



MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY PROGRAMS

Newsletter December 2012

Volume 7 Issue 12

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From all of us at Family Programs, we want to wish each and everyone of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



New Staff Members in Family Programs

We have many new staff members that have joined the Family Programs Team in the last few months. Erin Helm joins the Family Assistance Center Team in Missoula as our Missoula area Family Assistance Center Specialist. Tyler Anderson joined the Youth Programs Team and will also be located in our Missoula office as a State Youth Coordinator. Christian Hughes joins the Family Readiness Team as the new 1889th RSG Family Readiness Support Assistant. Christian will be based out of Butte. Liz Foster joins the Family Programs team as a Personal Finance Counselor MFLC. Liz will be based out of the Helena office. Please help us welcome our new team members! Welcome to the Family Programs Team everyone!

Military Appreciation Weekend

Free skiing for the Military! Check out all the ways Big Sky is saying "thank you" to our troops during Military Appreciation Weekend. Members of the military and their families can take advantage of:

December 15th-16th:

- ~Free skiing for military with ID
- ~1/2 off skiing for immediate family members with ID
- ~ 25% off lessons through Snowsports school for military families
- ~50% off rentals for military families



Discounted lodging 14th-16th (options to extend discounted rate if wishing to stay longer):

- \$129 Huntley Lodge
- \$159 Stillwater 1 bedroom
- \$179 Summit Queen
- \$205 Shoshone 1 bedroom

*Call Big Sky Central Reservations at 1-800-548-4486 to book or if you have questions.

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Important December Dates

Dec.1: Great Falls - Air NG Family Day

Dec. 1-2: Helena - 60-Day YRP for 190th, Army Reserve, and Air Guard

Dec. 7: Pearl Harbor Day

Dec. 8-9: Big Sky- YRP During Event B Co 189th /484th/260th Families

Dec. 15-16: Big Sky - Military Appreciation Weekend

Dec. 25: Christmas Day

Dec. 31: New Years Eve



5 Tips Managing Deployment Stress During the Holidays

By Ms. Vicki at Military.com

Peppermint Cookie Canes

Prep time: 20 min. + 1 hr chilling of dough

Baking Time: 11-13 min. Yield: 40 cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 sticks unsalted butter, soft
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 1/2 cup of powdered sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 teaspoons peppermint extract
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon liquid red food color

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°f
2. Sift flour and set aside
3. Mix butter until light and fluffy. Add both sugars and combine well. Add egg and mix until well incorporated. Add peppermint and salt.
4. Add flour and mix briefly until just incorporated. Divide dough in half. Add red food color to one half of dough. Mix until color is smooth throughout.
5. Press both pieces of dough 1/4 inch thick onto a parchment lined cookie sheet and place in refrigerator for about 45-60 minutes until firm.
6. Working on 2 candy canes at a time, remove 2 individual tablespoons of both red and non-colored cookie dough. Keep remaining dough in refrigerator.
7. First, roll each piece of dough in balls and then roll into a 6 inch tube, if needed use a tiny amount of flour to keep dough from sticking. Twist a red and plain dough tube together.
8. Roll gently to make twist even. Curve on end to create a candy cane shape.
9. Place on parchment lined cookie sheet about 1/4 inch apart.
10. Place in oven and back until still pale in color and bottom is slightly golden, about 11-13 minutes.



The holidays are about food, fun, and family - especially enjoying the season with that special someone. I recently heard one of my Christmas favorites, "Christmas just ain't Christmas without the one you love," by the OJAY's. But what do you do when the one you love is deployed? How can you enjoy the holiday festivities and avoid the holiday blues or depression?

Coping with deployments can take a toll on one's emotional well being and can wreak havoc on relationships. Spouses and Service Members deal with being absent for births, birthdays, anniversaries, special family events and even the holidays. Because of this, it's very easy and common to develop resentments that can affect our overall well-being. However, you can get a grip on holiday blues and managing deployment stress. Here are some quick tips to get you started:

