Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services

December 2015

CYSS CONNECTIONS

CYSS MISSION

To support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities.

Monthly Highlights

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day
December 15 - Bill of Rights Day
December 31 - New Year's Eve

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How to Keep Kids Calm in the Holiday Chaos

For many Families, the holidays are accompanied by a long list of activities, events, and preparations that can leave you feeling frazzled and fatigued. If the season's commotion is creating chaos and adversely affecting your children, allow Child, Youth & School Services (CYSS) to share how you can take a step back. Consider these helpful tips from thechildrenstrust.org.

Recognize the reasons.
Children get keyed up during the holidays for many reasons. First, there is an underlying energy and excitement your child feels, but may not totally understand. Second is the duration of the season - a week can seem like an eternity to a small child. Finally, there is an altered environment, including decorations and changes in routine. What was once safe and predictable may suddenly be filled with inconsistency. This can lead to insecurity, over-excitability, and unwelcome behaviors.

Maintain rituals and routines.
Often adults are so busy trying to cram shopping and tasks into their days, they forget how this can affect their children. Changes in routine can affect children greatly depending on their age, temperament and personality. If it's going to be a busy day, keep intact some rituals, such as mealtime and bedtime routines. Or, if one day is hectic, return to a normal schedule the next. And don't get so wrapped up in holiday preparations that you forget to enjoy the actual holiday season. The best way to help your child cope with stress is to spend some quality time together. For more helpful information on temperament and behavior in young children, see our CYSS national military partner Zero to Three at zerotothree.org/child-development/.

Watch for stress.
Overexcitement is natural this time of year and can manifest itself in a variety of ways. If your child is experiencing an upset stomach, headache, clinginess, insomnia or is being difficult, take a step back and think about what he or she is trying to tell you: "I'm tired," "I'm confused," "I don't understand why things are different," "I want attention." If you are in public and notice your child is having a difficult time, be willing to leave before it spirals out of control. Check out our national military partner Military Kids Connect, militarykidsconnect.t2.health.mil, for games and activities to lower stress and build quality time with you and your child.

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Schedule down time.
On busy days, try to build in quiet time. Let your child look at a book, engage in quiet free play, watch something calm on TV, or lay across his bed. Even if he doesn't fall asleep, he is still unwinding. Remember, rest and a proper diet will help your child cope with additional excitement and stress.

Shop smart.
If you need to shop all day, leave your child at home. Swap care with another parent, ask a relative for help watching your child, or hire a sitter. Better yet, check in with our partners at your local YMCA to see if you qualify for respite care. Determine if you're eligible by visiting ymca.net/military-outreach/childcare.html. If you have to bring your child with you, plan shopping trips when he or she is rested, and watch for cues that your child is getting tired. Crowded and noisy stores can be overwhelming to small children. To make the trip easier, bring a stroller, snacks, and comfort items.

Soothe anxieties.
For some children, unfamiliar events such as visiting Santa can inspire fear. Look at Santa from a distance and talk about what you see. Use "I wonder" statements: "I wonder if it's scary to sit on someone's lap you don't know. What do you think?" This validates your child's feelings. Never force a fearful child to sit on Santa's lap just for the sake of a photo, even if you waited in line for hours. The same goes for pushing your children to embrace unfamiliar relatives or friends: don't force kids to hug or kiss someone who is a stranger to them, even if the person is familiar to you.

Watch your own stress level.
Children take their cues from adults, and you are sending the wrong message if you are all stressed out. Take care of yourself, get some rest and eat right so you have the patience and energy to manage your child. Most important, prioritize what's most important. Remind yourself what you want your child to take away from the holidays - joy and happy memories.

Many of our Reserve Families are facing the holiday season separated from their Soldier, or adjusting to having them home again. This may be the time you need to utilize the services of a Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC). The goal of a MFLC is to prevent Family distress by providing education and information on Family dynamics, parenting strategies, available support services, the effects of stress, and positive coping mechanisms. MFLCs provide anonymous and confidential assistance to Soldiers and their Families in problem solving issues resulting from deployment, reunions, reintegration, and/or other times of change. A counselor will assist you in clarifying the problem, developing an action plan, handling a crisis, and prioritizing problems. The purpose of a MFLC is to provide short-term, non-medical treatment. Contact your CYSS specialist on the back page of this newsletter today to help connect you with a MFLC near you, or any other resource your Family needs.

CYSS is here to support your children and youth in any way that we can. We hope that these helpful hints can be a comfort during the busy holiday season and remember to check arfp.org/cyss for fun Youth Enrichment Programs near you.

