

# Time to Take Off

Section A

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## Air Force officials launch updated Key Spouse program

**Tech. Sgt. Amaani Lyle**  
*Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs*

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- As part of the July 2009-July 2010 Year of the Air Force Family initiative, the service's senior leaders have announced the launch of a revised and standardized Key Spouse program.

Paula Roy, wife of Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Roy, is the senior spouse champion for the program and her video endorsement will open each Key Spouse training session.

Key Spouse is an official communication network designed to enhance readiness and establish a sense of community among unit leaders, Airmen and their families, said Gretchen Shannon, the Airman and Family Readiness chief.

"The Key Spouse program is an excellent way to bridge communication gaps and maintain contact with families to inform, support or refer them as needed," Ms. Shannon said.

A Key Spouse volunteer may be the spouse of an officer, an enlisted Airman, a Department of Defense civilian or other qualified person connected to the unit. Unit leaders formally select and appoint each Key Spouse. Senior officer or enlisted spouses are encouraged to serve as mentors or advisers. Staff members from the installation Airmen and Family Readiness Center provide initial and update training and serve as a referral resource for Key Spouses.

The program's structure is designed so the unit commander, Key Spouse, first sergeant, and Key Spouse mentor work as a team to ensure 100 percent follow-up with separated families.

In addition to ongoing contact with separated families, Key Spouse activities may include publishing monthly newsletters for waiting family members, involvement in official and unofficial meetings or squadron events and distribution of deployment "survival" information, said Lorraine Neuser, the Airman and Family Readiness policy deputy chief.

"Whether addressing issues at the lowest possible level or simply being an ear for questions or concerns an Airman's family may have, the Key Spouse program is a great force multiplier," Ms. Neuser said. "This valuable tool supports families during separations and other emergency situations, while enhancing communication between leadership, spouses and other family members."

Desk and resource guides have been developed for all Key Spouse team members. For more information about the Key Spouse program, contact the staff at the Airman and Family Readiness Center at 739-2747.

## Family matters

### Daughter helps survivor live through breast cancer

*Editor's note: October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. During this time it is important to spread the message that "early detection is the key." But, once that detection happens, what then? For one survivor, her daughter made all the difference in the world.*

**Maj. Carrie Clear**  
*Tinker Public Affairs*

"We don't do cancer."  
That's what I told the radiologist when he told me I had breast cancer. "No one in my family has ever had any kind of cancer. We do heart attacks and strokes."

Unfortunately, it seems, breast cancer doesn't care about family history.

I had just gone in for my annual mammogram and didn't expect a call back. When it came, I was told they "may not have squished me enough" and they wanted to get a better look with ultrasound. There was a small tear-shaped spot floating in my breast.

"It's probably nothing, but let's do a needle biopsy just to be sure," the radiologist said.

I was reassured that I probably didn't have anything to worry about, so when I went back a few days later for the results, I was completely unprepared. I didn't take anyone with me because I didn't think there was cause for alarm. I thought he would come to the waiting room and tell me it was a false alarm. Instead, he pulled me into a small room and said, "I was wrong."

As the radiologist gave me the details, my brain just heard "CANCER" over and over.

My daughter, Hollie, had watched her boyfriend's mom go through the same thing the year before so she was much more educated than I on the subject. When I told her I had cancer she said, "first of all you're not going to die. The medications and treatments available today ..." She was my rock.

Over the next seven months I had two surgeries to remove the tumor and lymph nodes, completed eight rounds of chemotherapy and had 34 radiation treatments.

At 20, Hollie shared her strength with me and kept my head above water when it got too deep. She was

at every doctor appointment, translating the medical jargon when my eyes glazed over. She shaved her head with me, and bought Groucho glasses so we could take a picture of us with eyes in the backs of our heads.

She sat with me at each chemo treatment and finished my sentences when the "chemo brain" kicked in. When I asked her what the "N word" was, she reminded me it was Neuropathy. We laughed at the absurdity of losing my eyelashes after my last chemo treatment and at the halo effect around my head when my hair started coming back.

Most importantly, she taught me that it was OK to be scared and to talk about my fears. She didn't let the cancer control our life.

It's been a year since I finished my treatment, and while it's a long road to recovery from all of the side effects, I know that my daughter is by my side on this journey and regardless of what lies ahead, we can handle it together.

## Domestic violence leaves mark on children, too

**Joyce Atlee**  
*Family Advocacy Outreach Manager*

Each October, the nation focuses attention on a serious problem during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Domestic violence impairs the lives of millions of adult victims each year. Often, the public does not consider that the children who are exposed to violence in the home may also experience a wide range of negative effects.

One study estimated that approximately 15.5 million American children live in families in which partner violence had occurred at least once in the previous year, while 7 million children live in families where severe partner violence had occurred.

Exposure to intimate partner violence includes being in the same room while the violence is occurring, witnessing a parent being slapped, punched, thrown around, kicked or strangled. It also includes the child who cowers under the covers and hears the yelling, screaming and smashing things, or the child who ventures out when things quiet



*Air Force photo illustration by Margo Wright*

**While many parents involved in domestic violence situations try to hide the abuse from their children, research shows that nearly all children in abusive families can provide detailed accounts of incidents.**

down, only to find his mother on the floor bleeding and crying. While parents often naively think their children are not aware of what is happening, researchers have

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