

COMMUNITY CORNER

Commander encourages participation in wellness programs during holidays

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

With the cold weather and holidays upon us, cookies and Christmas dinner may be more at the forefront of our minds than crunches and calorie counting.

However, during the holidays and all year round, Soldiers, Family members and civilian employees are encouraged to participate in wellness and resiliency programs.

As Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, Installation Management Command commanding general, stated in IMCOM Policy Letter No. 17, "The resilience and fitness of our Soldiers and civilians are what enables them

to thrive in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict. By promoting healthier lifestyles, I am convinced we can

enhance morale, increase productivity, increase loyalty, reduce medical costs, increase performance, reduce sick leave and increase both job and life satisfaction."

Think you're fit enough or wondering how fit you really are?

To gauge your mental resiliency, visit www.army.mil/csf and complete the Global



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Assessment Tool for Soldiers, Family members or civilians. At the end of the assessment, you will receive a rating and suggested training to help improve your resiliency in the five dimensions of strength.

For the physical piece, try the Adult Fitness Test, which is part of the President's Challenge. Visit www.adultfitness.org and follow the instructions to learn about your aerobic fitness level, muscular strength, flexibility and body composition.

After learning your fitness level, I encourage you to accept the President's Challenge to improve your activity level. The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award is a challenge for those who want to make phys-

ical activity an everyday part of their lives. The President's Challenge site offers a way to track your progress and earn awards based on your activity. Some suggestions given by the site, www.presidentschallenge.org, to stay active include biking to work or to visit friends; volunteering to coach a team; walking; signing up for an exercise class; or even just taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

While units on post do regular physical training, the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation offers plenty of ways for Family members and civilian employees to stay active and meet the President's Challenge.

The gyms on post offer cardio equipment, racquetball courts, pools, fitness classes and intramural sports. King Field House recently opened its Family fitness room, a space where parents can work out and watch their children.

To encourage activity in our children, Youth Sports and Fitness offers racquetball, basketball, soccer, Family Fitness Nights and other active opportunities. To learn more about youth sports opportunities, call 785-239-9885 or visit www.rileymwr.com.

Families can stay active together by checking out the walking trail around Riley's Conference Center, visiting Custer Hill Lanes and bowling a few frames or checking out

the activities offered through Outdoor Recreation.

Need a little extra motivation to get active? Start a group and track your progress with members of your Family Readiness Group, coworkers or friends. If you would like to be a part of the IMCOM group, just enter the group ID number 90878 at www.presidentschallenge.org.

Let's all accept the challenge and be not only the best division-level installation in the world, but the healthiest as well.

If you would like to comment on this column or suggest a topic for Community Corner, e-mail rile_post_newspaper@comus.army.mil.

Connect with others to beat 'holiday blues'

By Shari Lopatin
TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

Ever wonder why you sometimes feel down during the holiday season?

According to Mental Health America, formerly the National Mental Health Association, many factors can cause the "holiday blues," including:

- Stress and fatigue
- Unrealistic expectations
- Financial constraints
- Inability to be with one's family or friends

That final point can be especially taxing for military Families, as the military lifestyle is mobile and sometimes unpredictable.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS ON FACEBOOK

TriWest Healthcare Alliance launched a discussion board on its company Facebook page asking visitors how they beat the holiday blues. The discussion gives servicemembers and their families a place to connect and share how they get through their biggest stressors during the holidays.

Additionally, behavioral health specialists at TriWest will periodically monitor the discus-

sion and may interject some general advice if the opportunity arises.

TO JOIN THE FACEBOOK DISCUSSION

- Log into your personal Facebook account.
- "Like" TriWest's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/triwest.
- Click the "discussions" tab toward the top of the page.
- Click the "holiday blues" discussion and post your thoughts.

Mental Health America offers some good advice on how to deal with the holiday blues. Keep holiday expectations manageable and set realistic goals.

Spread out activities and don't concentrate all holiday sentiment on just one day.

Representatives from the organization also suggests doing something for someone else, such as volunteering. For those who are financially strapped, enjoy low-cost or free activities, like driving around and looking at Christmas lights or building snowmen.

Most of all, save time and share the responsibility of entertaining with others – don't do it all alone.

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