

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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What's new at:

www.ImAlreadyHome.com

1. **Speaking Events** tab to read about having Elaine speak at your conference.
2. **Blog link** directly to a blog where you can read and comment on ideas.
3. **Flat Daddy™** page to bring you photos, instructions, and how to get one for free!
4. **Operation Connect a Family** to provide books free to families.

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Message from Elaine: *Sometimes it's the small things.*

My 80 year old mom lives in the northern region of Rochester, New York about 2 miles south of Lake Ontario. That usually means lots of "lake effect" snow in winter. As a child I loved the snow because I could build snow caves in the banks at the end of the driveway, and make snow angels. Of course I never had to shovel it when I was young so it was always a winter wonderland! Recently, though, the snow has been piling up on the walks and driveway at Mom's. She's had trouble getting around and was worried about how she was going to get the pathways cleared. One afternoon, while she was sitting having a warm cup of coffee, she heard noises outside. She waited a bit and then struggled out of her chair to go investigate. She opened the front door and peeked out. She saw a small figure bent over at the end of her driveway lifting away the last shovelful of snow. It was the eight year old son of her next door neighbor. Now normally this might not have been an unusual occurrence, but in this case, Mom had never met that particular family! She had not asked for this job to be done.

When he was done, the child came to the door. His face was buried in a big parka hood and his nose and cheeks were bright red from the cold. But nothing could hide the big toothy grin on his face. Mom figured that he had come to the door to get paid so she asked him what the going rate for snow shoveling was. He looked up at her and asked, "Does this help you?" When Mom said that it most definitely had, he replied, "That's all I needed to know!" as he quickly turned around and headed down the driveway with the shovel over his shoulder. What a marvelous feeling for both of them!

Why do I share this story? For three reasons: First, it reminded me that sometimes people do things for others just because they want to and for no other reason. I'll bet that people have helped you in lots of ways while your loved one has been deployed. Secondly, it reminds us to be gracious and guilt-free when we accept the kindnesses of others. Remember that people *like* to help, and knowing that they have, is often the only "payment" they are looking for. Third, can you or your kids find ways to lend a helping hand? Often, when we help others, we forget our own pain and problems for a while and that's not a bad thing! Just a thought...

Elaine has two NEW Programs for Reunion and Reintegration!

It was time for me to design new programs to help with the challenges and reconnections around reunion and reintegration. So I did! One is designed as a keynote/general session and the other is a breakout. Each is briefly described below, and you can also find them at www.ImAlreadyHome.com at the "Speaking Events" tab. Here they are:

**"The GOOD news is...your spouse is home!
The BAD news is...your spouse is home! "**



You're home now, and that's wonderful! But fitting back in has come with some challenges. Together we'll look at the Top 10 concerns people have with reintegration. Let's see how they compare with your experiences! Now let's learn what to do about it. With a "lighter" approach, I'll take you through a hands-on exercise, and teach some techniques designed to facilitate better more open communication between you and your spouse, kids, boss at work, friends, etc. These techniques will be looked at through stories and examples that you'll find fun and heartwarming.

"Did my butt really get this big? - and other reunion realities" -

It's amazing when you think of how much has changed during the time you've been apart. In this totally interactive session, we'll review the top 6 concerns people have about coming home. Then we break into focus groups (1 for each concern) and generate ideas people have experienced to help make it easier. Next, each group will share the best of what they discovered. As a result, every participant will leave with at least 20 ideas to make the 6 reintegration concerns easier to deal with. Very fun and productive. You'll have a good time while hearing some truly breakthrough ideas.

Trying NEW funding options! Call me ...



I know that budget cuts and reallocations have affected some of your state family programs conferences. I have good news! Lately, I've been working on a couple of creative ways to be able to bring you programs that might work within your budget parameters. As you consider the speakers for your State Family Programs conferences, briefings and trainings for 2007, give me a call and let's talk!

Elaine on Army Wife Talk Radio:

Monday, March 19, 2007 at 8:00pm - 9:00pm EST (Eastern Standard Time)

To listen live go to www.ArmyWifeTalkRadio.com and click on the "listen NOW" button. During the show, call the Listeners Line at 646-915-8736 to participate in the *LIVE* show!



Patriotic Photo Contest: Military Family Network Community Connections is partnering with Flags Across the Nation to sponsor a Patriotic Photo Contest. Eligibility is open to everyone. The desired themes of the photographs are Military, Patriotism, Freedom, Americana scenes of landscape, and images of the American Flag. Photos must be mailed by March 19th, 2007 and one submission is allowed per person. First place winner receives \$300 and all winners receive an American Flag. Thirteen entries will be selected and sewn onto the Flags Across the Nation Patriotic quilt to be part of the traveling Flags of Freedom Patriotic Traveling Exhibit. For more information visit: <http://www.iloveamericaday.org/> and <http://www.flagsacrossthenation.org/>. (Source: <http://www.emilitary.org/>)

This month's best submitted ideas...

