

Recruiter

The Magazine of the Air Force Recruiting Professional



Under Pressure

Managing stress with available resources

April
2005

Commander

Brig. Gen. Dutch Remkes

Chief, Public Affairs

Lt. Col. R. Steven Murray

Deputy Chief, Public Affairs

1st Lt. Amy Render

Editor

Senior Airman Madelyn Waychoff

This funded Air Force magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the *Recruiter* are not necessarily the official view of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

The editorial content is edited, prepared, and provided by the public affairs office of Air Force Recruiting Service, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

Articles and photos submitted for publication in the *Recruiter* must be received by the editor no later than the first day of the month preceding publication.

Correspondence should be addressed to AFRS/PA, 550 D STREET WEST STE 1, ATTN: EDITOR, RANDOLPH AFB, TX 78150-4527. Phone numbers are commercial (210) 565-4678, DSN 665-4678 or e-mail afrrshqpa@rs.af.mil.

cover



Stress is often an everyday occurrence in the workplace and particularly in the recruiting arena. Understanding its origins and methods of control allows Air Force members to better manage their stress. For more, see Pages 10-11. (Illustration by Senior Airman Madelyn Waychoff)

Recruiting service members earn promotion to colonel

Two Air Force Recruiting Service lieutenant colonels were among the 505 lieutenant colonels selected for promotion by a board of Air Force officials at the end of February.

Selected were:

Robert Q. Jenkins 314th RCS
Daniel Woolever HQ AFRS

Also selected for promotion to



colonel were former squadron commanders Lt. Col. Darryl G. Treat, 348th Recruiting Squadron, and Lt. Col. Thomas Y. Headen, 367th RCS.



Air Force Recruiting Service

COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE

Q: I've heard that the public affairs NCOs are being removed from the marketing office. Will someone else fill those positions or will those duties be absorbed by others?

A: I met recently with the public affairs leadership at the Pentagon to discuss the valuable contributions our public affairs NCOs bring to the marketing team and recruiting mission. I cannot argue the fact that their career field manning is suf-

fering with widespread vacancies at both the 5- and 7-skill levels. As a result, public affairs NCOs will be assigned back into their career field through attrition.

Although the process will take about two years to run its course, a handful of squadrons will soon be feeling the impact as we close this fiscal year and lose these people. However, we're not losing the positions. My personnel experts at the headquarters are looking at a variety of options for filling those vacancies. Once we've considered all of the options and arrive at a fix, we'll inform you immediately.

The Commander's Action Line is a direct line for comments, questions, complaints and suggestions on how to make Air Force Recruiting Service a better place to work.

All action lines will be answered personally by me or my staff while protecting the identity of the individual as best as possible. Although the action line is always available, the best way to resolve problems is through your chain of command.

If concerns still cannot be resolved, please call the action line at (210) 565-4678, or e-mail at afrsactionline@rs.af.mil. Items of general interest may be printed in the *Recruiter* magazine.



Brig. Gen. Dutch Remkes
Commander

Tools of the trade

Military image critical to successful recruiting

By Tech. Sgt. Daniel Elkins
Air Force Recruiting Service

Ensuring Air Force members have the tools necessary to perform their job is a responsibility of commanders and supervisors across the service. In recruiting, however, the most visible and potentially harmful tool at each person's disposal rests not with their leadership, but falls squarely on the shoulders of each individual.

Perhaps the most critical tool for recruiting is the Air Force image people portray in hometown communities across the nation. The majority of recruiters and support personnel at duty locations away from bases are often the only Air Force representation when interacting with young men and women, influential civic leaders and even the next door neighbor.

Whether it's building relationships in the community, conducting visits to local high schools or manning a booth at a local county fair, Air Force members must strive to preserve a professional military image through both their appearance and actions.

It's the same image portrayed in countless pieces of recruiting literature at a cost of millions each year. And, more importantly, an image in which

many young men and women often find pride when choosing to serve.

Maintaining that image is a responsibility of every member – both on and off duty. Because America's military is held to a higher standard, any deviation from professional conduct often makes for leading headlines in the local newspaper the next day. Even before allegations can be substantiated, a headline accusing a member of misconduct can cause irreparable damage to the reputation of the Air Force in a local community or throughout a school district.