- Avoid looking at it as the "holiday season," instead look at it as a "holi-Day." In other words, take it one day at a time - think of it as Christmas Day or New Years Day.
- Avoid the temptation to spend extra money to make you feel better. This will only lead to depression later when the credit card statements arrive in the mail. Yes, this is the season of giving, but it would be better and more economical to give framed family photos, calendars, baked goods and other crafts that you've been wanting to make.
- Don't overeat. The extra pounds will definitely cause depression when you can't zip up your favorite jeans. Extra pounds also means extra stress too - which is stress you don't need right now. Enjoy your favorite holiday goodies but try not to over do it.
- Give yourself permission to have fun but don't over indulge with alcohol. It's normal to be sociable while enjoying a glass of wine or perhaps a mixed drink. However, you don't want to use alcohol to help you cope, this will only lead to alcohol dependency.
- You don't have to be superman or superwoman. The holidays can be the perfect time to ask for help. Many family members try to prove they can be the "warrior spouse" or show they can "wing it" alone. This is not true and now is not the time to be isolated or alone. Depend on your close family, friends and other loved ones to help carry you through this deployment. Don't spend time beating yourself up because of the way you feel. Instead, you should own your feelings and recognize that they're normal given what you're experiencing.

"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly."

~ Andy Rooney

Family Programs 2013 Events



Mark Your Calendars!

*Print off and put on your refrigerator!



January

4-5 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
18-20 Missoula - Family Resilience Training (Parents and Youth)
25-27 Lewistown - Marriage Enrichment PREP—Strong Bonds
26-27 Location TBD - Yellow Ribbon During I 495th Families

February

1-2 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
23-24 Location TBD - Yellow Ribbon During Event II 484th/260th Families
25-27 Webinars - B.A.S.I.C.S. Training (Family Readiness Group Training)

March

1-2 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
9-10 Red Lodge - Singles Weekend "How Not to Marry a Jerk or Jerkette"

April

Month of the Military Child

5-6 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
Month of Military Child - Watch for events
19-21 Missoula - State Workshop and Youth Symposium

May

3-4 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
4-5 Location TBD - Yellow Ribbon During Event I HHC 1-189th Families
17-19 Chico - Marriage Enrichment *Laugh Your*

June

7-8 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
21-28 Camp Runnamucka - Neighart, MT
24-26 Webinars - B.A.S.I.C.S. Training (Family Readiness Group Training)

July

Summer Camps TBD
8-12 Fort Harrison - Fort Harrison Day Camp
20-21 Whitefish - Singles Weekend "Got Your Back"
27-28 Location TBD - Strong Bonds Family Camp

August

Summer Camps TBD
2-3 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
16-18 Yellowstone - Marriage Enrichment PREP—Strong Bonds
19-21 Webinar - B.A.S.I.C.S. Training (Family Readiness Group Training)
23-25 Big Fork - Family Resilience Camp

September

6-7 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots

October

4-5 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
18-20 Great Falls - Volunteer and Youth Leadership Retreat
21-23 Webinar - B.A.S.I.C.S. Training (Family Readiness Group Training)
31 Fort Harrison - Trick-or-Treating at the Fort

November

Month of the Military Family

1-2 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots

December

6-7 Fort Harrison - Teens & Tots
16-18 Webinar - B.A.S.I.C.S. Training (Family Readiness Group Training)

For detailed information on these events please contact your local Family Assistance Center

*All locations for events are tentative based on contracting

Family Readiness Corner



Welcome Christian - 1889th RSG Family Readiness Assistant

Hello, I am Christian Hughes, Family Readiness Support Assistant for the 1889th RSG, in Butte, MT. I will serve as the Family Readiness Assistant for the Commander to assist with the execution of Family Readiness command responsibilities. I am a Missoula native and have been living in Butte for the past 3 years. I have a special place in my heart for the Service Members and their Families, as my younger brother has been an active duty soldier for the past 16 years and has been deployed twice to Iraq and once in Afghanistan, he just returned two weeks ago. My brother-in-law is also deploying for the 4th time in February 2013 to Afghanistan.

My educational background is an Associates Degree in Law Enforcement, a Bachelors degree in Sociology and Criminology with a Masters degree in Social Work. I have been a juvenile probation officer, adolescent addictions counselor, a clinical mental health therapist, and I am excited now to work with the Montana National Guard. My contact information is christian.a.hughes2.ctr@us.army.mil, my cell number is 406-475-2231 and my office number is 406-324-5293. Please contact me at anytime!

The Christmas Pledge

From Unplug the Christmas Machine by Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Steaheli

Believing in the beauty and simplicity of Christmas, I commit myself to the following:

1. To remember those people who truly need my gifts.
2. To express my love for family and friends in more direct ways than presents.
3. To rededicate myself to the spiritual growth of my family.
4. To examine my holiday activities in light of the true spirit of Christmas
5. To initiate one act of peacemaking within my circle of family and friends.

