

COMMUNITY CORNER

Get a kit, make a plan, be informed: Prepare for severe weather now

By Col. William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

With temperatures in the 70s and 80s this week, it seems we have put winter behind us. Although that may not quite be the case, the warm weather is a good reminder we must now prepare for spring and summer severe weather.

Just like I asked you in the fall to prepare for the harsh winters usually characteristic of Kansas, I now ask you to prepare for the possibility of tornadoes, thunderstorms and floods often characteristic of Kansas in the spring and summer. While we hope to pass through spring and summer without major incidences of severe weather, much like we did this winter, it is always better to be prepared for whatever Mother Nature may send our way.

This week, from March 12 to 16, Fort Riley participated in Kansas Severe Weather Awareness Week – what better time to prepare for severe weather. One of the best ways

to prepare is to follow the mantra of the Ready Army Campaign: Get a kit, make a plan and be informed. I encourage each of you to do that as we come to the end of Kansas Severe Weather Awareness Week to be Ready Army.

GET A KIT

Ready Army suggests the following items for a severe weather home emergency kit: weather alert radio with new batteries, flashlight with new batteries, candles and matches, cell phone with car charger, first aid kit, drinking water – three gallons per person, three-day supply of non-perishable food, propane for gas grills, blankets, hats, change of clothes and shoes, and cash.

Packing these items in a bag or box to take in your car if and when you leave home for shelter or travel during bad



Col. Clark

weather also is suggested.

MAKE A PLAN

While we like to think the worst won't happen to us, we need to be ready if it does. Think about what your family would do in case of an emergency.

What if your house is struck by a tornado? Do all of your family members know where to go for safety? If you are separated, do you have a plan in place spelling out how you'll meet up or get a hold of each other?

What if there's a fire? Where will you meet? If the house is on fire, do your children know they shouldn't hide from firefighters?

What if you lose power? Do you have a battery-powered weather radio? Do you have a car charger for your cell phone?

Ready Army plans suggest family members have at least three points of contact, and those numbers should be posted by each phone. Fire alarms and extinguishers should be inspected, along

with a walkthrough of your home to identify hazards that need corrected. Children should know how to contact emergency services.

For severe weather like tornadoes, shelter locations should be identified inside the home, along with plans if you are not at home, and every family member should practice the plan.

BE INFORMED

The Ready Army program provides information and resources to help Army Families, retirees, civilians and contractors prepare for severe weather. Click the Ready Army link on Fort Riley's website at www.riley.army.mil or visit www.readyarmy.mil to learn more about how to prepare for severe weather.

In the event of severe weather, it is important to be informed about the storm, tornado or other weather event.

Local radio stations usually have storm spotters on location following the storm's path. These spotters call back

to the station with reports that are broadcast over the radio waves. Stations in the Fort Riley area include: 100.9 in Clay Center; 1420 AM, 97.4 and 103.5 in Junction City; 1350 AM, 101.5, 104.7 and 95.3 in Manhattan; 580 AM in Topeka; 1150 AM in Salina; and 98.5 and 102.5 in Abilene.

Other ways to stay informed on watches and warnings is through Fort Riley AtHoc Text Messaging, Riley TV – cable channel 2 on post, tornado sirens and the giant voice system, as well as local TV stations like WIBW, KTKA and KSNT.

To sign up for AtHoc text messages, common access card holders can visit the following locations:

- At your work computer – on post only
- Any Department of Defense computer with dual CAC card readers
- Laptop kiosks located at:
 - Army Community Service, Building 7264
 - Replacement Company, Building 208

- In-processing, Building 210
- ID Card Center, Building 212

• Soldier Readiness Processing site, Building 7673
Additionally, family members can sign up at their unit's Family Readiness Group offices or at their sponsor's unit on any local area network computer. A CAC cardholder can sign up a spouse or dependent by clicking on the purple globe at the bottom right-hand side of his or her computer screen, on any computer connected to the local area network.

In future Community Corners, I will provide guidance specific to common occurrences of severe spring and summer weather – tornadoes, thunderstorms and floods. So be on the lookout. In the meantime, visit www.readyarmy.mil and be prepared.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, email rlc.post.newspaper@comus.army.mil.



Pamela Redford | POST
Classmates reflect and assess what they learned during a recent Resilient Spouse Academy session March 9 at the Resiliency Learning Center.

Spouses graduate from resilient academy after weeklong training

By Pamela Redford
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The Resilient Spouse Academy graduated 13 of its members March 9, after a week of training and activities at the Resiliency Learning Center on Custer Hill.

"This class was great. They were very open and willing to talk," said Julie Zwiebel, program manager, Army Family Team Building, Army Family Action Plan and RSA, Army Community Services.

The program, in its third year, was originally developed to provide tools, build resiliency and strengthen skills within "key spouses," Zwiebel said. By targeting leaders within a community, RSA trains people – usually the type who are very involved in their community – on how to help others by sharing that knowledge, she said.