1. "My husband loves to read, so he always takes books on his deployments. So, when he's packing his stuff getting ready to leave, I sneak into his bag and put little "love" notes in his books. That way, he doesn't always see the notes right away. He may be gone for a couple of weeks before he opens the book and sees the note."
2. Ask your hometown newspaper to mail a complimentary newspaper subscription to your service person.
3. Ask special people to send a letter, etc. to your soldier. (we sent out notes each month to people to participate, so our soldier received letters from new people - some he hadn't heard from in years!)

EDMR Process as shared by a guest trauma counselor:

I write this article with the hope that no one needs the information, but also with the knowledge that trauma is a part of life. Whether it is an accident, an assault, a natural disaster or a war, **traumatic stress is a normal response to an abnormal event**. For most people acute trauma recedes in a matter of a few days to a few weeks. However, for some individuals the trauma becomes "stuck" and can remain frozen for months or even years.

My work with trauma began some 25+ years ago. Over the years I worked at sharpening my skills by adding new and innovative ways of working with traumatic injury. Then eight years ago I found myself the victim of a horrific auto accident. Although my physical body healed, I am here to tell you that no amount of intelligence, skill, training or sheer willpower could take away the PTSD symptoms that I was experiencing. Somehow I thought I was immune – that I was different from everyone else – that I could just talk myself out of such symptoms as intrusive memories, flashbacks, exaggerated startle responses, extreme driving anxiety and many more **normal** responses that had me feeling crazy. It was not until this life-changing event that I truly realized the power of the process I am going to tell you about.

EMDR – Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. While there are numerous ways to process trauma, I have found EMDR to be the most effective. The process is relatively new and was originated by Francine Shapiro. It works with all 3 of the areas in which trauma is stored – the intellectual, the emotional and the physical. EMDR utilizes bilateral stimulation as a means to restore balance within the body. While my initial training in 1995 emphasized eye movements, you will find therapists today that utilize several different methods. I personally prefer the use of auditory stimulation as it allows the client to keep their eyes closed during the process. Once you find an EMDR therapist, you can experiment with which method works best for you. The following resources will help you find out more about trauma and its treatment: [Emotional Healing at Warp Speed](#): David Grand, Ph.D., [Waking the Tiger](#): Peter Levene, Ph.D., emdria.org



idea We tend to talk to our friends differently than we talk to our spouses. When you and your husband/wife need to discuss something that can be emotionally charged, try saying this: **"I can't talk to you as my spouse right now, but I'll talk to you as my best friend."** The woman who shared this with me at one of my breakout sessions, says that it's amazing how this change of perspective can help.



Bookmark these Websites

Free tax help is provided for you again this year through Military One Source. They are using TaxCut software this year instead of TurboTax. To talk with a tax consultant, call 1-800-730-3802 or log onto:

www.militaryonesource.com



A group of NFL, AFL and CFL players have sponsored \$199 SAT and ACT test prep programs to every family in the U.S. military (all branches-active or retired). Specifically, the sponsorship allows any military person (active or retired) to request as many programs as they need for the students in their lives. For more information go to:

<http://sat.eknowledge.com/military2007.asp>



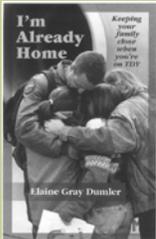
Give an Hour is a nonprofit organization. They are creating a national network of mental health professionals who will give an hour of their time each week to provide free mental health services to military personnel and their families. If you are a licensed mental health professional, please visit below to sign up:

www.giveanhour.org

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We're on the web:
www.ImAlreadyHome.com

United Concordia

sponsors:

"Month of the Military
Child" Random Drawing

United Concordia is proud to sponsor a web-based, random drawing. Prizes will be awarded to military children of varying ages.

Children of active duty or National Guard and Reserve sponsors who are enrolled in the TDP are eligible. To enter, complete the form found at:

www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com between March 28 and April 26, 2007. Submit online. Winners will be selected at random.

Some Prizes include:

- \$100 Savings Bond
- VTech V.Smile Baby
- VTech Nitro Notebook
- iPod Shuffle

"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!

And just when you thought you knew everything...

- No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver or purple
- Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing. (The mirror tells me this!)
- TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard. (I just did it and it's true)
- A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.
- A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds. (That sounds like mine!)
- A "jiffy" is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second.
- Almonds are a member of the peach family.
- A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes.
- Peanuts are one of the ingredients of dynamite!
- Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated. (You're going to try this, I know)
- The cruise liner, QE2 moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns. (And you thought it cost a lot to fill up your SUV)
- There are more chickens than people in the world.



is the "Month of the Military Child"! Celebrate by having a family Support youth conference or event.