

## COMMUNITY CORNER

## EFMP provides services for Families with special needs children

By Col. Kevin Brown  
GARRISON COMMANDER

While the Army provides care for all of its Family members, those with special needs get a special place at our installations. We don't keep track of Family members with special needs to single them out. We keep track so we can make sure they get the services they need and that Families are sent to installations that can best support them.

These services are provided through the Exceptional Family Member Program. All Soldiers who have a Family member or members with special needs are required to enroll in EFMP. Family members may include spouses, children, step-children and adopted children.

Some of the conditions that warrant enrollment

in EFMP include: attention deficit disorder, allergies, autism, asthma, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, hearing problems or loss, depression or anxiety, heart conditions, mobility problems and seizures. In short, any Family member with a physical, emotional, developmental or intellectual disability that requires special treatment, therapy, education, training or counseling should be enrolled.

To enroll in EFMP at Fort Riley, call the EFMP special needs advisor at Irwin Army Community Hospital at 785-239-7198. Soldiers are requested to update their Family members' enrollment information every three years or when there is a significant



Col. Brown

change in their situation. Besides enrolling through IACH, contact the EFMP staff located at Army Community Service. They do a great job keeping our Families in touch and providing information on services in the area.

Did you know respite care is available for Family members with disabilities who need regular care? Respite care provides a break — up to 40 hours a month — for those Family members who provide constant care. If you are interested in finding out more, call EFMP at 785-239-9435. The staff will fill you in on requirements and get you signed up for the program if you're eligible.

EFMP also partners with the New Parent Support Program, Geary County Infant Toddler Service and Parents as Teachers to provide free Ages and Stages Assessments for

vision and hearing. These assessments are available to help parents assess their children's needs and tailor their parenting to target those needs.

Upcoming assessments will be from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sept. 15 and Nov. 17.

Fun activities are hosted by EFMP on a regular basis throughout the year. Events such as camps, the special needs rodeo, visit to the pumpkin patch and other holiday parties allow parents and children with special needs to get out in an environment where they can meet others who may be in the same situation. Keep an eye on the newspaper and the EFMP newsletter for upcoming events.

A support group for Families is held the fourth Tuesday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. To find out the locations for upcoming meetings, call

EFMP at 785-239-9435.

EFMP is ready to assist our Families so they can experience the best quality of life available to them. At the Army level, leaders also are looking for better ways to assist. If you have ideas about how EFMP can better serve your Family, submit your ideas through the Army Family Action Plan. We'll be holding an AFAP conference this fall on Fort Riley, but in the meantime, submit your ideas online. The submission form is located at [www.riley.army.mil](http://www.riley.army.mil). From the homepage, click Services, Family Services, Army Community Service and then Army Family Action Plan.

For more information on EFMP services, call the staff at 785-239-9435 or visit their page under Army Community Service at [www.riley.army.mil](http://www.riley.army.mil).

To comment on this article or to suggest a topic for Com-

## IF YOU GO

**Special Needs Rodeo**  
» 10 a.m. July 17

**Theaplay**  
» 9 to 11 a.m. July 20 and 21  
» ACS, Building 7264

**Child and Family Nutrition with Mitzi Dulan**  
» 1 to 2 p.m. July 28  
» IACH

**Typical Developmental Delays**  
» 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. July 28  
» IACH

**Bal-A-Vie-XI**  
» July 31  
» ACS, Building 7264

**RSVP for classes and events by calling EFMP at 785-239-9435.**

community Corner, e-mail file, [post.newspaper@comus.army.mil](mailto:post.newspaper@comus.army.mil).

## Spouse learns cooking, coping skills during extension classes while husband is deployed

By Pat Melgares  
K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

Make no mistake: Amanda Bartholome can't wait until her husband, Chief Warrant Officer David Bartholome, returns from duty with the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in northern Iraq.

But, until then, she's keeping busy.

