Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum leaders sign Month of the Military Child Proclamation

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division (LI) leaders signed the Month of the Military Child Proclamation at the Commons on March 21, recognizing youths as integral members of the armed forces community and applauding their strength and resiliency.

The Department of Defense established the annual commemoration in 1986 to thank the children of service members and veterans for their service and sacrifices and to draw attention to programs and support available to military youths and their families.

The proclamation signing opened the quarterly Fort Drum Educational Liaison Committee meeting, with garrison officials, district superintendents, and educators in attendance.

Maj. Gen. Gregory Anderson, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, said that he will be deployed overseas when MOMC officially kicks off in April, but he wanted to personally acknowledge and thank those who support military families.

“As a commander, knowing that our kids, our family and our community is in good hands is a source of inspiration and encouragement for us when we leave here,” he said. “It takes a lot off our plate because of your amazing job. I’m thankful for all the educators, coaches, administrators, and professionals who run our programs and teach and mentor our children.”

Anderson said this is his family’s third assignment at Fort Drum, and that his sons were educated in North Country schools.

“It’s world-class here,” he said. “And it’s a strength for 10th Mountain Division families to come out here and be blessed by amazing people who care. New York is serious about education. They invest in our children, and it shows.”

Anderson said he is continually impressed by the accomplishments of military children and the sacrifices they make while moving from one duty station to the next.

“There is something special watching how resilient and resourceful they are,” he said. “They learn to deal with change all the time, but it is people like you who help them through that and steady them in a storm – whether it’s a deployment or when they move and have to leave friends.”

Col. James Zacchino Jr., garrison commander, welcomed the educational committee members back to Fort Drum. While they continued to meet online during the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the first in-person gathering since October 2019.

“We collectively gathered virtually as we were getting through the pandemic, but today I’m happy to say we can turn some of that incredible can-do energy toward achieving additional goals,” he said. “Thank you all for being with us to collaborate, partner, and share information and resources, all in support of our military children and families.”

Zacchino said that nearly 5,000 Fort Drum-connected students attend public, private or parochial schools in the area. He also noted that he is a product of North Country education, as is his son.

“The great education that our children receive in the North Country is directly attributed to this group’s dedicated efforts and passion for quality education and unmatched support to the Fort Drum community,” he said. “No one knows it better than the people in this room, that the education and support North Country schools provide creates indelible growth and development.”

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Photo Captions:

MoMC Proclamation 1 - Maj. Gen. Gregory Anderson, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, and Col. James Zacchino Jr., Fort Drum garrison commander, sign the Month of the Military Child Proclamation on March 21, during the Fort Drum Educational Liaison Committee meeting. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

MoMC Proclamation 2 - Jennifer Premo, Carthage Central School District superintendent, speaks from the podium about the benefits of therapy dogs in schools during the Fort Drum Educational Liaison Committee meeting March 21 at the Commons. She invited teachers to provide testimonials as to how the dogs interact with children and create a more positive learning environment. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)