during morning meetings, and while they’re checking in with the students, asking how everyone is doing and if there is anything to celebrate. She said other ideas have been to ‘think of a time when someone made you grateful’ or ‘post 10 positive notes around your home’.

“Our students have enjoyed the challenges, and we hope these activities have helped to foster a sense of belongingness in this time of separation and occasional uncertainty,” said Jamey Chianetta, Fort Belvoir Upper School principal. “We are so proud of our students for being the people they have already become, and know they are on their way to doing so much more good in the world. They have kind and generous spirits, and we love to celebrate the good things they do.”

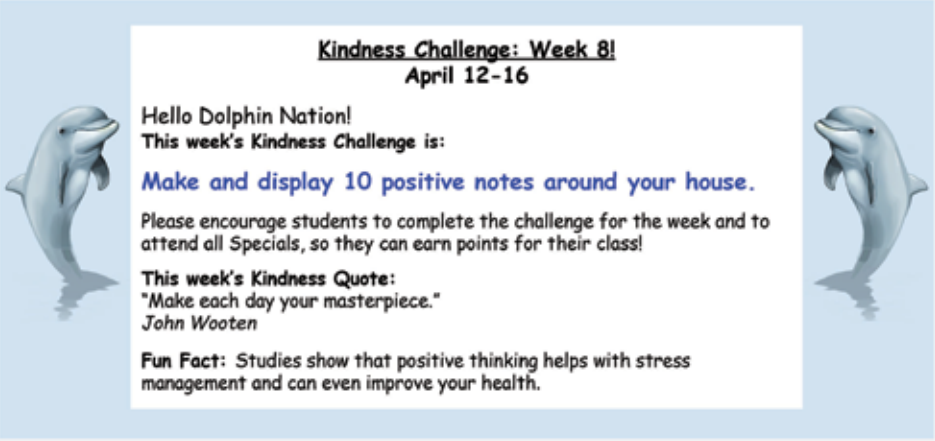
families. They don’t complain, they get the social distancing and they observe the marks and know where to walk. We were really worried about them not being in school and lacking the social structure, but they’ve had no problems at all. It’s been so fun seeing the kids back in the hallways, and I know the staff has missed the kids so much,” said Hill. “The kids said they missed their friends,” and said that’s why they wanted to create a positive community for everybody.

Hill, who has worked at Fort Belvoir Elementary School for 13 years, said the installation stands apart from other schools in Fairfax County.

“When I talk to other schools, they have 40 to 60 percent of students returning to class, but close to 80 percent of ours chose to come back,” said Hill. “We were all figuring it was going to be a disaster – but there was none of that, so a tribute to our parents for their work in preparing them to come back. I do know that with kids being able to interact, they’re

so happy with that, that the atmosphere really is positive. We are continuing the kindness challenge in person.”

Hill noted that the competition has drawn the attention of other schools in the district, that have asked for the resources to share this, and spread a little kindness.



Hill said smiles and kindness seem to be in abundance at school, after in-person instruction resumed last month, and said that students exceeded teacher’s expectations.

“I will tell you it has been so awesome with the kids back in school. It’s a credit to our

50 years of morale building, lifestyle activities for Outdoor Recreation

By Paul Lara
Belvoir Eagle

Nestled along Thomson Bay is one Fort Belvoir's many gems: A large area for walking, running, a long shoreline to enjoy the view of the Potomac and the eagles and ospreys, and the spot where you have access to gear to make the most of the watery fun. Fort Belvoir's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation's building, at the water's edge, is the heart of Outdoor Recreation.

The U.S. Army's Outdoor Recreation program is celebrating 50 years of supporting Soldiers, civilians and their families through morale building and healthy lifestyle-oriented activities and services.

The first Outdoor Recreation program was established in 1971 and since then, ODR has been providing programs and services around the world at Army installations.

John O'Sullivan, the U.S. Army ODR program director, said ODR has been running successfully for five decades due to the benefits of the program.

"ODR's mission is to teach outdoor skills and leisure activities which improve overall quality of life," said O'Sullivan. "The fact that ODR has been maintained for 50 years, and continues to build, is a reason to celebrate. ODR has earned recognition through achievements."

O'Sullivan said quality of life has been improved through ODR because it provides a different perspective for Soldiers.



Photo by Paul Lara

Paddlers take kayaks out on Thompson Basin in this 2018 file photo.

"They can get away from their normal environment, develop new skills and learn about lifetime leisure programs," said O'Sullivan. "ODR gets them outside in the fresh air and gives them the opportunity to enjoy nature. Every aspect of the environment is your playground, if you use it properly."