While often isolated in recruiting squadrons, occurrences of misconduct taken into consideration across the command can pose a serious threat to the Air Force image – one built on the hard work and sacrifices of thousands of Airmen at home and deployed. Their mission accomplishment and, often-times, selfless acts fuel the patriotism on which many recruiters rely in order to gain access to potential recruits in communities across the country.

When it comes to professional conduct, be it on the flight line at Balad Air Base in Iraq or in your hometown recruiting station, you are the key to upholding the Air Force image. This responsibility should not be taken lightly.

Command chief

Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey J. Kallas assumes duties as the Air Force Recruiting Service command chief master sergeant at the end of this month.

Chief Kallas comes to AFRS from Vance Air Force Base, Okla., where he served as the command chief master sergeant for the 71st Flying Training Wing since February 2004. He fills AFRS's top enlisted position following the retirement of Chief Master Sgt. Ken Kowalski.

As the command chief, Chief Kallas is responsible for advising the commander on the health, morale, welfare, and discipline of the nearly 3,000 enlisted men and women assigned to Air Force Recruiting Service, its four recruiting groups and 28 recruiting squadrons.

AETC awards

Four people in Air Force Recruiting Service are among the winners

Maj. (Dr.) Thomas Knolmayer mashes through Anchorage, Alaska, March 5 during the ceremonial start of the Iditarod dog sled race. The chief of surgery at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, finished the race March 20 in 58th place out of 63 finishers after 13 days, 22 hours, 13 minutes and 25 seconds on the trail, covering 1,161 miles. Doctor Knolmayer took part in the race as an opportunity to represent the Air Force and discuss health professions opportunities along the trail.



Chief Kallas

of the Air Education and Training Command Media Contest and Achievement Awards.

The staff of *Recruiter* magazine earned first place in the funded magazine category and former graphic artist Tech. Sgt. Rob Ashley earned second place in the arts/graphics category.

Awards in individual achievement were won by the following:

- Lt. Col. Steve Murray, Headquarters AFRS, Outstanding Public Affairs Field Grade Officer
- Master Sgt. Chris Haug, 314th Recruiting Squadron, Outstanding Public Affairs Senior NCO
- Tech. Sgt. Daniel Elkins, Headquarters AFRS, Outstanding Public Affairs NCO.

First-place winners are going on to represent AETC in the upcoming Air Force competition.

New AETC chief

Air Education and Training Command officials recently named Chief Master Sgt. Rodney Ellison as the command's new command chief master sergeant.

As the command's top enlisted Airman, Chief Ellison succeeded Chief Master Sgt. Karl Meyers who

retired March 11.

The command chief master sergeant advises the AETC commander and senior staff on the morale, welfare and effective use of more than 34,000 enlisted Airmen at locations worldwide, plus the more than 350,000 enlisted Airmen trained and educated in the command annually.

Chief Ellison previously served as the command chief master sergeant for Headquarters Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, Va. (AFPN)

DFAS Web site

Air Force Recruiting Service members looking for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service public Web site must now redirect their browsers to a new site.

Users of the previous site, www.dfas.mil, are being redirected to the new site, www.dod.mil/dfas. Links to pages on the previous site will generate error messages notifying users of the move.

DFAS officials said the move provides for increased speed of the site; improved search capability; and reduced Web traffic on DFAS networks.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Keith Brown



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paula Allen-Gibbs

No PAS, no play

Staff Sgt. James Riser and Tech. Sgt. Don Stevens encourage Wesley Grile, a member of the 338th Recruiting Squadron's Delayed Entry Program, to pump out a few more push-ups during a physical ability stamina test at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, recently.

Recruiter Spotlight

Staff Sgt. Claudia Garcia

Job title: Enlisted accessions recruiter, 367th Recruiting Squadron

Office location: Las Cruces, N.M.

Hometown: El Paso, Texas

Time in the Air Force: Seven years

Time in AFRS: Four and a half years

Prior career field: Supply specialist

Hobbies: Watching movies, reading, camping and golf

What inspires you to do what you do? My family

What is the best advice you have received? Never judge a book by its cover.

Career goals: Earn a silver badge and complete my degree in education

What recruiting hints can you give others? Take care of your people; they're what this is all about.

Personal motto: Do or do not, there is no "try."



Perfect Prom

N.M. student wins sweepstakes

By Senior Airman
Madelyn Waychoff

Air Force Recruiting Service

An Albuquerque, N.M., student is the grand prizewinner of the U.S. Air Force-sponsored “2005 Win the Perfect Prom Sweepstakes.”

