

COMMUNITY CORNER

Fort Riley has many resources for Families

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

Aug. 13, the 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley had their official send off for the Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team who are heading to Iraq for a 12-month deployment.

For many of our Families this isn't the first time they've wished their Soldiers farewell. However, just because they've been through it before doesn't make it any easier. And if it's a first deployment, Families may be nervous about what to expect. Fort Riley has numerous programs in place to help Family members deal with deployments. While staying involved and in touch with others in your situation during the deployment is a great benefit of all of these programs, many of them also are designed to provide long-lasting skills to help Family members build resiliency and adapt with the Army's sometimes strenuous pace.

As Family members say their own good byes, I want to remind Soldiers and their Families about some of these programs. Soldiers need to know their Families are well taken care of so they can focus on their mission.

Two of the best resources during a deployment – and after – are Army Community Service and your unit's Family Readiness Group. FRGs are in place to support Families throughout deployments. FRG leaders and group members not only know what you're going through, but they also can help point you in the right direction if you should need assistance. If you don't know anyone in your FRG, use the numbers included with this article to contact your brigade's FRG leader or FRG assistant. They can direct you to the leaders for your battalion and company FRGs.

Another source to find out just



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about anything you need to know is ACS. ACS houses numerous programs for Army Families – Employment Readiness, the Family Advocacy Program and the New Parent Support Program are just a few.

If you're a spouse new to military life, sign up for the Army Family Team Building program to learn the ins and out of Army life. The next level one class, which is Sept. 10 and 11, will focus on expectations and the impact of the mission, military acronyms and terms, the chain of command, military customs and courtesies, basic military benefits and entitlements, military and civilian community resources, an introduction to Family Readiness Groups, supporting children's education, Family financial readiness, and basic problem solving.

Looking for a job on or around Fort Riley? The Employment Readiness Program has everything you need. ERP staff can assist you with writing a resume, understanding the government's Resumis system and provide you with interviewing tips.

Maybe you don't have time for a job but would like to spend a few hours a week volunteering in the community. Call the volunteer coordinator at ACS for ideas on how you can get involved. Fort Riley volunteers annually give thousands of hours of their time to provide services across the installation.

Whether it's the first time or the fifth that your spouse has been deployed, becoming a single parent during deployments can be challenging. The New Parent Support Program, Family Advocacy Program and Exceptional Family Member Program all work

together to provide classes and information for parenting at different stages in your children's lives. Check www.riley.army.mil for upcoming classes or give them a call at 785-239-9435 to find out what's coming up.

If this is your first time handling the Family's finances, give the Financial Readiness Program a call. FRP offers advice and classes on balancing checkbooks, debt consolidation, budgeting and financial counseling, among other things.

Another avenue you might be interested in while your spouse is deployed is furthering your education. Stop in to any one of Education Service's Learning Centers to learn about free Leader Skills Enhancement Courses or earning a degree from one of the colleges or universities in the Fort Riley Consortium.

- Main Post Learning Center, 217 Custer Avenue; open 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; 785-239-6481

- Learning Center No. 1, 7604 Parker Street; open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; 785-239-9485

- Learning Center No. 2, 7656 Graves Street; open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; 785-239-9824

Besides supporting spouses, Fort Riley provides many programs for our younger Family members. The Middle School Teen Center offers too many services to list them all here. Teens can find job opportunities, get help with their homework and participate in various clubs. The teen center also host deployment discussions from 4 to 5 p.m. every Wednesday night where teens can talk to other teens about dealing with having a parent overseas.

Besides the teen center activities, Child, Youth and School Services offers sports programs – many at a discount to children with a deployed parent. Child care also falls under the purview of CYSS. The Warren East Child Devel-

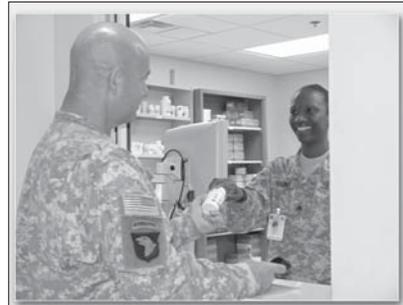
opment Center offers hourly care for children 6 weeks through kindergarten from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 6981 Warren Rd. Parents can schedule up to 20 hours per week, and reservations may be made up to 30 days in advance. Special Army Family Covenant rates are available to Families of deployed Soldiers. For more information on this program, call 785-239-9885 or 785-239-5440.

Two programs available on post just for the spouses of deployed Soldiers, or those on unaccompanied tours, are the Hears Apart program and Picerne Military Housing's Down Range Days Off. Hears Apart holds monthly activities for spouses to get together with others in their situation. Last month Family members enjoyed a picnic and J.C. Generals ball game. Contact Hears Apart at 785-239-9435 to find out about upcoming activities. Picerne's Down Range Days Off are for those spouses who live in on-post housing. Stop by your neighborhood office to find out more about these events.

Besides these services, Fort Riley offers recreation in the form of bowling, golf, swimming and various outdoor activities just to name a few. For information on activities and Family programs at Fort Riley, visit www.rileymwr.com.

While your Soldier is deployed, take advantage of these and all of the other programs Fort Riley has to offer. If there's a program we should be offering that we're not, let me know. Join in our discussions on Facebook – www.facebook.com/FortRiley – about what you want to see at Fort Riley.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, e-mail riley.post.newspaper@com.us.army.mil. And don't forget to join in the garrison commander's blog at www.facebook.com/FortRiley. Share your comments where they can make a difference.



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FINISHING TOUCHES



Finishing touches are being placed on the clubroom of the new Forsyth Neighborhood Center scheduled to open Sept. 25. The interior features a rustic theme and decor. The 13,000-square-foot facility is the first neighborhood center to be built on Fort Riley by Picerne Military Housing. It will house a fitness center, locker rooms, children's play room, a K-State-themed game room, computer lab, club room, laundry facilities and Picerne offices. The outdoor space by the facility will have softball and soccer fields, a playground area and a pool. The Forsyth Neighborhood Center's grand opening will take place at 1 p.m. Sept. 25.

Flavia Hulsey | POST

