

In Touch

Idea update for military families facing separations

Based on the books "I'm Already Home" and "I'm Already Home...Again"

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Fall 2006



Message from Elaine

It's hard to believe that fall is in the air! As I sit writing this the temperature outside is 61° and overcast...unusual for Colorado. But it's kind of nice. When seasons change, I welcome what lies ahead...crisp weather, new holidays, and a time to review where I am in life and where I'm going because it's so easy to get off track. Do any of you feel that way sometimes? You're really busy and driving forward yet you may have lost sight of your direction? It's easy to lose focus. It can be even harder to stay on task when your family is separated and you're doing everything. I have something that might help.

It's **SISU** (pronounced see' - sue) and it's a Finnish concept. A friend of mine shared that his grandfather was Finnish, farmed in northern Minnesota, and raised 9 children. It was a hard life to be sure! He would tell his children and grandchildren that what kept him going in the hard times and built his inner strength was SISU. It's the philosophy that what must be done will be done, regardless of what it takes. (For those of you at the Philly NG Family Programs convention, remember the song "Whatever it takes?") SISU is a special resolve and persistent determination to keep going and overcome, during any time of adversity. It's a combination of stamina, perseverance, courage, and determination held in reserve for hard times. Mythological heros taught the Finnish that it was possible to overcome any obstacles.

For many families this is a time of adversity and it's easy to lose direction. Let SISU help you. Remember that at the end of all this, your family will be back together. Keep that out in front of you and never lose sight of it. Don't ever forget that that's why you're going through everything! It's the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. YOU have that SISU deep in the reserve of your soul and don't ever forget that. We **all** do. When things pull you off your path, let this notion be a basic source of inspiration for you. Cut out the sign below and tape it on your bathroom mirror or computer so that you can always remember that **you can overcome anything!** Stay Strong!

SISU

Resources, Information and Ideas I found for you:

As a presenter recently for the National Guard Family Programs Convention in Philadelphia, I came upon some resources, information and ideas that I liked and thought I'd pass on to you. Remember - I have NO special interest or relationship with anything or anyone I mention here. Just a need to provide you with useful information.

1. Operation: Military Child Care

This is a child care resource program of NACCRRRA (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies). It's designed to help eligible families find local child care options in their communities. This program may also be able to reduce child care fees for families who are already using licensed care providers. Who is eligible? Families and legal guardians of National Guard & Reserve Service Members activated or deployed. For more information log onto:

www.NACCRRRA.org/MilitaryPrograms
or call toll-free: 1-800-424-2246

2. Connect and Join:

I'm learning more about this resource but from what I've seen it looks like a really good idea. I'd be anxious to hear from any of you out there who are using this. It's an online family message center designed for those separated by deployment and serving as a member of the military or living apart due to job related responsibilities. It's an online communications portal to bring families together. It's password protected, and has full customer service available. It seems pretty easy to use. Some of the things you can do on the site include family newsletters, photo gallery, calendar, special kid's section and teens site along with scrapbooking tools and journals. Take a look at:

www.connectandjoin.com
Or call: 1-888-729-9828

3. Photos and Feedback from my Philly breakout session - "Make a Small World Smaller"

My husband Larry (remember him?) took some candid photos at my *Make a Small World Smaller* breakout sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday in Philadelphia. Go to www.imalreadyhome.com/phillybreakout.htm Maybe you'll see yourself! Also on that page I posted a compilation of all the "find someone who..." responses you came up with in the second part of the exercise. If you're going to be making your own connection get-to-know-you sheets in your FRG, you might find some of these responses helpful. You came up with some great ones! I'm sure you'll find some that will work. Enjoy the pictures.

4. Family idea: Create DVD's

I received this idea in the mail and am sharing it because I forgot how easy it was to make DVD's to send to your spouse overseas. Here's what one family did: *"We created a DVD of pictures and video put to music so my husband could view it any time he was homesick. It also had our kids voices on it saying they loved him and to come home soon and safe. It also had our six year old saying the Pledge of Allegiance."*

While this DVD sounds like quite an involved venture, I recently discovered how easy this is to do. I made the DVD's that were used to open and close my general session speech in July, and they turned out great. I used a program called Pinnacle Studio which is very user friendly. It lets you "lay down" separate tracks for photos and videos, music and then voices. The program automatically "blends" them together into a seamless movie that can be played on any standard DVD player. Your whole family can help. The younger ones can pick out the pictures and add their voices. Try it! If you go to: www.Pinnaclesys.com you can download a FREE 30 day trial to see how you like it.

5. This is a "Dreamy" idea:

Glenna shared with me that she and her husband stay connected mainly through telephone calls. I know that this is what a lot of the families do, so what makes hers different? She and her husband discovered that they often have the same dream! She said that it makes phone calls very special when you ask the one you love about their dreams and then talk about them. So next time you talk to your spouse, ask him/her about their dreams.