"We're hoping we get people to come out and participate in the watersports at their disposal, and also check out the other equipment we have available," said Romel Voellm, Fort Belvoir's Outdoor Recreation Director. "We want people to know these outdoor activities are especially safe activities during the pandemic."

"We have kayaks, canoes, john boats, fishing boats, paddle boats, pontoon boats, and we also have an inflatable paddle boat. If you have a

smaller vehicle, or can't tow, this is great to take it somewhere and pump it up for use," said Voellm, who has plans to expand the number of inflatables later this year.

There are two large fishing piers on Tomkins Basin that provide easy access for those with disabilities. While bait is available for purchase, due to the pandemic, you have to bring your own fishing equipment. Fishing on the installation also requires a Virginia license and a Belvoir permit. It's very easy to get the Belvoir permit through iSportsman.

To celebrate 50 years, local ODR programs will be holding events to showcase the opportunities available through the Garrison. Patrons will be able to see the greater benefits to morale, comprehensive fitness, and overall well-being.

Events will adhere to safety guidelines, including applicable pandemic rules and restrictions.

An outdoor adventure photo sweepstakes will be held June 1 to Sept. 7 across Army MWR and ODR social media accounts.

"We're hoping more customers come out here and safely enjoy what we have to offer," Voellm said.

Outdoor Recreation is open Wed – Mon, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. and is closed Tuesday. Holiday hours are typically 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. If you'd like to rent equipment or see what is available, call 703-805-3081. Fort Belvoir fishing permits are required, and can be purchased at ftbelvoir.isportsman.net/.

Belvoir Community Briefs

MS4 Stormwater Program

"As required by the Garrison's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, Fort Belvoir Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Division is accepting comments in writing on the Draft 2021 Chloride Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan for the Lower Accotink Creek until April 30.

The documents can be found on the Fort Belvoir web page, home.army.mil/belvoir. First, search for "Environmental Division." Once on the page, scroll down to the box marked "Programs and Documents" and click on it. Then click on "MS4 Stormwater Program. Links to all relevant documents can be found here.

Submit comments, by email, to Yari Chiro at yarelis.chiro.civ@mail.or.atusarmy.belvoir.id-sustainment.mbx.dpw-enrd-stormwater@mail.mil.

Healthy Eating Workshop

Join the Family Advocacy Program for a virtual Healthy Eating Workshop. Enjoy samples of a healthy plate, discuss portion sizes, and receive a booklet with family friendly recipes. Each workshop is from 10 - 11 a.m., April 16 and July 28. Participants must register by calling 571-231-7001.

Virtual Storytime

Join your library team every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. on the Belvoir MWR Facebook page for a virtual group reading experience. Storytime targets ages 5 and under, but all ages are welcome to join.



MWR Library 4-night Stuffie Sleepaway Camp



Every Thursday, Children are invited to drop off a stuffie at the MWR Library for a fun-filled adventure. Each stuffie will go home on the following Monday with a craft, personalized library books, and photos of their adventure at the library. Drop-offs are Thursdays, March 25 - June 3, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Staff will notify customers the following Monday when stuffies can be picked up from the library.



DADS 101

Let the New Parent Support team show you how to overcome your fears and get comfortable in your paternal role. Whether a first-time dad or a first-time attendee, these sessions will empower you with advice and tricks to become the best dad you can be. This virtual class is from 3 - 4 p.m., April 28. Participants must register by calling 571-231-7028.



Play Morning

Play Mornings, hosted by Army Community Service, allow the opportunity for families to connect virtually and have a playgroup experience together through crafts, story time and other activities. Classes are biweekly, 10 a.m., Fridays. The next sessions will be April 23 and May 7, with additional sessions through June. Participants will be notified of any changes

in the schedule. Registration is required by calling 571-231-7028.

Community Scavenger Hunt

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, Autism Awareness Month and Month of the Military Child. The Community Scavenger Hunt is a month-long effort that fosters family fun and bolsters social and emotional well-being. Each scavenger hunt activity will take participants to a physical location, a website or encourage a family activity. The Community Scavenger Hunt runs now through April 30 at 12 a.m. For the list of tasks and rules and eligibility, visit belvoir.armymwr.com.



MWR/SHARP 5K

Fort Belvoir's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program, in partnership with MWR, will host the annual MWR/SHARP 5K Run/Walk. The 5K will be virtual, with the first 100 participants receiving an MWR/SHARP 5K shirt. Registration closes April 23 at 7 p.m. To register, visit belvoir.armymwr.com.

