

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 up at:

www.ImAlreadyHome.com

1. **Readiness Training** tab for program descriptions currently available.

2. **Blog link** directly to a blog where you can read and comment on ideas.

3. **Flat Daddy™** page to bring you photos, updates and instructions.

4. **Submit Book Ideas** tab to watch a video and submit your great ideas for reunion and reintegration book.

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Update from Elaine's Office:



Happy Summer! There's a lot going on this time of year. I know that deployments keep happening so we need to continue to do our best to keep everyone connected and busy. In this issue I'll be bringing you a fantastic guest article from Operation: Military Kids sharing details of what they do and how they can help. I know you'll enjoy hearing from Linda. You'll also find exciting news concerning the National Guard Joint Family Support Volunteer Convention in St. Louis, including coupons for additional book discounts and FREE offers. Of course the newsletter wouldn't be complete without the best of the best in reconnection ideas and the sites to bookmark. So print it out, sit back when you find a minute (yeah, I know, easier said than done) and enjoy this issue. As always, feel free to forward the pdf files on to anyone else who might like it too.



Guest Article brought to you by:

Linda J. Fuller

Youth Program Specialist

Colorado National Guard Family Programs
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Have you heard about Operation: Military Kids and the Joint Family Support Assistance Program?

Here's the 'skinny' on this OSD support program for military families.

Operation: Military Kids (OMK) is a collaborative outreach initiative to provide support and assistance to military youth and families on installations and those geographically dispersed National Guard and Reserve families in our communities. Based on individual and family needs and upon request, OMK assistance includes a variety of support programs: single day or weekend camps, retreats, workshops, 4-H clubs and Boys and Girls Clubs programs, babysitting training, American Legion programs, and FRG's and spouse/family support programs.

Partnerships in Colorado include the Joint Family Support Assistance Program, Army Child and Youth Services, the Colorado 4-H Youth Development Program, Boys and Girls Clubs, The American Legion and the American Red Cross. These and other community organizations are joining OMK to support military children and youth before, during, and after the deployment of a parent or loved one.

The mission of OMK is to support the deployed with both Active Duty and Reserve Components of Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps children living in communities across the country by:

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- ★ Creating networks of people, organizations and other resources to support military children and youth where they live and raising community awareness.
- ★ Delivering a wide range of recreational, social and educational programs for military youth living in civilian and military communities.
- ★ Acknowledging the strengths and sacrifices of military kids as everyday heroes.
- ★ Supporting military kids coping with the stress of knowing their deployed parents may be in harm's way.
- ★ Educating the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on soldiers, families, children and the community as a whole.

How does OMK do this?

By providing fun and hands on programs such as:

Ready, Set, Go! Training (RSG)

Led by trained facilitators, RSG! trainings are designed to develop local support networks of youth workers, educators, counselors and community service agencies and to offer an insight into military culture and the deployment cycle, and suggest ways to understand the needs of and provide support to military kids.

Hero Packs (HP)

Hero Packs serve as a tangible expression of support for military families from their communities and OMK Partners. Hero Packs are backpacks filled by non-military youth with items designed to help connect kids to their deployed parent. They are a way for non-military youth to *hand-deliver* a salute to military youth for their strength and sacrifices while parents are deployed.

Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK)

SOMK is a youth-led, adult-supported project that generates community awareness of issues faced by youth of military families to help communities understand the deployment cycle for military families. Youths formed speakers bureaus, and developed presentations, public service announcements, videos, and other materials.

Mobile Technology Labs (MTL)

The labs are used to facilitate connections between deployed soldiers and the children and youth left behind. Any OMK partner can request and use the laptop computers, digital camera, video recorder, printers/scanners for children and youth to send or create personal messages for their deployed loved one.

Babysitting Training Program

OMK state teams will train adults and teens using the 4-H Army Babysitting Curriculum and the Adult Babysitter Training Course.

What is the Joint Family Assistance Program?

A purple project, the Joint Family Assistance Program (JFSAP) provides mobile, high quality services to augment current family programs and their ability to meet the needs of Active Duty, Guard and Reserve family members. Its primary focus of support is for families who are geographically dispersed from a military installation. The JFSAP team consists of five key staff:

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- ★ The Operation: Military Kids Youth Program Specialist delivers a wide range of recreational, social and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities and educates the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on troops, families, kids and the community as a whole.
- ★ Through the MilitaryOneSource's high tech, high touch, Web-connected community, the MilitaryOneSource consultant is able to connect military families with each other and with supportive resources 24/7.
- ★ There is a Military Family Life Consultant and a Child Youth Consultant who specialize in short-term marriage, family and youth counseling and support groups...and they don't keep any records!
- ★ The American Red Cross is a partner and specializes in building resources and partnering with both civilian and military individuals to support all service members and their families in Colorado.