Compiled from thechildrenstrust.org and mhngs.com by Valerie Morgan, Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group.

Give An Hour Services: Valuable Resource Provided for Reserve Families

Welcome
Give an Hour is a nonprofit organization providing free mental health care to U.S. military personnel and their loved ones affected by post-9/11 service. Their goal is to help you heal. If you are seeking help, Give an Hour offers a range of mental health services to address a variety of needs.

Philosophy
Give an Hour's definition of "Family" is very broad and includes but is not limited to the following:

- spouses
- children
- parents
- siblings
- extended Family members
- unmarried partners

They offer services to anyone who is or has been affected directly or indirectly (through a relationship with someone in the military) by the post-9/11 conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. If you are unsure if someone you love qualifies, please contact info@giveanhour.org.

Services
Providers can help in the following areas:

Individual Services	Marital Services
Family Services	Group Counseling
Child and Adolescent Services	Parent Guidance
Post-Traumatic Stress	Pastoral Counseling
Alcohol/Chemical Dependency	Grief and Loss
Traumatic Brain Injury	Anger Management
Anxiety	Separation/Divorce
Sexual Abuse	

By providing free and confidential services, they offer an essential option for Soldiers and Families who might otherwise fail to seek or receive appropriate care. There is no paperwork, no insurance claims, and no money changing hands. There is no limit to the number of sessions one can receive, so visit giveanhour.org

Expectations of the Providers
Providers are licensed mental health professionals who have agreed to provide services in their areas of expertise. They generously agree to provide one hour per week of mental health support at no charge. The providers agree to participate in the Give an Hour network for a minimum of one year. They are aware that Give an Hour is a nonpolitical organization whose mission is to assist military personnel and their Families as they cope with the effects of their time in the service. Providers agree to conduct their practice using the highest ethical standards and to respect and honor the dignity and individuality of those who seek their assistance.

An Offer to Assist You in Giving Back
A core belief of the organization is that individuals who receive help benefit from the opportunity to give back once their needs have been addressed. If at some point you would like this opportunity, Give an Hour would be happy to connect you to organizations in your area that are in need of volunteers. Contact Give an Hour if you would like to donate time in your community. Give an Hour believes that everyone has something valuable to give and that our society will benefit if we harness the resources inherent in each of us.

Your CYSS specialist can help connect you to a provider near you, or a provider in your state offering video counseling. CYSS contact information is located on the last page of this newsletter. You can also visit giveanhour.org and use the zip code search. If there is no provider in your area, email info@giveanhour.org and a provider will be located for you.

Tips For Winter Safety

The holiday season means crackling fires, cups of hot cocoa, winter sports, and more time spent with your loved ones. While the weather outside has already turned frightful in some parts of the country, here are a few tips to make sure your Family is ready for a safe winter.

At Home

- Check to make sure your home has a carbon monoxide detector on every level, especially near sleeping areas. Keep them at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances. This is also a good time to change batteries in your smoke detectors or fire alarms.
- Keep your baby's crib free of stuffed animals and extra blankets. A firm mattress covered with a tight-fitting crib sheet is all you need for your baby to sleep well. If you're worried about keeping your baby warm on those cold winter nights, try using a sleepsack (wearable blanket).
- Create and practice a home fire escape plan with two ways out of your house in case of a fire. Make it a fun activity for the whole Family.
- Review some additional holiday safety tips for trees, candles, ornaments, toys and more.

In the Car

- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Don't leave a car, SUV or motorcycle engine running inside a garage.
- Take a few seconds to do a quick walk-around before you start the car, especially if you park outside. Check to make sure your tailpipe is not blocked with snow, which can also cause problems with carbon monoxide.
- Car seats and winter coats don't mix. Bulky coats can compress in a crash and create a loose car seat harness. Instead, lay the jacket or a blanket over your children once they're safely strapped in.

Outdoors and At Play

- Wear warm clothing, and have your kids come indoors periodically to prevent hypothermia or frostbite.
- Make sure your kids use the proper gear, like helmets, when they are skiing, snowboarding or playing ice hockey.
- Even though it's cold outside, it's important to use sunscreen and stay hydrated. Compared to adults, children are at increased risk of dehydration.

Weather Guidelines for Children

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)

Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph: Calm 5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43

Comfortable for out door play — Caution — Danger

Compiled from safekids.org.

What To Do with the Holiday Break?

When you have children, it is at times challenging to find childcare or provide fun activities for them during school breaks. Rest assured, there are many wonderful opportunities for your Family to participate in while school is out during the holiday season.

