

COMMUNITY CORNER

Commander congratulates recent grads on accomplishments

By Col. William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

Congratulations graduates! Today, we honored more than 200 graduates in a postwar graduation ceremony at the Deployment Support Facility, Building 1986 on Camp Funston.

It was an honor to participate in this ceremony — especially for me, since it was my first graduation ceremony at Fort Riley.

Degrees awarded include 14 master's degrees, 39 bachelor's degrees, 127 associate degrees and 24 certificates of completion from Central Michigan University, University of Mary, Upper

Iowa University, Southwestern College, Central Texas College and Barton County Community College.

The accomplishments of our men and women in uniform, their Family members, our civilians, retirees and reservists amaze me. Many work, raise a family and volunteer — all while going to school.

Graduates, you should be very proud of what you have accomplished. And I encourage you to use your education to the



Col. Clark

fullest. Your diploma is not just a piece of paper or a means to promotion points. Education can truly open doors to new opportunities.

I hope that our graduates enjoyed the opportunity to be able to take courses right here on post. The educational services Fort Riley provides our first rate.

Through Education Services, we offer a one-stop shop for enrollment, advisement and instruction. Our tuition rates are lower; our class schedules are convenient and thorough; and many schools offer incentives for their students in terms of book discounts, loans and more.

Let me take this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about our Education Services — for those not familiar with what Fort Riley offers.

About seven universities offer dozens of degree-seeking programs that can lead to an associate, bachelor's or master's degree. Housed in Building 217 on Main Post, Education Services can help you meet your educational — and future — goals.

To learn more, give them a call at 785-239-6481 or visit www.riley.army.mil/UnitPage.aspx?unit=DHR.Educ&nav=Svc-Ed1.

Education Services offers counseling and tutoring in its

numerous education centers across post.

For information from individual education centers, call:

- Main Post Learning Center, 785-239-6481
- Custer Hill Learning Center, 785-239-9824
- Multi-Learning Facility, 785-239-9485
- Tutor Center, 785-240-3617
- Testing Center, 785-239-6481

Another unique offering are Leader Skills Enhancement Courses. These courses are on-duty classes designed to train non-commissioned officers and other Soldiers who exhibit po-

terential for promotion and increased leadership responsibility. Classes are available to Soldiers, with adult Family members, Department of the Army civilians, retirees, and reservists on a space-available basis.

For more on LSEC, visit www.riley.army.mil/NewsView.aspx?nid=2983.

You also can always visit www.goarmymed.com for general Army education information.

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

CYSS to expand play group hours, venue in January

By Parker Rome
1ST INF. DIV. POST

For Riley Child, Youth and School Services will offer an expanded community play group beginning in January.

The free community play groups will begin Jan. 9 and will be offered from 10 a.m. to noon Monday to Thursday every week until at least March at Normandy Drive Child Development Center. The play groups will be offered at no fee to those registered with CYSS and open to parents and children from newborn to age 5.

"What we've found is that the combination of the winter

months and with the population increase, there's been more of a need for play groups," said Sonya Douglas, CYSS director. "With it getting colder, there aren't a lot of other avenues or indoor play areas that are not costly for the Families."

Douglas said CYSS will sponsor the program, but it's not a typical CYSS program.

"We will supply all of the supplies, all of the equipment, all the toys, and we will have a staff member there just for assistance," she said. "As far as the play groups and modified time, we won't do that. All the parents can go there and pretty much do what they want. We'll

have indoor bikes for them to ride on, pouce equipment, puzzles, coloring, activities and things of that nature."

If that doesn't meet the needs, Douglas said it will be expanded further.

The community play group plans set to begin in January are an expansion of the current community play groups that have always been offered by CYSS.

The current play group meets weekly on Mondays at CYSS, but the parents have wanted to meet more often and have a larger play area.

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DeCA scholarship applications for dependents now available

By Tammy L. Reed
DECA

FORT LEE, Va. — A 2011 Scholarships for Military Children recipient, Jordan Cherry, said receiving extra money for college lightened her financial load.