This year’s grand prize winner, Erin Whitaker, is a junior at Del Norte High School. Ms. Whitaker was selected randomly March 1 from more than 79,000 entries and won \$1,500 for prom expenses and the use of a sport utility vehicle limousine for the evening. Her school receives \$20,000 toward prom expenses and a live performance by Jive Records recording artist Wakefield.

Along with the grand-prize winner, 10 first-place, 25 second-place and 130 third-place winners were selected. First-place winners receive a \$500 allowance for prom expenses, second-place winners receive a \$150 allowance, and third-place winners receive a Wakefield compact disc.

“This is an awesome program, and it’s a great way to get our message in high schools – ‘Be safe. Be smart. Be sober. Make the right choice,’” said Master Sgt. Joseph Hunter, Air Force Recruiting Service enlisted accessions account executive.

“From a recruiting standpoint, it’s a great tool,” he added. “The Air Force name is everywhere, including around the schools and on the Web site, because this is strictly our program. And each year we hold it, the bigger it grows.”

The annual Air Force program runs December to March and gives high school students an opportunity to win a “perfect prom” by entering online at perfectproms.com or airforce.com.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Les Waters

Del Norte High School student Erin Whitaker, winner of the “Win the Perfect Prom Sweepstakes” is presented a check for \$1,500 from Tech. Sgt. Dominic Bartholomeo, 367th Recruiting Squadron enlisted accessions recruiter.

Perfect prom is now in its fifth year, and the impact it has in getting the Air Force name out can be seen in the number of entries and leads generated every year, said Sergeant Hunter. The first year it was held there were about 24,000 entries. This year, there were three times as many with more than 4,000 students requesting more information on Air Force opportunities.

“I’ve had people question the program, asking why we spend so much on a single high school,” said Sergeant Hunter. “I tell them it’s not the journey, it’s the destination. Think of all the exposure the Air Force gets from December to March with more than 15,000 schools seeing the Air Force message. Even after the winners are announced, people still go to the Internet for prom tips and other information it offers.

“This is also a great opportunity for recruiters to get out to the schools to present the winners with their prizes,” added Sergeant Hunter.

“This program helps create public awareness and a strong, positive image for the Air Force. Our goal is to get the Air Force message out and help address underage drinking. We do that effectively.”

BE Safe
BE SMART
BE SOBER
MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

30 in AFRS among E-8 selects

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas - Thirty members of Air Force Recruiting Service are among the 1,535 master sergeants selected for promotion to senior master sergeant by the Air Force.

The board, which convened here Jan. 31 to Feb. 18, considered 16,708 master sergeants for a 9.19 percent select rate.

“Since public law limits the number of personnel who may serve on active duty in the top two enlisted grades, promotion to senior master sergeant remains highly competitive,” said Chief Master Sgt. Dale Kenney, chief of

the enlisted promotion and military testing branch at the Air Force Personnel Center.

The average score for those selected was 663.46 with an average time in grade and time in service of 4.54 and 20.16 years, respectively.

Those selected for promotion were:

Tony Barnes	344th RCS
Daniel Benton	338th RCS
James Bishop	368th RCS
Roy Blanco	369th RCS
Tony Brown	HQAFRS
David Bullard	319th RCS
Thomas Byington	360th RCG
Douglas Byrd Jr.	HQAFRS
Darrick Carter	HQAFRS

Bradley Elkjer	HQAFRS
Bradley Esposito	330th RCS
Robert Giordano	360th RCG
Timothy Jacobs	369th RCG
Jimmy Jones	AFPC
Jason Kenney	367th RCG
Wayne Klasen	367th RCS
Charles Lamer Jr.	360th RCG
Laura Lindsey	362nd RCS
Kevin Luck	367th RCG
Charles Marshall	338th RCS
William Mundt	369th RCG
Valerie Nelson	313th RCS
James Nickerson	345th TRS
Kenneth Oliver	343th RCS
Raymond Oshop Jr.	372nd RCG
Weldon Selders	HQAFRS
Jeffery Springer	361st RCS
Deana Toth	347th RCS
Raney Tromblee	319th RCS
Ervin Wright	337th RCS

Loss of travel card information affects 3,400 in recruiting service

Bank officials cite no evidence of misuse to date

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — About 900,000 Defense Department employees may be affected by Bank of America’s loss and the possible compromise of government travel card information, Pentagon officials said recently.