6. Beam me up, Scotty!

Here's a great idea that takes "Flat Daddy" and goes a step further. Mary said: *"I have made a "Scotty Doll." It's a life size cloth doll that resembles my husband. He sits at Scott's desk where Scott usually is when he's home. My daughter thinks I've lost my mind, but I had fun making it."* Thanks, Mary

7. Happy Anniversary

I loved this idea, but couldn't make the cut off date to include in the new book so here it is: Send all the makings for an anniversary dinner and have a small anniversary "together" while you're apart. (candles, holders, flowers, etc.)

2006 "Use-it-or-lose-it" Fund; End Soon

Just a reminder that we are here all week to fill book and

CD orders for you by September 30th. We have quantity discounts starting as low as 20 books so we can cover orders of *any* size! Call or email for orders or questions:

866-780-0460 or my cell at **303-956-0316**

Email: Elaine@ElaineDumler.com

(We can accept IMPAC card transactions)





Imagine...time to think about Christmas connections! From An FRG meeting: "We are already putting together Christmas tree ideas, ornaments with pictures and we also made Christmas tree skirts with pictures on them...so cute. Remember you can put pictures on cups, key chains and T-shirts to send as well. One woman is making her husband a blanket (you know who you are ☺) and putting pictures on it of all the family. He gets cold at night and would love a big blanket to cover up with full of pictures of his family!"

If you go to www.LetsSayThanks.com you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it and send to a soldier who is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to some member of the armed services. It is 100%FREE and it only takes a second to brighten the day of one of America's modern heroes. Pass this link along to your church, school or civic organization. I tried it and it's very easy!



New Stuff and Happenings here in Colorado...

Here's what you'll find we're doing to help you help yourself and others around you. It's fun to keep moving forward so I hope you like what you see!

1. **New Blog** on my website. A fun way for us to share thoughts and ideas every few days. When you have a chance, please visit: www.ImAlreadyHome.com and click on "Visit Elaine's Blog." Remember that I'm new at this so be patient!

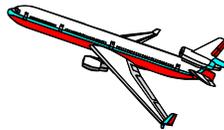
2. **New CD.** I know that sometimes we spend so much time in the car chauffeuring kid's around, that I wanted something you could pop in the CD player and listen to when you don't have time to read. I wanted to bring you something different. This CD is not an audio book, it's a companion to the book. It's a conversation about connecting that you can "listen in" on. I think you'll enjoy it and glean ideas from a short 45 minutes. The entire CD is broken into tracks so you can stop and start it as time allows.

Buy it until November 1st for only \$5 each (50% off) plus shipping...as many copies as you'd like!



To order, call **1-866-780-0460** or go to www.ImAlreadyHome.com and click on the "purchase" tab.

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Call me at 866-780-0460 or 303-956-0316 and let's talk about how to make this happen for your families!



Bookmark these Websites

A friend referred me to this website and I really liked it. It's full of fun information and it's easy to navigate. It includes a Guestbook, Photos, Stories, Hugs for Kids, and a newsletter plus much more. Have fun.

www.homefronthugs.com



Ok, I'll admit that this next website has nothing to do with the military...it's just plain fun! Go to:

<http://earth.google.com>

Download the free version of Google Earth and plan on wasting lots of time. You can travel around the world and zoom in on any location you want...really close! I found the house I grew up in and even zoomed in on my son's college dorm. Then I told him I was watching him! Of course I wasn't, but I liked looking at the campus.



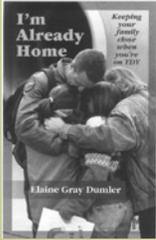
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A Potluck recipe from someone who hates to cook!

My Mother's "Casserole"

1 lb. ground beef
1 15oz canned spaghetti (try for the kind without cheese)
1 15oz can red kidney beans
1 15oz can pork 'n beans
2 tsp Oregano (more or less to taste)

Salt and Pepper to taste.

In a very large skillet on the stove, brown the beef and drain well. Add all remaining ingredients and stir. Heat through and let the flavors combine for about 10 minutes. Transfer it to the dish you're taking to the potluck. Trust me, as odd as it sounds, I always take home an empty dish! Leftovers, if any, are great too.

"The military recruits...the family retains."

Weekends are filling fast in 2007! Get Elaine booked for your State Readiness Conference, training, or briefing. Call 1-866-780-0460 toll free or visit www.ImAlreadyHome.com

Just for FUN! - Army Trivia

Solution is at www.imalreadyhome.com/armytrivia0609.htm

1. When was the Army established?
2. What does the military nickname "G.I." stand for, and when was the term introduced?
3. What did the G.I. Bill do?
4. Arrange the following wars in order according to the number of American Soldiers who served (greatest to least): WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, 1st Gulf War.
5. How many U.S. Army five-star generals have there been?
6. What are the four types of Army combat helicopters currently in operation?

My son sent me this and I just had to pass it on. If you've ever raised a boy, you can totally understand! ☺

A little boy was in a relative's wedding. As he was coming down the aisle, he would take two steps, stop, and turn to the crowd. While facing the crowd, he would put his hands up like claws and roar. So it went, step, step, ROAR, step, step, ROAR, all the way down the aisle. As you can imagine, the crowd was near tears from laughing so hard by the time he reached the pulpit. When asked what he was doing, with tears in his eyes the child sniffed, and said, "I was being the Ring Bear."