"This scholarship definitely decreases the financial burden of school, which we all know is a big benefit," she said.

Applications for the 2012 Scholarships for Military Children Program are now available at commissaries worldwide, as well as online through a link on www.commissaries.com and directly at www.militaryscholar.org.

Awards will be based on funds available, but the program awards at least one \$1,500 scholarship to a student at each commissary. Scholarships are funded by donations from commissary vendors, manufacturers, brokers, suppliers and the general public. Every dollar donated goes directly to funding scholarships. No taxpayer dollars are expended on the scholarship program.

If there are no eligible applicants from a particular commissary, the funds designated for that commissary are used to award an additional scholarship

at another store.

The scholarship program was created to recognize military Families' contributions to the readiness of U.S. armed forces and the commissary's role in the military community. Since the program began in 2000, it has awarded more than \$9.3 million in scholarships to 6,069 military children from more than 62,000 applicants.

"While these numbers are impressive, what's even more impressive is what past scholarship recipients are doing with their education," said Defense Commissary Agency Director and CEO Joseph H. Jiu. "Many recipients have entered a wide range of career fields such as teaching, business, law and military service — to name just a few. Many others have earned advanced degrees. They are making their way in this world, and they are making a difference."

To be eligible for a scholarship, the student must be a dependent, unmarried child, no older than 21 — or 23 if enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university — of a service member on active duty, reservist, guardsman, retiree or survivor of a military member who died while on active duty or survivor of a retiree. Eligibility is determined using the Defense

Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database.

Applicants should ensure they, as well as their sponsor, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current military ID card.

The applicant also must be planning to attend or already attending an accredited college or university full time, in the fall of 2012 or be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

Applicants must submit an essay on a topic that is available at www.militaryscholar.org. Applications must be turned in to a commissary by close of business Feb. 24, 2012.

The scholarship program is administered by Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to service members and their Families. Scholarship Managers, a national, nonprofit, scholarship-management services organization, evaluates applications and awards these scholarships.

If students have questions about the scholarship program application, call Scholarship Managers at 856-616-9311 or email them at militaryscholar@scholarshipmanagers.com.

Financial Readiness Office gives tips to reduce overspending

By Melony Gabbert
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Calls often come into Fort Riley's Financial Readiness Office in January because of overspending at Christmas, according to Stacy Johnston, program manager.

Callers either call for assistance, for advice in getting a budget back on track or for ideas on how to pay off bills from Christmas, she said.

In response, Johnston offers the following tips to reduce overspending this season.

According to Johnston, if holiday shopping is done on a credit card, it can actually increase a shopper's debt two to three times as much, once interest and finance charges are figured in.

Johnston offered the following tips for avoiding holiday overspending:

• Pay with cash. Shoppers should spend money they al-

ready have. Use debit cards, cash or write checks.

• Make a budget — not a per person budget, but an overall budget for all holiday spending and compare it with the amount available to spend.

• Keep track of how much has been spent on gifts, dining and entertainment.

• Shoppers should make a list of all the people they would like to give gifts to and then rank people on the list. This tip often gets laughs, Johnston said, but is actually the most important tip to follow. She suggests giving a homemade gift to people the gift giver can't afford to purchase a gift for. Another suggestion is to give a certificate for a service the gift giver will provide, like babysitting or car washing.

• Shoppers should know what they want to buy and for whom before going shopping.

• Shop alone when doing the bulk of gift buying. It will

help avoid impulse spending.

• Don't shop while tired or hungry.

• Steer clear of high-price fad items, and instead, buy practical gifts that last longer.

• Think before using a credit card to take advantage of "holiday bargains."

In conclusion, Johnston said, set limits and stay within a budget.

"We're in tight economic times, and we may not have the budget we had previously. Accept that you may not be able to buy as much as you did in the past, and do not be quitted into overspending," she said.

For the holiday season next year, Johnston suggests planning ahead.

"Start early and pick up things throughout the year that you can set aside as holiday gifts," she said. "The main thing is planning ahead."

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