As an Army Reserve Family, take advantage of the national military partnerships with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (bgca.org), YMCA (ymca.net), 4-H (4-hmilitarypartnerships.org), or Military Child Education Coalition (militarychild.org) near you. These organizations are always hosting events at their centers for youth to participate in. It provides youth an opportunity to play and interact with their peers while parents can take this opportunity to do some holiday shopping or continue their normal work schedule. Parents can also check with other community sources such as libraries, museums, and local schools for more activities located near their home.

It's also ok to stay home. Today's parents are always looking for the next thing to enroll their child in for participation. However, winter break is an excellent time to stay home and catch up on things you can't normally get to during the school year. Make this time a fun occasion for the Family by baking and allowing the kids to decorate cookies and other tasty treats. Or, consider hosting a Family game day and invite friends over to join the fun. Feature a holiday movie, pop some popcorn and enjoy each other's company. Don't forget to get outside and play. Sometimes simple, tried and true activities that are budget friendly can create the greatest memories.

For those parents who are unable to stay home during the break, are you considering leaving your child home alone? What can a parent do to ensure the child is safe? There is no magic number for determining how old children must be before they can be left on their own. Experts say parents must consider several factors, including the child's maturity level, time of day they are alone, and whether they have to watch over other children. Nationwide, between 5 million and 12 million children ages 5 to 13 are left at home alone for part of everyday (National Crime Prevention Council Working Moms).

If you are considering leaving your children home this holiday season, you should consider the following tips for the home alone child compiled from the US Census Bureau (2010).

- Apprise yourself of the laws in your area
- Make sure your child is emotionally mature enough to look after themselves
- Prepare and roleplay handling different situations
- Get your child involved in the rule-making process
- Discuss home safety issues (practice dialing 911)
- Never assume your child "knows better" (revisit rules regularly)
- Get to know your neighbors
- Lock the door (Families can utilize a code word and change it periodically)
- Check in (before, during and after)
- Set up parental controls (tv, phones, online)
- Research community programs (arfp.org/cyss)
- Look into extracurricular activities (such as those provided by our national military partners)

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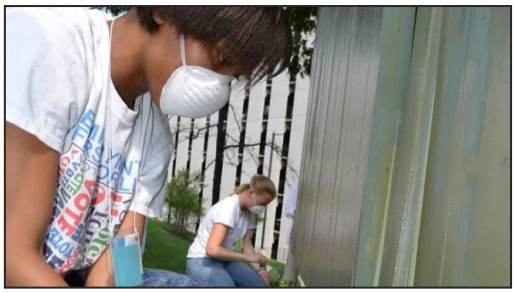
Youth, especially high school students, can also use the holiday break as time to volunteer and strengthen their college resume. TeenLife (teenlife.com), a leading resource that connects students, parents, and educators with community service opportunities, offers numerous suggestions for community service by high schoolers.



The following are some that are geared towards the holiday season:

- Work with friends and donate old clothes or household goods, particularly warm clothes, to your local shelter.
- Answer letters to Santa from a needy child. Visit your local participating post office to get a letter from an underprivileged kid, buy a gift, and mail your package.
- Send a care package to deployed Troops, Veterans, or wounded Soldiers. Write a thank-you letter and include some food (no homemade or canned food allowed). If you are under 18, make sure to sign your letter with your first name only. Take a look at Operation Gratitude (operationgratitude.com) or Give2TheTroops (operationgive.org) to learn what to donate and who to send it to.
- Offer to rake leaves, shovel the walk, or do housework for an elderly neighbor.
- Participate in a clean-up of a beach, riverbed, or park.
- Volunteer with your whole Family to serve a meal to someone who needs it.
- Volunteer at your local library.
- Deliver food to those who are unable to leave their home. Contact your school or church to see if they have programs in place, like Meals on Wheels, or start one of your own.
- Volunteer at a crisis line. Many organizations have specific programs for teens and their peers, where you will be trained to listen actively as a teen crisis counselor.
- Visit a retirement home and spend time doing fun activities with the elderly who lack immediate Family.
- Volunteer at a homeless shelter. There are multiple different volunteer options, such as preparing and serving food to people in need.
- Offer to nanny or baby-sit for free to a Family in need. You can contact a local women's shelter, department of social services, or church to volunteer your services.