Of those affected, 3,400 are Air Force Recruiting Service personnel, said Beverly Osburn, AFRS financial analyst.

The General Services Administration and Bank of America notified DOD officials that “SmartPay” travel cards are affected. Officials said Bank of America has been monitoring the

affected accounts, and there has been no evidence of fraud or misuse.

Bank of America officials are sending letters to those affected.

“Information regarding travel card program accounts for individual cardholders has been lost, and it is possible that some information has been compromised, though we don’t believe that is the case,” said Teresa McKay, the Defense Department’s deputy chief financial officer.

Secret Service agents are conducting the investigation, with help from the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. Officials said although there has been no evidence of criminal activity, release of details on the circumstances of the loss could jeopardize the investigation.

“Indications right now are that it

is an accidental event,” Ms. McKay said. “The bank has been monitoring the accounts involved from the onset, and to date there has been no indication of fraudulent activity.”

The information compromised is personal cardholder information — names, Social Security numbers, addresses and account numbers. The loss occurred in late December. GSA officials notified DOD on Jan. 19. Ms. McKay said the delay was necessary to protect the integrity of the investigation.

Bank of America has set up a hotline for those affected. The number is (800) 493-8444.

Cardholders who notice irregularities in their accounts should call the Bank of America at the number printed on the back of their cards, Ms. McKay said.

‘Thanks for the memories ...’

Command chief retires after 27 years of service

By Senior Master Sgt. Ellen Schirmer
Air Force Recruiting Service

More than 100 military coins line the coffee table in his corner office – a collection that spans 25-plus years of service. The numerous plaques and memorabilia hanging from the walls reflect the commitment of a chief master sergeant who spent the past three years serving in the top enlisted position at Air Force Recruiting Service, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Ken Kowalski retires April 1 after serving 27 years of active-duty military service. He spent his final years advising the commander on the health, morale, welfare and discipline of the nearly 3,000 enlisted men and women assigned to AFRS, its four recruiting groups and 28 recruiting squadrons.

The memorabilia that adorned the office walls, to include a pictorial collage in the shape of a chief’s head, was indicative of the success Chief Kowalski achieved at the height of his career.

Growing up in Tonawanda, N.Y., the chief had always wanted to travel. As a senior in high school, he had narrowed his choices to joining either the Air Force or Marines.

“It all happened rather quickly,” admitted the chief. “The Air Force recruiter came to my house and talked with my parents. As it turned out, my dog ended up biting him, and the next thing you know, I’m in the DEP.”

Chief K, as he’s been nicknamed by colleagues, started his career in civil engineering in November

1978. As a carpentry specialist, he had the opportunity to travel to places like Egypt and Berlin before settling into his niche of ‘carrying a bag.’

“I remember learning the value of freedom at a very young age,” said the chief. “As a two-striper pulling duty in Berlin in the early 1980s, I had the chance to see what life was like in a communist country. A young kid approached me and offered 10,000 (Deutsche) marks for my ID card,” he continued. “At that moment, I knew there was something special about what I was doing. This was a child who would risk getting caught just to enjoy a life of freedom in America. That was an important time in my life, and I knew the military would always be a part of it. I haven’t looked back since.”

Although content with his job as a carpentry

specialist, the chief admits there was something missing. “I’m a people-person, and I needed more interaction with others,” he said.

Faced with the decision to choose between another CE assignment and recruiting, the chief opted for an opportunity that would allow him to meet people from all walks of life.

Recruiting enlisted, officers and health professionals came natural for the New York native. “It was easy because I believed in what I was doing,” he said. “I believed in what the Air Force represents and I still do to this day.”

Being successful doesn’t always come easy, but the chief has some secrets that he believes will help individuals succeed in their own careers.

“Flexibility is the key,” he said. “I see so many people get frustrated with change, but we have to be able to adapt. People need to understand why we change and be a part of that change.”

This year, in particular, has been a year of change for recruiting.

“There’s been a yo-yo effect with budget and personnel cuts, and it’s not healthy. If I could change

“I remember learning the value of freedom at a very young age ... as a two-striper pulling duty in Berlin in the early 1980s.”

