

Volunteers celebrate 15 years of teaching Army way of life

By Ashley Strehle
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The Army Family Team Building program turned 15 years old on Dec. 16.

Fort Riley community members celebrated with a birthday party from 11 a.m. to noon at the Army Community Service Annex.

AFTB is a volunteer-led organization that provides training to Army Families.

"Our mission here at AFTB is to educate and empower members of the military community to develop skills and encourage behaviors that strengthen self-reliance, promote retention and enhance readiness," said Hope Walker, AFTB advisor and guest speaker at the event.

Walker said the basic philosophy of AFTB is that individuals can function at a higher level in any situation if they have been properly trained.

The AFTB program provides training on three levels.

The first level covers the basic skills and knowledge needed to be a military family.

The second level of training helps the student become a community leader.

The final AFTB level focuses on inspiring and mentoring others into leadership positions.

Walker said she would have welcomed a program like AFTB when she became a military spouse 22 years ago.

"Talk about culture shock," Walker said, "I had no idea what an Army spouse was supposed to do or what my role in the military should be. I didn't understand the rank structure, protocol, acronyms, etc. — all the things that the AFTB program now offers new spouses."

Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Ian Mann, also spoke about the benefits of the AFTB program at the celebration.

He said when the Army launched the AFTB program it was hard to predict how much of an impact it would have on Army Families.



Ashley Strehle | POST

Army Family Team Building volunteer, Amie Jones (center), is recognized with a Lifetime Presidential Service Award at the AFTB's 15th birthday Dec. 16. Hope Walker, AFTB advisor (left), and Michelle Simmons, AFTB program manager (right), presented her with the award.

"Today that impact is evident," Mann said. "This program continues to launch the Army forward in preparing Soldiers and Families to handle today's issues."

Mann talked about AFTB's role in the Army's new, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. The program is an Army-wide initiative that builds resiliency by developing five dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, spiritual and family.

He said AFTB has been building the Family pillar for 15 years through its education and training.

About 220 active AFTB programs exist worldwide with more than 20,000 paid staff and volunteers.

One such volunteer, Amie Jones, was recognized with a Lifetime Presidential Service Award at AFTB's birthday party.

Jones has contributed 4,000 hours of volunteer service.

She has been a volunteer with AFTB for 9 years, three of those years at Fort Riley.

To volunteer with the AFTB program to get involved or to learn more, call Michelle Simmons, AFTB program manager at 785-239-9435.

AFTB day classes are offered at the

ACS Annex.

Free child care for AFTB students and volunteers is offered at the Armed Services YMCA in Junction City. People must register with AFTB if they want child care services.

For more information on AFTB, visit www.armyfamilyteambuilding.org or the program's link on the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Web site, www.rileymwr.com.

AFTB's winter 2010 class schedule begins with Level 1 classes at 9 a.m. on Jan. 12 at the ACS Annex.

COMMUNITY CORNER

As in past, Army community will lead way in efforts to save

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER



Col. Brown

While catching up on the news online, I came across an article by Charles W. Wittman on newstimes.com. Wittman discusses patriotism and sacrifice on the homefront and his memories of the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941.

Shortly after, as the U.S. became fully involved in the war, those on the homefront each did their part for the war effort. Women, exemplified by the now-famous image of "Rosie the Riveter," filled jobs across the country. Rationing went into effect. "Cigarettes and nylons were difficult to get. So were sugar and coffee," Wittman wrote. "Government-issued rationing stamps governed the amount of certain foodstuffs and gasoline we could buy. There was some grumbling, of course. But the American determination to win the war rapidly overcame any temporary deprivation we needed to endure."

Wittman recalls everyone was asked to do their parts. In that same spirit, I am asking everyone at Fort Riley to do their part in these tightened economic times as our troops continue to fight overseas.

I recently sent out a memo on

energy conservation to all garrison offices. Some of the things we all can do to save money and energy in our offices include turning off lights and unplugging chargers.

This is just one area, and one group, that can make a difference for us in the years to come. We can all do something. Let's show other installations that we can team together and create enormous change in our behavior and stewardship of resources, and as a result, spend our funds on much needed efforts to deploy our Soldiers and take care of our Families.

MORE ENERGY SAVING TIPS:

- Close doors and windows securely to reduce drafts.
- Set room thermostats to 68 degrees when heating and 72 degrees when cooling. Turn it down even more at night in winter, even to 55 degrees.
- Log off computers and turn off computer monitors when not in use.

Turn off printers and copiers at night and on weekends.

- Unplug cell phone and Blackberry chargers, computer speakers and other electronic devices when not in use.

- Dress appropriately for the season. Wear sweaters, wool sock and thermal underwear during the winter, and light, loose-fitting clothing during summer to reduce the need for heating and cooling. Use a blanket instead of a space heater to keep your feet warm.

- In winter, open blinds during the day to let sunlight in for extra heat. Close them at night to reduce heat loss.

- In summer, close blinds during the day to block heat, and open them at night to let some heat escape.

- If you have broken window panes on exterior windows, doors that don't close tightly, or other severe air leaks in your building, call the Public Works Service Order Desk at 239-0900 to get them repaired.

Remind each other to do these things every day and together we can make a difference.

If you would like to comment on this column or suggest a topic for Community Corner, e-mail rile.post.newspaper@com.us.army.mil.

CMS seeks spouses for focus groups

CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Customer Management Services announced last month plans to facilitate focus groups with the intention of uncovering issues that various members of the Fort Riley community may face and how those issues can be rectified.

Focus groups are being coordinated for each major constituent group that either works, plays or lives on Fort Riley.

The great thing about focus groups, according to Colleen Bay, Fort Riley customer service officer with CMS, is that focus groups allow members to express their feelings and experiences regardless of where they fall within Fort Riley's structure.

Garrison leadership understands decision makers can have different points of view than those whom they are ultimately representing in much of their decision making. Focus groups can, therefore, reveal more meaningful and honest information for leaders than a survey could, Bay said.

The first wave of focus groups will kick off on Feb. 3 and 4, targeting spouses. Specifically, spouses of deployed Soldiers, spouses of Soldiers just returning from a deployment and spouses of Soldiers who are preparing to deploy.

"It will be interesting to see the how

the issues of each group will differ from each other," Bay said.

Issues derived from the focus groups will then be vetted by the Installation Action Council, which meets on a quarterly basis and is made up of the Army Family Action Plan Steering Committee as well as representatives from across Fort Riley. Other forums that feed the Installation Action Council are the community Town Hall meetings, the annual AFAP Conference and completed Community FIRST forms, which can be found on the CMS link on Fort Riley's Web page, www.rileyarmy.mil. All open issues currently being worked on in the Installation Action Council are also located on the CMS link.

Participation in the spouses of deployed Soldier's focus groups is being solicited today. Spouses of deployed Soldiers will meet from 9 a.m. to noon Feb. 4 at the Army Community Service Annex. Seats are limited, and free child care will be available. Spouses of Soldiers just returning from a deployment and spouses of Soldiers who are preparing to deploy will meet from 9 a.m. to noon Feb. 3 at the ACS Annex.

For more information on other upcoming focus groups, or if you are interested in participating in a focus group, contact Bay at 785-239-2540 or colleen.bay1@us.army.mil.

TAKING AIM



Ashley Henry | USAG PAO
City of Manhattan City Manager Ron Fehr tries out one of the M-16 simulators at the Battle Command Training Center. Fehr, along with other city of Manhattan department heads, toured the simulator campus on Victory Drive Dec. 16 as part of their annual retreat. After touring the campus the group conducted their own goal-setting session for the city of Manhattan.