To date, more than 200 spouses have graduated from the program, Zwiebel said. In 2011, Fort Riley was presented with a Secretary of the Army's Quality of Life Award for Best

Practices, stemming from the development of RSA.

The mission, "to create a network of well-trained spouses who feel better prepared and motivated to truly make a difference in the lives of our individual Soldiers and their Families," is accomplished quarterly through an eight-hour class, Monday to Friday, at the Resiliency Learning Center.

During the recent training, Zwiebel covered a variety of instructional topics, including suicide intervention skills, domestic violence, sexual assault, substance abuse, survivor support, avoiding and responding to financial challenges, financial culture, investing, saving, spotting problems and changing behaviors. Eight hours of Master Resiliency Training also were included in the curriculum.

Fort Riley Garrison Commander William Clark attended and thanked all of the spouses for their participation. He also asked the attendees for feedback on how Fort Riley can

do better with training Family members on topics covered in the RSA.

"He's just so invested in RSA," Zwiebel said.

Full-time Barton Community College student June Davis said she learned a lot during the week, including communicating with people, how to address problems more effectively, her finances and resources available at Fort Riley.

"It was very enriching to learn about programs and services on post that are valuable to people," she said.

Graduate Jessica Brooks said she appreciated how the curriculum all tied together and taught her better ways to communicate.

"It helps us all to be stronger and build our military community," she said.

The class is offered once a quarter. The next RSAs are scheduled for June 4 to 8 and Sept. 10 to 14.

For more information, visit the Resilient Spouses-Fort Riley Facebook page or contact ACS at 785-239-9435.



Parker Rome | POST
Lon Borjas, CVSS, gives a lesson on communication during the RYA March 9 at the Resiliency Learning Center. The program is offered quarterly for military children.

High school students learn coping skills at Resilient Youth Academy

By Parker Rome
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Along with the normal struggles growing up, military children also may go through many of the same stresses as their parents.

Nine high school students learned about coping with these stresses when they attended the Resilient Youth Academy March 9 at the Resiliency Learning Center.

"I learned about how to prevent suicide for my peers, some facts about abuse in teens, some things that will help me in transitioning from base to base and how to have better communication with my peers," said Trevor Dailey, Junction City Freshman Success Academy.

The one-day RYA featured subject matter experts working throughout Fort Riley giving classes on specific resiliency skills. Instructors included Kay Ediger, Army Community Service; Lon Borjas, Child, Youth and School Services; Carolyn Tolliver-Lee, Family Advocacy Program; Kariga Pratt, FAP; Doraine Pinson, CVSS; and Clint Strutt, Financial Readiness, ACS.

Topics covered were bullying, peer pressure, suicide

prevention, dating abuse, transitioning, employment and finances.

Participants are encouraged to take what they learn and act as peer mentors, said Eric Childs, the academy's coordinator and school liaison officer, CVSS.

"I think it's important because most people my age don't have the communication skills that they need," Dailey said. "They don't understand complicated relationships like dating and stuff like that."

Dailey said the class was a good experience.

Because the RYA teaches students and prepares them to serve their peers, the time spent in class counts toward Junction City High School's service learning requirement.

The RYA, which is offered quarterly, began about a year-and-a-half ago, using the Resilient Spouse Academy as a model.

"Our main goal is to try to help kids acquire the life skills necessary to help them positively face the challenges that are associated with growing up in the military and being a military-connected family member," Childs said. "They deal with transitions from base to base, they move around quite

a bit, being the new kid on the block and deployment-related stressed – just those things along with the typical stresses of growing up in a teenage world nowadays."

With the available resources already at Fort Riley, Childs said it was a no-brainer. Some changes may be coming in the future, though.

"We've found the curriculum to be pretty successful, so we've stuck with the same curriculum for the last year-and-a-half," he said. "We do some little tweaks here and there, but we've been doing it long enough now that we can probably start looking earnestly at any additions or changes we want to make in the future."

The next RYA is May 4, which coincides with an off-day for Junction City schools.

"I just really encourage parents and youth to take advantage of the opportunity and participate in the program," Childs said. "We're always looking to increase our numbers. We've got the facility, and we've got the resources."

For more information, call ACS 785-239-9435.

Good News Club starts March 29

By Parker Rome
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The Garrison Chapel's Office will offer a four-week after-school program for elementary school students.

The Good News Club will meet weekly, beginning March 29 at Morris Hill Chapel.

"It is meant to help strengthen children's faith," said Don Ericson, director

of religious services. "This is spiritual resiliency we offer for children the same way that adult's faith is strengthened, by reading God's word, the Bible, and talking about how that applies to our lives. It helps kids to know that God's word is a resource to them that they can apply to their life with whatever they're dealing with."

Activities include games and competitions, listening to a missionary story and scripture, memorizing Bible verses and singing Christian songs.

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