Chief Kowalski



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Elkins

Although rare to find him behind his desk, Air Force Recruiting Service Command Chief Master Sgt. Ken Kowalski retires this month after more than 27 years of service, which has included a little more than 20 years of proudly wearing the Air Force Recruiting Service badge.

one thing, it would be to keep things more stable for our recruiters,” he said.

As the command chief, Chief K had his hands in nearly every issue that affected the recruiting force over the past few years.

“I expected to be involved in policy issues; that comes with the job. But I’ve also been able to work directly with young recruiters as well as interact with senior staff to determine what’s best for our recruiting force. I can honestly say that our people are what make the Air Force great.”

Having balance in one’s personal and professional life is equally important to flexibility, added the chief.

“The most successful people out there have that balance in their lives,” he said. “There are times when you have to sacrifice family for the mission, but that’s not all the time. Focus on finding that balance in your own individual lives.”

The chief sends one final message to his enlisted troops in recruiting.

“You need to continue to grow - personally and professionally - and always represent the Air Force well,” he said. “There are times when you’re out there on your own, and you may feel alone, but there is always someone you can turn to for guidance. You’re part of the best team there is, and one with an important mission. Believe in yourself and in what you’re doing, and the mission will succeed. Thank you for making my job the best job ever, and thank you for the memories.”

Chief Kowalski and his wife, Dana, along with children Natalie, 15, Emily, 14, and Kyle, 13, plan to retire in Texas. The chief will put his experience as a carpenter to use as he looks forward to opening a construction company in the local San Antonio area.

Stressing Out

Officials offer tips to relieve pressures from home, work

By Senior Airman Madelyn Waychoff
Air Force Recruiting Service

Recruiting is a business that often involves stress – from working long hours and dealing with family issues to, in some cases, being physically separated from a base and its support network.

A few months ago, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper initiated the wingman program designed to mitigate some of the factors related to suicide, including stress and its impact on Air Force people and the mission. Recognizing and managing stress are key components of the wingman program.

“There are a lot of stressors – job, family, interpersonal – anything can be stressful,” said Master Sgt. Mark Marley, Randolph Air Force Base Life Skills Support Center NCOIC. “But what you have to remember is something that may be stressful for one person is not always stressful for others.”

Stress is part of the human condition; we’ll never get away from it, he added. But not all stress is bad.

There are different kinds of stress. Eustress, or positive stress, can be caused by happy events such as graduation, getting a new job, getting married, having a baby or winning the lottery. It motivates people to accomplish tasks and be productive. But even good stress can be over-

whelming at times.

Distress, or negative stress, also varies in its type and can be caused by almost anything. It can never be eliminated completely, but it’s always manageable, said Sergeant Marley.

“The best way to manage distress is to eat well, exercise and practice spirituality, whatever you may believe,” he added. “These are the fundamentals of a healthy lifestyle, and they lower the risks associated with distress.”

“If stress does become overwhelming, though, there are many resources available for information and people to listen and talk to. A few of the resources available are life skills, the chaplain, the health and wellness center and the Internet,” Sergeant Marley said.

“We can be a sounding board for people,” said Chaplain (Capt.) Bill Coker, Air Force Recruiting Service deputy chaplain accessions. “People can talk to us about anything, because we maintain confidentiality. We have an open door policy for anyone going through anything. It’s better to talk sooner rather than later, and the more you talk the better you tend to feel.”

“If you’re physically separated from a base, you can always call us to talk, or we can network for you,” he added. “In a crisis situation we encourage you to see us as soon as possible or go to the closest base helping agencies.”

First sergeants are also a good stress manage-



The following four-step process, according to Chaplain (Capt.) Bill Coker, calls for people to simply “stop” to think through their actions as a method for helping relieve stress.

ment resource.

“It’s our job to be there to help our Airmen,” said Master Sgt. Taylor Crenshaw, 318th Recruiting Squadron first sergeant. “We’ve had experience working in stressful environments, and we use that experience to help our people. We’re outside the immediate chain of command and can offer some confidentiality.”

Life skills support center officials suggest other ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle are to practice stress relievers – deep breathing, a healthy diet and calisthenics.

“These go back to taking care of yourself, especially if you get overwhelmed,” said Sergeant Marley. “If your diet’s awful, you feel depressed. Most Americans are under-nourished and dehydrated, and this directly affects how they handle stress. This is true for recruiters, too. Recruiters are under great pressure, so it’s very easy for the fundamentals in life, such as family, eating and exercising, to go out the window.”

