

ARNG Strong Bonds Program

What is it? Recognizing the importance of Family support, the Army introduced the Building Strong and Ready Families or Strong Bonds program in 1997. Strong Bonds is a Chaplain-led program which assists Commanders in building resilience by strengthening the Army Family. The core mission of the Strong Bonds program is to increase readiness through relationship education and skills training. The Strong Bonds program consists of four sub-programs applied across the Army Force Generation model: Single Soldier, Couples, Families, and Deployment specific programs for pre/during and post deployment. The events are conducted in a fun, safe, and secure environment to facilitate and promote learning and relationship growth.

What has the Army done?

The Army National Guard executed \$7.1M to the 54 States and Territories in support of over 340 Strong Bonds events supporting over 15,248 Soldiers and Families, with a 99.4% obligation rate. Currently, the ARNG has more than 450 chaplains, chaplain assistants, and spouses and family program personnel with the skills and certifications required to effectively conduct Strong Bonds events. Funding provides for training materials, fees, transportation, food, lodging, and childcare for members of the armed forces and their Family members.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future? The Department of the Army Chief of Chaplains Office (DACH) is the proponent of the Strong Bonds program. The DACH Director of Soldier and Family Ministry provides training and training materials for all Strong Bonds curricula. For FY12, the ARNG is planning on conducting another cycle of Strong Bonds events with two additional Strong Bonds programs for Singles.

Why is this important to the Army? The Army National Guard supports overseas contingency operations (OCO) as well as domestic missions by mobilizing and deploying forces in the highest possible state of readiness. The Army National Guard coordinates the reset and resilience of its units and Soldiers returning from deployments. Since September 11, 2001 through the end of FY11, the ARNG completed 482,096 Soldier mobilizations in support of domestic and overseas missions to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Guantanamo Bay, Djibouti (Horn of Africa), and the Sinai. The Strong Bonds program is key component for Commanders to increase Soldier and Family readiness and to promote reintegration as the ARNG prepares for a changing OPTEMPO.

Related sites:

www.strongbonds.org

<http://www.chapnet.army.mil/>