While deployed, rearranged family and personal lives, create concern about how things will be managed at home. Thanks to JSAP deployed service personnel can focus on their mission knowing their military family is being taken care of...in their own backyard!

For more information on these programs or how we can help you, don't hesitate to contact Shauna Woods, 970-491-1807 or shauna.woods@colostate.edu or Linda Fuller, 720-250-1188 or linda.fuller3@us.army.mil.

Meet Me in St. Louis

If you're going to be in St. Louis for the NG Joint Family Programs Volunteer convention, you have to come see us and say "Hello" at our booth (#42) in the exhibit hall! *Why?* See below!

- You'll be the 1st to see the **custom quilt** that will grace the cover of the new book.
- You can **enter to win** one of 20 wonderful gift bags to be given away 1 per hour throughout the convention.
- We have **Flat Daddy™** trading pins designed especially for this convention! Come trade with us for one.
- You receive special convention **discounts** on all books, pre-orders and programs.
- You can buy a copy of "I'm Already Home...Again" and have it personally signed.
- You can stop and **talk to Larry** (yes, the husband who doesn't like his picture taken).

Finally...we're lots of fun and ***we have chocolate!***

Special Offer!

Reserve Elaine for your Family Readiness Conference or event during the convention and receive:

70 FREE

books of your choice!
(includes the NEW book)

Convention Coupons

ALL quantity book orders placed during the convention will get an

EXTRA 5% discount
in addition to the quantity discounts you already receive!
Also applies to:

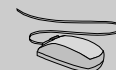
- The orders you usually place in September to use 2008 funds
- All pre-orders of "The Road Home"



Bookmark These Websites

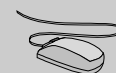
This website was forwarded to me and I think you need to see it. Click on "Trailer" at the top and watch clips from a full length feature film called "Warriors." Even though most of those interviewed are Marines, the message is entirely universal. You can't come away from it feeling anything other than respect and pride for our fighting forces.

www.warriorsthefilm.com



GreenCare for Troops is a nationwide outreach program coordinated by Project Ever-Green that connects local lawn and landscape firms with men and women serving our country in the armed forces away from home. GreenCare has helped over 1,200 volunteers provide free lawn and landscape services for over 4,800 military families nationwide. The cost to manage the GreenCare for Troops Program is underwritten by Cub Cadet commercial. To read more or to apply to receive free home GreenCare maintenance visit:

www.projectevergreen.com



For Aspiring young writers: AAFES is holding an essay contest from June 27 - August 31. There are 4 age categories with 3 winners in each. Complete rules and instructions can be found under the Patriot Family Connection link at:

www.aafes.com

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We're on the web:
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"The military recruits...the family retains."



...to reserve Elaine to present and train at your State Readiness Conference, training, or briefing.
Call 1-866-780-0460 toll free or visit
www.ImAlreadyHome.com

Review descriptions of trainings and programs at the website under the **Readiness Trainings** tab on the home page. You can also view media clips and request to review videos from past programs for all branches of the service.

Your help needed:

The following thought/concern was submitted, and from your experience, I'd like your ideas on how I can best address this situation. Please email your responses to:

Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com

"Sometimes people don't realize the hurdles that deployments cause for **"blended families."** My husband had to have a conference call with a judge here in the states to grant me time with my stepchildren. Staying connected with stepchildren is something that is rarely addressed, however with the divorce rate at what it is there are more and more families in this situation. I would be helpful to have this addressed in your book. **How do you stay connected in a blended family?"**

This issue's "best ideas" are previews of some the wonderful tips and thoughts that you'll find in the new book "The Road Home" due out this fall.

1. "My fiancé (new wife) is also a middle school teacher and sent me questions that her students had. This allowed me to share information that she and others wanted to know but wouldn't ask and gave her a better idea of what I was experiencing. I also have a daughter who was in the first and second grades while I was deployed and when I came home, I was a 'show and tell' item at her school!"
2. "Upon returning home, I did not try to make drastic changes; I eased back into the role of being a parent and spouse. My spouse continued to make some of the major decisions and I eventually took over those roles after a couple of months. I let my spouse continue to be the disciplinarian of my child and eased back into that role after getting used to being back in the role of a parent."
3. "Dad was gone to school, then Alaska for TDY, for one year total. We became very used to being home without him and when he came home, the first night was weird! So Mom came up with the idea of PJ's, popcorn and a kid movie all bunched up under one blanket. We needed to touch him, then everyone relaxed."
4. "When my husband returned home it was an immediate relief, but now almost 5 years later we are still struggling to really connect. I spent too much time telling him that there was something wrong with him, and not enough time trying to accept the "New Normal". We all tend to watch Oprah and Dr. Phil, and they give great advice, but be careful not to turn around and diagnose your soldiers. We are not the experts, but we are the avenue to the experts and the resources to help. Talk to your unit support, your reintegration officer, and tell them what you are experiencing. They can incorporate that into the returning home process. Accept the "New Normal."