Changes in lifestyle are not difficult, but they are hard to implement, Sergeant Marley admits. “It takes discipline and time; it’s not something that is going to happen immediately.”

Many times overwhelming stress can cause depression – the “common cold of psychology,” according to Sergeant Marley. With depression comes insomnia, low energy and concentration and suicidal thoughts, he added.

To combat this, Sergeant Marley suggests people make a plan. This plan can include talking to someone who can help, maintaining physical fitness, and engaging in an overall healthy lifestyle.

“It’s time to get help when you start having

disturbed sleep, irritability, problems concentrating, excessive guilt and sadness, tearfulness, apathy and appetite extremes,” said Sergeant Marley.

Reflecting back on General Jumper’s wingman program, the key is to take care of yourself and always look out for each other.



SnoCross

X Recruiting takes Xtreme measures to reach target

By 1st Lt. Amy Render
Air Force Recruiting Service

A flash of light and smoke caught everyone's attention. Sparks were flying and quickly turned to spouting flames amidst the cheers. Sleds sped past as melting snow was scooped onto the dying fire and the dejected driver slowly walked back to the finish line.

The same excitement by 17- to 25-year-old fans drawn to snowmobile racing is shared by Air Force recruiting, which is sponsoring the snowmobile circuit as one of its measures to reach this target audience.

Over the past few years, recruiting advertising efforts have grown to sponsor a variety of events from NASCAR to Motorcross, the Cross Into the Blue touring display, and the World Snowmobile Association.

"It's helping hit the northern tier states, areas traditionally in the 'red zone,' whereas we support the southeast and southwest parts of the country with NASCAR," said Master Sgt. Marv Daugherty, superintendent of special events at Air Force Recruiting Service, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. "These extreme sports draw the attention of the younger generation; they're the ones we are trying to target."

Snowmobile racing is a growing sport, according to Sergeant Daugherty. The Air Force teamed up with WSA five years ago when this professional sport had only 300 fans. Now with 110,000-plus fans and growing, recruiting efforts will definitely benefit from these venues, he said.

"We got in at the ground level, so we're getting more bang for our buck with exclusivity at these events," said Sergeant Daugherty. And exclusivity is exactly the

picture painted at these races.

Although Amzoil and other companies also sponsor the circuit, the Air Force logo is widespread and seen plastered around the track. There are Air Force track ads, an Air Force finish-line banner, two Air Force-sponsored snowmobile racers, and the Air Force emblem subtly embedded on the checkered flag behind the trophy presentations. There is even a shrink-wrapped snow groomer. The track announcer throws in plugs for the Air Force wherever possible, and Air Force recruiters help present the final trophies.

Additional special promotional items, like Air Force lip balm, were created specifically for these racing venues. Beanies have also been a great hit, according to Sergeant Daugherty. "Fans everywhere can be seen sporting this Air Force winter wear."

"I think we are setting a fast pace toward the championship this year and we have the resources from a talent and sponsorship standpoint," said Steve Scheuring, team and sled owner. "Year after year, we are within the top three and I think this is our year to bring in the trophy."

With a chance at the season's championship trophy, recruiters



Photos by 1st Lt. Amy Render

(Above) D.J. Eckstrom of the Scheuring Speed Sports Snocross team races past fans during a recent race in Green Bay, Wis. (Left) The Air Force's sponsorship of a World Snowmobile Association racing circuit captures the attention of snocross fans from signage at the track and on snow groomers to the presentation of race trophies.



have a great opportunity to capitalize on the racers' achievements.

Besides recruiting at the booths, local recruiters help garner publicity and generate Air Force leads

by planning more civic outreach and media involvement at these venues, according to Lt. Col. Steve Murray, AFRS chief of public affairs.

“We can also get a lot of value from Snocross in generating leads,” added Sergeant Daugherty. “This is definitely grass roots recruiting at its best.”

Recruiter provides support, safe haven for local teenager

By Staff Sgt. J. LaVoie
339th Recruiting Squadron

What makes one of the busiest members of the 339th Recruiting Squadron suddenly decide to become a single parent — of a 16-year-old girl?

As a recent gold badge recipient, and trainer and interim flight chief, a hectic temporary duty schedule and countless phone calls was the norm for Master Sgt. Jacqueline Foster. Often the one in control during phone conversations, it was a call from a local teenager that turned the tables for this seasoned recruiter and forced her to reevaluate her priorities.