Surviving Christmas

Christmas is one of those events that bring out the best and worse in us. We try to make it a perfect season and in our efforts, wear ourselves to a frizzle and often end up facing our own irritability and the dissatisfaction of others.

The only effective way to combat this is simplify. Take time to make decisions about your Christmas celebration and have the courage to make changes. Do less, not more, to create a more satisfying season.

First: Decide what you are really celebrating and then focus on that. There can be many meanings attached to Christmas. Give your own meaning and enjoy the season.

Second: Take an inventory of your lifestyle and make a realistic decision about the amount of time you can spend on Christmas.

Third: Note the tasks that you enjoy as well as the tasks from which you find little enjoyment. Focus on the tasks that you enjoy. Eliminate those things that don't bring joy or satisfaction.

Fourth: Examine your self-defeating gift giving rules! Make changes where you can.



State Youth Programs Corner



Welcome Tyler Anderson - State Youth Coordinator

My name is Tyler Anderson but please call me Ty. I recently obtained a BS in Business Management and I am currently attempting to complete my MBA in a more time sensitive fashion. The most important things in my life are my two year old son and six year old girl and my primary goal in advancing my education is to give them a better life. I have served 14 years so far in the military. I have deployed to Afghanistan and various places in the Middle East and have lived in many of the states in the Continental US.

My experience with youth includes years spent as a camp counselor, recruiter for the Army National Guard, and raising my own two children in a Guard Family. I look forward to serving the military community not only with one weekend a month of training but also as a contractor with HPSC serving our youth and teens in our Military Community. Taking care of Service Members and their Dependents so that they can take care of our nation is one of the finest professions I can imagine. Thank you all for your sacrifices and helping to enable me to further serve.



Teens and Tots weekends at Fort Harrison

Tots On the Fort

When: First Saturday of every month from 0900-1100

Where: Fort Harrison, Building #799

Who: Tots ages 4-6 years old
(with parent or guardians only)

What: Every month we want to bring our military Tots together to enjoy time together as military kiddos learning about all sorts of things and having fun!

Teens On the Fort

When: First Friday of every month from 1800-2100ish

Where: Fort Harrison, Building #799

Who: Teens ages 13-17 years old
(or up to 18 if still in school)

What: Every month will be a different topic (Guard Teen Panel, Speak Out Military Kids, Finances, Destination Imagination, and more) and then just time to hang out and be military kids together!

No registrations necessary. Just come and have **FUN!** (And hopefully learn a little too). For more information please see the website at www.montanaguardfamily.org or contact the MT National Guard Youth Programs Offices at 324-3346 or 324-5120.



Christmas Break = FREE Time!

Here are some creative ways for your kids to spend time during the Christmas Break!

- Read military kid books (The Soldiers' Night Before Christmas) - Create a book report to be shared in this publication and online!
- Write articles and become a contributor on the Montana Guard Kids Facebook page and Family Programs website
- Deployed loved one? Create great homemade crafts and snacks to send in a care package to your loved one.
- Find fun projects from Pinterest to keep both younger and older kids entertained through the long winter break
- Teach your kids the true meaning of Christmas by giving to others. Look for opportunities locally to buy Christmas presents for other kids at a Salvation Army Tree or donations of school supplies and other items to schools in Afghanistan or Iraq. Maybe have them clean out closets or toy boxes and donate unused toys and jackets.
- Make Christmas cookies for neighbors, friends, and family. Don't forget about Santa's cookies too!



Family Assistance Center Corner



Welcome Erin Helm - Missoula Family Assistance Center Specialist

Hello, my name is Erin Helm and I am excited to be the new FAC Specialist in Missoula. I was born in Sidney, MT and attended school in Fairview until Jr. High. I was devastated when my parents moved me away from the quality of life I had grown to love in MT, so after high school I moved back to attend the University of Montana. I obtained a BA in Communication Studies and began working as a trainer and educator for the YMCA. I now have over ten years experience working in Missoula teaching, planning events, and providing social services.