Since March, when her husband deployed to Iraq, Bartholome has managed to plant her first garden, learned how to roast Anaheim green chile peppers and started using some new tips for saving money on the Family's grocery bill.

She's taken classes on how to can foods, blanch and preserve fruits and vegetables, prepare strawberries and tomatoes, dehydrate foods, and pickle peppers. This fall, she's planning to learn more about making bread, especially holiday varieties.

She's also taken a class titled, "Loving Long Distance," which teaches military spouses practical ways to stay connected with their deployed Soldier and helps them prepare for new challenges when they return.

"And you know what," Bartholome said, "these were all free classes."

She's one of a growing number of military spouses who have taken advantage of programs offered through K-State Research and Extension's Fort Riley office, which just began its second year of service on the



COURTESY PHOTO

Amanda Bartholome shops for produce - and bargains - at the Fort Riley Commissary. Bartholome regularly takes classes at K-State Research and Extension's Fort Riley office.

post.

The Fort Riley office opened in March 2009, making Kansas just the second state to have an Extension office within a military installation — Texas is the other. Toni Bryant, director of Fort Riley's Extension program, said she and her staff are now offering 10 to 15 classes monthly, covering many areas relevant to military spouses.

About 20,000 Soldiers are stationed at Fort Riley, and about 9,000 Family members like Bartholome live on post. Another 13,000 Family members live off post.

The support Bartholome

receives from the Extension office and other services on the post, "helps (David Bartholome) do his job better over there, because he knows the Kansas community is taking care of me," said Bartholome, who is originally from California where she taught second graders prior to getting married and moving to Kansas.

"He sees that I'm happy and safe," she said.

The office at Fort Riley is like many of K-State Research and Extension's offices across Kansas. Bryant noted the Fort Riley office offers programs and classes in child development, nutrition and health, Family

life, and managing Family resources such as budgeting and managing credit.

"Our (Extension) agents have just been working their tails off; they've hit the ground running," said Bryant, noting that developing partnerships with key groups and strong support from the post's leadership have been crucial for the office's success.

Their work has made a difference for Bartholome, who said on most questions she can stop at the office and get written information or e-mail an Extension agent to get help.

"Knowledge is power, and it's enriching," she said.

## Respite care offers a temporary break

*Editor's Note: During the month of July, the post will observe the Exceptional Family Member Program campaign, "Army Strong with Special Needs." The following is the second in a series of articles about TriWest Healthcare Alliance and EFMP.*

By Shari Lopatin  
TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

You don't want to admit it, but life can get overwhelming.

The more it builds, the more you act like everything is OK. Focusing on your Family member can feel all-consuming and may lead you to ignore your own health.

Caring for a loved one with a disability is tiring. That's why it's important for you to care of yourself. And Tricare makes that possible with respite care for you — the caregiver.

Respite care offers caregivers a temporary break when they are looking after a Family member with special needs. Tricare offers a respite benefit allowing a skilled professional to come to your home.

To be considered for the respite benefit, a Family member must first be registered in the Tricare Extended Care Health Option, or ECHO. After registration in ECHO, a Family can contact their assigned ECHO nurse

to determine eligibility for the respite benefit.

## WHAT'S COVERED FOR RESPITE CARE?

ECHO offers a home health care option, where a professional comes to your home for up to eight hours per day, five days per week.

The program does have a yearly cap; it won't pay more than the maximum amount Tricare would pay each year if the beneficiary lived in a skilled nursing facility.

This home health care benefit is available only to those who qualify for it. It was designed to provide much needed rest for the caregiver.

This service, however, cannot be used for other reasons, such as babysitting or coverage during employment.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFO?

Don't be afraid to ask. If you need the rest, contact your ECHO nurse and find out if you qualify for Tricare's respite benefit. You also can visit [www.triwest.com/](http://www.triwest.com/) ECHO.

If you're not yet registered for ECHO, you can call TriWest's ECHO program information and new patient referrals line at 1-866-212-0442.

Remember, you owe it to yourself.

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