As a parent, if you are worried about meeting resistance from your youth during the break, you are not alone. However, *All Work and No Play?*, a joint project of The Wallace Foundation and Public Agenda, suggests that parents who encountered disinterest or resistance when suggesting activities to their youngster might be well advised to give it a second try. A whopping 89% of the youngsters interviewed agreed "even though I might complain about it, some-times I need to be pushed by my parents to do things that are good for me" – and 62% strongly agreed. So speak openly with your child this holiday season, and enjoy all the break from school has to offer.

Upcoming December CYSS Youth Enrichment Programs

December 5: Babysitter Certification Course
Fort Jackson, SC; 13-18 years old
christopher.j.dempsey.ctr@mail.mil or 803-751-4982

December 6: Where the Past Meets the Present!
Riverside, CA; 6-12 years old
flora.m.sherman.ctr@mail.mil or 951-251-7106

December 11: Language of Coding
Moffett Field, CA; 7-12 years old
gina.p.nguyen.ctr@mail.mil or 6505269892

December 12: Motion Commotion
Los Alamitos, CA; 9-18 years old
xania.d.nacino.ctr@mail.mil or 562-936-7633

December 21: Bionic Arm
Darien, IL; 7-12 years old
daniel.p.aukst.ctr@mail.mil or 630-739-7282

Compiled by Jamie Avery, Jason Follett, and Terry Jones, Contractors: Odyssey Marketing Group
from teenlife.org, wallacefoundation.org, and ask.census.gov.

COMMAND/UNIT UPDATES

THE SPOTLIGHT

What do panel members do?

- Participate in Teen Issue Forums
- Serve as junior advisors for Command Teen Councils and regional Youth Leadership, Education and Development (YLEAD) programs
- Volunteer at events such as Family Readiness Group meetings, Family Days, and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Programs (commit eight hours per month)
- Establish partnerships between AR youth and leadership
- Participate in service learning projects
- Receive training in leadership and teen resilience

What are the requirements?

- Enrolled in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade
- Maintain a 2.5 or better GPA
- Be a dependent of an Army Reserve Soldier
- Serve a two year term
- Commit to attend up to three meetings per year
- Ability to represent and voice Army Reserve children and youth issues and find solutions

How do I apply?

- Visit arfp.org/cyssprogram.php#artp to download an application packet
- Applications will be accepted through January 15, 2016
- Check us out on facebook.com/ARTeenPanel

Who do I contact with questions?

Kendra Edwards Waters, CYSS Youth Services Manager
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
kendra.edwards3.ctr@mail.mil or 770-754-9900 ext 506

Ann Nacino, CYSS Specialist
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
xania.d.nacino.ctr@mail.mil or 562-936-7633

COMMAND/UNIT UPDATES

THE SPOTLIGHT

JOIN US

TEEN COUNCIL

Up for a challenge? Ready to build your resume, have fun and make a difference? Accept the challenge and have your voice heard by representing the children and youth of the Army Reserve! Command Teen Councils are looking for youth between the ages of 13-17 to serve as leaders within their command and the community!

The Teen Council's goal is to empower youth with the core values of leadership, service and resiliency. They aim to promote high standards of learning through curricula, resources and activities. Each well-qualified candidate is chosen based on a thorough selection process evaluating their experience, dedication and willingness to speak on behalf of AR children and youth.

Through this opportunity, youth will gain public speaking and leadership skills, work on professional and personal development skills, experience workshops on communication, and develop effective strategies and implement solutions for issues they face as Army Reserve youth. It's a great way to connect with youth from your command and across the country. Don't miss out on this experience...application deadline is January 15, 2016! Any of the specialists listed on the back page are ready to speak with you.

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve a two-year term
- Attend up to four meetings annually/travel paid for face-to-face meetings
- Provide at least four hours/month with military and/or community activities
- Work with fellow teens to develop innovative opportunities
- Attend local/regional command youth events as assigned
- Inform Army Reserve leadership about the needs of youth

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

- Command-connected youth
- A member in good standing in the military and community
- Enrolled in the 8th-11th grade for the 2015-16 school term
- Maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher

Community Events

DECEMBER 2015

Please note that events listed in this newsletter, with the exception of AR CYSS events, are not endorsed by the Army Reserve and are provided only for community awareness.

What's Happening in Your Neck of the Woods...