My foray into military life occurred three years ago when I met, fell in love with and married a soldier from my hometown of Sidney. After two years in Monterey, CA where my husband attended the Defense Language Institute and I pursued a Master's Degree in International Policy, I am now happy to be back home. I was lucky enough to meet my husband after he had already completed three tours overseas as a National Guard infantryman to Bosnia (with the MT -ARNG). I am coming to this position in a place of humility and an openness to learn. I have read many articles and books about the Middle East, but I will never know what it's like to have boots on the ground as a soldier.



Creative Ways to Say I Love You From the Homefront

By Dee Young—Military Spouse Magazine, December 2012

One of the challenges of deployment as a spouse is finding a creative way to express how much you miss your Service Member. Of course you're going to send a care package filled with a bunch of goodies, but that's pretty much expected. You, being the super spouse that you are, want to do something that is unique and will keep them smiling until the next expression of love arrives. And with the holidays right around the corner, anything that makes that box extra special is definitely worth the time and effort. Well, here are some suggestions that I've come up with, with some help from the guys over at MANning the Homefront (facebook.com/MANningtheHomefront):

Star in Your Own Makeover Show

Take on a project that your spouse was interested in completing, but didn't have the time for. Something like redecorating the bedroom or adding the final touches to his garage or man-cave might be a good idea. This may be risky for some, but with great risk comes great rewards! All you need is proper planning, creative conversations about what they like, and the help of those closest to them. Just think of the look on their face when they see a photo journal of the transformation from a typical duty station space to something comparable to the work of a home makeover show!

Make a Movie

Create a video shout-out from all the people they care about. Getting e-mails and letters are great, but nothing beats the emotion of seeing people on video. If family and friends aren't close by, ask them to send you a video of them expressing their support for that special Service Member. Any humor they can add will make the video even more entertaining.

Set up a Private Photo Blog

No, we're not talking about that kind of private photo blog! We mean private as in only your spouse will be able to login and see it. I use this so that I can take pictures of the little things that we do throughout the day that my wife would find interesting. I use blogger.com and have the iPhone app so that I can update it on the go. My Service Member loves the fact that they can login in every day to read my stories and pictures, which helps them to feel connected to our daily lives.

Thousands of miles from home, mail call is something that all Service Members look forward to. It's not just a box that you're sending; it's a symbol of your support. So, no matter how creative or how commonplace you may think your idea is, there is only one thing that truly matters to your deployed Service Member - the fact that you took the time out to express your love and support.



National Guard Resources



HELP WANTED?

NEED A JOB?

The Montana National Guard is committed to helping you or your spouse find employment. Contact us today for one-on-one assistance with:

- JOB SERCH
- RESUME ASSISTANCE
- SKILLS TRANSLATION (Turn your MOS into civilian job skills)
- INTERVIEW COACHING

1:1 Assistance

ESGR

CONTACT:

GENNA IBSEN

406-324-3128



HAVE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE DEPLOYED?

Call Mr. Pete Gardzina TODAY at 406-324-3257 to ensure you are receiving all of the benefits you are eligible for. Some of these benefits include:

- VA Healthcare
- VA Home Loan and VA loan fee waiver
- Disability Compensation
- Rehabilitative Care Management

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TAA

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Financial



Welcome Liz Foster - Personal Financial Counselor

Liz Foster, Personal Financial Counselor, is the newest member of the MT National Guard Family Programs team. Liz has had the opportunity to live and work in many different places and after spending ten years in Minnesota, she and her husband moved to Montana. Most recently, Liz worked with students and families in navigating the college access, financial aid and budgeting processes. A Veteran herself, Liz has a passion for teaching the basics of sound money management principals and has an understanding of the unique situations faced by Service Members. Liz is available for group presentations and private counseling sessions.

A Recipe for the Holidays

6 Tips to Have More Money, and Less Fat, During This Season of Indulging.

By J.J. Montanario, USAA (From December 2012 Issue of Military Spouse)

My name is J.J. and on more than one occasion I've finished the holiday season out of shape - physically and financially. If you've ever been there too, you know it's no fun to see that extra padding show up on your scale or credit card statements.

