



Media Release

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“Malama na Koa”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Army provides for families on Furlough Fridays

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii — Furlough Fridays are no vacation for the children of Army families because the Army plans to turn the days “off” into days “on” for educational and recreational opportunities for its youth. As the second official furlough Friday approaches, Army staff is continuing to offer support to military families.

U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii (USAG-HI) Child, Youth & School Services (CYSS) are operating full-day operating hours in their school-age program at no additional cost for patrons currently enrolled in afterschool care. School-age centers are also providing hourly drop-in care and activities to family members not enrolled in the afterschool program, for a fee. Families must register with CYSS central registration, in order to utilize any of the opportunities available on furlough days.

All middle school and teen programs are extending hours to encompass the full furlough day and will be offering a host of special activities. The middle school and teen centers provide computer labs, video games and special programs, all at no charge. Special activities, such as field trips and dances may require a nominal fee.

Other Army agencies that currently provide activities for military, school-age youths are also expanding existing services. Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR); Army Community Services; the Army Continuing Education Center; and the Religious Support Office, have expanded their hours of operation and increased manning, in order to meet the needs of military families.

“Overall, we don’t want to offer solely ‘sitter-type’ services,” said Col. Matthew T. Margotta, USAG-HI commander. “We want to use these furlough Friday programs as growth opportunities for our keiki.”

According to Margotta, it is imperative to minimize the impact to military youths from the loss of instructional days.

The Army plans to emphasize enrichment and development opportunities in newly expanded programs, such as its “Excel, Develop, Grow, Experience” (EDGE) program, which offers cutting-

edge art, fitness, life skill, and adventure activities; and the “Hired!” program, which focuses on career exploration and preparation for older youths.

“There are lots of exciting things in store for youths who participate in furlough Friday activities,” said Debbie Blanchard, chief of CYSS. “We are putting together plans for numerous field trips and other great activities, and we still have room for a lot more students in our school-age and teen centers.”

USAG-HI’s furlough Fridays strategy team is also compiling input from Army families on their furlough support needs. Family feedback will help determine future offerings, according to Margotta.

“Our long-term strategy hinges on the continued needs of our community,” he said. “We want to make sure that our families’ needs and input are at the heart of our programs and initiatives.”

MEDIA NOTE: For your awareness, we have attached several flyers related to the Army’s furlough Friday efforts. You can also find information about furlough Friday programs and services on the garrison Web site, www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil. Media requesting more information should contact Rebecca Ellison, Media Relations specialist, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs, at (808) 656-3482 or cell (808) 220-9223.