Name of Event	City	State	Dates	Age Group	POC/Website
CYSS: Youth Enrichment Program Baby Sitter Certification Training	Fort Jackson	SC	5 Dec	13-18 years	Chris Dempsey, CYSS Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group 803-751-4982 christopher.j.dempsey.ctr@mail.mil
USS Jackson Commissioning	Gulfport	MS	5 Dec	All	ussjacksoncommissioning.com
Military Child of the Year Nominations (Reserve Category)	Nationwide	all	thru 11 Dec	13-18 years	www.militarychildoftheyear.org
Santa Paws	Fort Dix	NJ	12 Dec	Family and pets	http://gomdl.com/archives/32373
Surfin' Santa Kids Holiday Party	Tampa	FL	12 Dec	All	www.macdillfss.com
Cosmic Bowling	Brooklyn	NY	Monthly: 1st Fri and 3rd Sat	All	http://www.hamiltonmwr.com/events.php

YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN CHECKING THE FOLLOWING LINKS REGULARLY FOR EVENTS IN YOUR AREA:

CYSS Events: arfp.org/cyssstatecamps.php

4-H: 4-h.org

YMCA: ymca.net/

Resources and Web Links

For Deployed, AGR, Wounded, Ill, Injured or Fallen Soldiers

Army Fee Assistance is provided by General Services Administration (GSA,) working with those who serve in the military find and afford child care that suits their unique needs. Through the fee assistance program, Families are eligible to receive monthly fee assistance to help offset the cost of child care in their communities.
Visit: financeweb.gsa.gov/childcare_portal

Army Respite Care will provide the Family between 8 to 16 hours of hourly child care each month for each of the eligible children. Parents can use this time to run errands, attend appointments, or just take some well-deserved time out for themselves. The Army recognizes the challenges and extraordinary stress the parents and their Families may be experiencing, and wants to help support them in meeting their unique child care needs. Eligibility: Deployed; Temporary Change of Station; Unaccompanied Permanent Change of Station; Temporary Duty; Wounded, Ill or Injured Status; Survivors of Fallen Warriors.

Our Military Kids provides grants for K-12 youth dependents of overseas deployed National Guard and Reserve personnel or severely injured Service Members. Visit: ourmilitarykids.org/

For Various Duty Statuses

Army Reserve Family Programs provides programs, training, services, resources, youth programming and camping opportunities to Army Reserve Families. Visit: arfp.org/

Military OneSource provides an online library, web resources, and non-medical counseling to military Families.
Visit: militaryonesource.mil/

Military Kids Connect (MKC) is an online community of military children (ages 6-17 yr. olds) that provides access to age-appropriate resources to support children from pre-deployment, through a parent's or caregiver's return.
Visit: militarykidsconnect.t2.health.mil

Zero to Three has information and resources for parents of infants and toddlers. A new phone app, Babies on the Home Front, provides Military and veteran parents with strategies for enhancing everyday moments with their child.
Visit: zerotothree.org/

Military Child Education Coalition Military (MCEC) is a non-profit organization focusing on academic and school-related needs of military-connected youth. Visit: militarychild.org

National Military Family Association has programs that provide military Families with camps, Family retreats, and healing adventures during deployment, reintegration, and coming together after an injury.
Visit: militaryFamily.org/

America's Tooth Fairy has several signature programs engaging caring dental professionals in providing donated services and oral health education and supporting initiatives that expand access to care for children in need.
Visit: ncohf.org/

Give an Hour is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of Troops and Families, provides counseling to individuals, couples and Families, and children (on-line request for assistance). Visit: giveanhour.org

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This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.
For more information on resources and programs, please visit: ARFP.org/CYSS

Fort Family Outreach & Support Center - We Inspire and Empower
Anytime. Anywhere. 24x7x365
Call: 866-345-8248 Visit: ARFP.org

The mission of Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services is to support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities.

Family Programs Coordinator
Belinda Parker
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6182
Email: belinda.k.parker.civ@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Parker** for assistance with:
- Family Programs Training
- Policy and Guidance
- Command Consultation
- Teen Council

Youth Services Specialist (YSS)
Sheena Williams
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6188
Email: sheena.r.caston.ctr@mail.mil

Contact **Mrs. Williams** for assistance with:
- Command/Unit Support
- Weekend Events and Activities
- Child Care Resources
- Youth Programming
- Teen Council

Youth Service Specialist (YSS)
Jessica Gilmore
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6190
Email: jessica.m.gilmore8.ctr@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Gilmore** for assistance with:
- Command/Unit Support
- Weekend Events and Activities
- Child Care Resources
- Youth Programming
- Teen Council

412th Theater Engineer Command

facebook.com/412TEC

If you are not part of 412th TEC, contact one of the CYSS staff members above and we will connect you with the YSS or SSS in your area.

This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.
For more information on resources and programs, please visit: ARFP.org/CYSS

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