With that in mind, use these ideas to stay on course when it comes to eating and spending. You'll start 2013 without needing to add weight - and debt reduction - to your list of New Year's resolutions:

1. **Set a calorie limit.** We all know that establishing a daily calorie cap can help you navigate a minefield of eating opportunities. To stay financially fit, do the same: Put a cap on your holiday spending. Determine how much you can afford to spend for gifts before you shop. Ideally, it's money you've already set aside. But regardless, make a commitment to shop within your means.
2. **Make a list.** Those cookies that aren't on your grocery list can't add to your waistline if you don't buy them. Likewise, unwise purchases can't add to your debt load if you don't make them. Protect your wallet and stomach from getting swayed by the holiday music and sense of cheer at the mall by sticking to the list and not adding to it twice.
3. **Review the nutritional information.** Knowing exactly what's going into your system calorie-wise is a great idea as you plan your holiday fare. Being educated about what you're buying does the same thing for you financially. So, do your research before you shop. Use online sites like mysimon.com to find the lowest prices, even if you don't buy online. If you do like cyber-shopping, look for the extras, like free shipping and online coupons.
4. **Maintain control.** Success in the battle of the bulge has a lot to do with setting limits. Often, this means taking simple steps like eating healthy meals at home rather than racking up calories out on the town. Such maneuvers also work on the financial front. One of the best ways to set limits is to shop using cash only. Credit cards provide the greatest opportunity to spend what you don't have or didn't plan on. Sticking to the cash helps you stay in control. When it's gone, you're done.
5. **Be creative.** Whether you're taking the stairs instead of the elevator to burn calories or looking for ways to finish the holidays with no more debt than you started with, it makes sense to put your imagination to good use. On the gift front, consider baked goodies, coupons for services (can you say Parents' Night Out?), or even cool photos that capture an important moment or friendship. And what's wrong with drawing names? This may not work for the little tykes but for grown-ups like you and me it means picking a more special gift for one family member and spending less all around.
6. **Don't buy what you don't need.** Whether it's groceries or gifts we've all fallen into the trap of "if it's on sale, buy it." This year, to avoid blowing your diet and your budget, add a qualifier. It has to be on your list. In other words, try to buy stuff that you intended to buy anyway while it's on sale. Don't expand your shopping spree just because something seems like a good deal. Doing so is a recipe for extra calories and spending.

There you have it. Use these techniques and you'll be smiling all the way through the holidays and right into the New Year....without a big chunk of new debt or a winter "coat" to lose. And remember: It's not too early to start saving for next year. Happy Holidays!





Family Programs Team



Family Programs 24/7 Line: 1-877-706-7598

State Family Programs Director
1LT Kevin Dighans – 406-324-3239
kevin.m.dighans.mil@mail.mil

Family Assistance Coordinator
Vacant, Contractor – 406-324-3232

Family Assistance Specialist – Helena
Aimee Enos, Contractor – 406-324-3202
aimee.c.enos.ctr@mail.mil

Family Assistance Specialist – Missoula
Erin Helm, Contractor – 406-324-5121
erin.m.helm.ctr@mail.mil

Family Assistance Specialist – Kalispell
Christina Ryan, Contractor – 406-324-5180
christina.m.ryan.ctr@mail.mil

Family Assistance Specialist – Glasgow
Linda Sundby, Contractor – 406-324-5530
linda.j.sundby.ctr@mail.mil

Family Assistance Specialist – Billings
Russell Pettit, Contractor – 406-324-5450
russell.a.pettit.ctr@mail.mil

Airmen & Family Readiness Program Manager
Holly Wick – 406-791-0867
holly.wick@ang.af.mil

Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant
Misti Dauenhauer, Contractor – 406-324-3234
misti.l.dauenhauer.ctr@mail.mil

1189th Family Readiness Support Assistant
Christian Hughes, Contractor – 406-324-5293
christian.a.hughes2.ctr@mail.mil

Lead State Youth Coordinator
Sara Cease, Contractor – 406-324-5120
sara.l.cease.ctr@mail.mil

Youth Program Specialist
Tyler Anderson, Contractor – 406-324-5120
tyler.r.anderson.mil@mail.mil

Joint Family Support Assistance Program Team

Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC) – Contractor
Kerrie Wheeler, LCPC 406-696-5202

Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC) – Contractor
Jennifer Hurwitz, LCPC 406-403-6676

Personal Financial Counselor (MFLC) – Contractor
Liz Foster, LFoster@MFLC.Zeiders.com

Director of Psychological Health (DPH) – Contractor
Carol Josephson, LCSW/LAC 406-422-6131

Military OneSource Consultant (MOS) – Contractor
Bill Carroll 406-781-4986

Army OneSource Rep – Contractor
Sheila Schumacher 202-272-8331

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