Sergeant Foster met Rachel Atwood through the Michigan State University mentor program. The flight chief became involved in the mentor program after missing out on all the youth interaction she had as a recruiter.

“After being a recruiter for three years and dealing with so many kids, I missed that. I missed talking with them and motivating them — just finding out how they were doing,” said Sergeant Foster. “Especially in recruiting, the kids I dealt with were always reaching out, and wanting to do something good for themselves. This program couldn’t be much different.”

Sergeant Foster was matched with Rachel after an evaluation and training process. Their first meeting was at Rachel’s house, where she also met Rachel’s mother and little brother.

Though Rachel admitted she was initially intimidated by Sergeant Foster’s 6-foot-2-inch frame, the relationship quickly grew. As time passed, Sergeant Foster began to realize that Rachel was living in a less than acceptable home environment.

“I noticed right away there were issues between Rachel and her mom,” said Sergeant Foster. “Her mom would talk down to her. I knew if she talked to Rachel like that in front of me, it was probably only worse when there were no other adults around.”

Then, while working at home one evening, Ser-

Master Sgt. Jackie Foster makes Easter baskets with her foster daughter, Rachel Atwood, 16, for Rachel’s younger and older brothers.

geant Foster received a phone call that would alter her outlook on life.

“She was crying hysterically,” Sergeant Foster said of her phone call from Rachel. “She told me she couldn’t stay at home and needed me to pick her up right away.”

After advising Rachel to wait outside her home, Sergeant Foster called a neighbor to accompany her. They picked up Rachel and drove around for a while to make sure she was OK. Instinctively, Sergeant Foster knew she had to get the police involved, for



both Rachel's safety and the safety of her younger brother.

That night, Rachel's mother was arrested for domestic violence charges and the children were removed from the home. Since the children didn't have any family members to stay with, local officials allowed the children to stay the night with Sergeant Foster.

"So I took the kids for that night," she said. "The next morning, I dropped them off at school and took their belongings back to their house before going to work. I didn't know what to expect, and assumed they were going back to their home after school. Then all the phone calls started."

Sergeant Foster received calls from child protective services, the MSU mentor program and other state agencies. One thing was clear — the children

were being removed from their home and there was no place in the county for them to go. Sergeant Foster began looking into the possibility of having her sister, who is a foster parent, take in Rachel.

"I was in foster care when I was 15 and nobody wants teenagers, so I lived in many foster homes over a very short period of time," said Sergeant Foster. "I got to the point where I just didn't want to go anymore. I wasn't very nice, and wouldn't talk to anybody that wanted to take me. I just didn't want to start over again. I knew that's what Rachel would have been going through."

Initially, Sergeant Foster's sister looked like the only option for Rachel, until one of the local officials asked Sergeant Foster herself whether she would consider taking in Rachel. It was later determined that Sergeant Foster was qualified to foster Rachel.

"When they asked me if I would be willing to take her, I said 'of course.' I had no idea what all that really meant, but I knew Rachel was safe here, and that she wouldn't have to start somewhere else," said Sergeant Foster. "It took a lot of courage for Rachel to pick up the phone and call me when she needed help. How could I turn my back on her?"

What really impacted Sergeant Foster's decision to foster Rachel, she admits, stems from her three years in recruiting.

"I saw many kids in the same situation as Rachel, but I couldn't help them the way I was helping Rachel. I had to find places for kids to stay, be the big sister, be the mediator, whatever they needed. But I couldn't take that next step," she said. "I could, however, with Rachel. I know she has potential; she has a lot of potential."

Now, almost a year after Sergeant Foster received the phone call, Rachel's potential is shining through. She recently earned straight "As" for the first time, even while moving out of her home and attending numerous court dates. Now that Rachel is in permanent family foster care and will remain with Sergeant Foster, she has even higher hopes for the future.

"There are still going to be trials and tribulations, but I want her to be a 16-year-old kid right now," she said. "I want her to go to high school and to college; she wants to be a Spanish teacher. I want her to be able to do all those things she's wanted to do. Most of all, I want her to be able to trust other people. I hope this time it's going to be a happy ending."



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. LaVoie

AFRS/PA
550 D Street West Ste 1
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4527

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LAS VEGAS NV
PERMIT #583

