

A True Patriot
Showing the Volunteer Spirit

Service and Sacrifice
Resiliency During Reintegration

Sweet Dreams
Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

September/October 2010
Volume 2 • Issue 3

National Guard Soldier & Family

FOUNDATIONS

A NOTE FROM

Major General
David Sprynczynatyk,
Adjutant General,
North Dakota Army
National Guard



PT. 2 OF THE SERIES ON
"YOUR BEST BODY"
**NUTRITION
IS THE KEY**

LEGACY of SERVICE

THE ROOTS OF OUR PATRIOTISM



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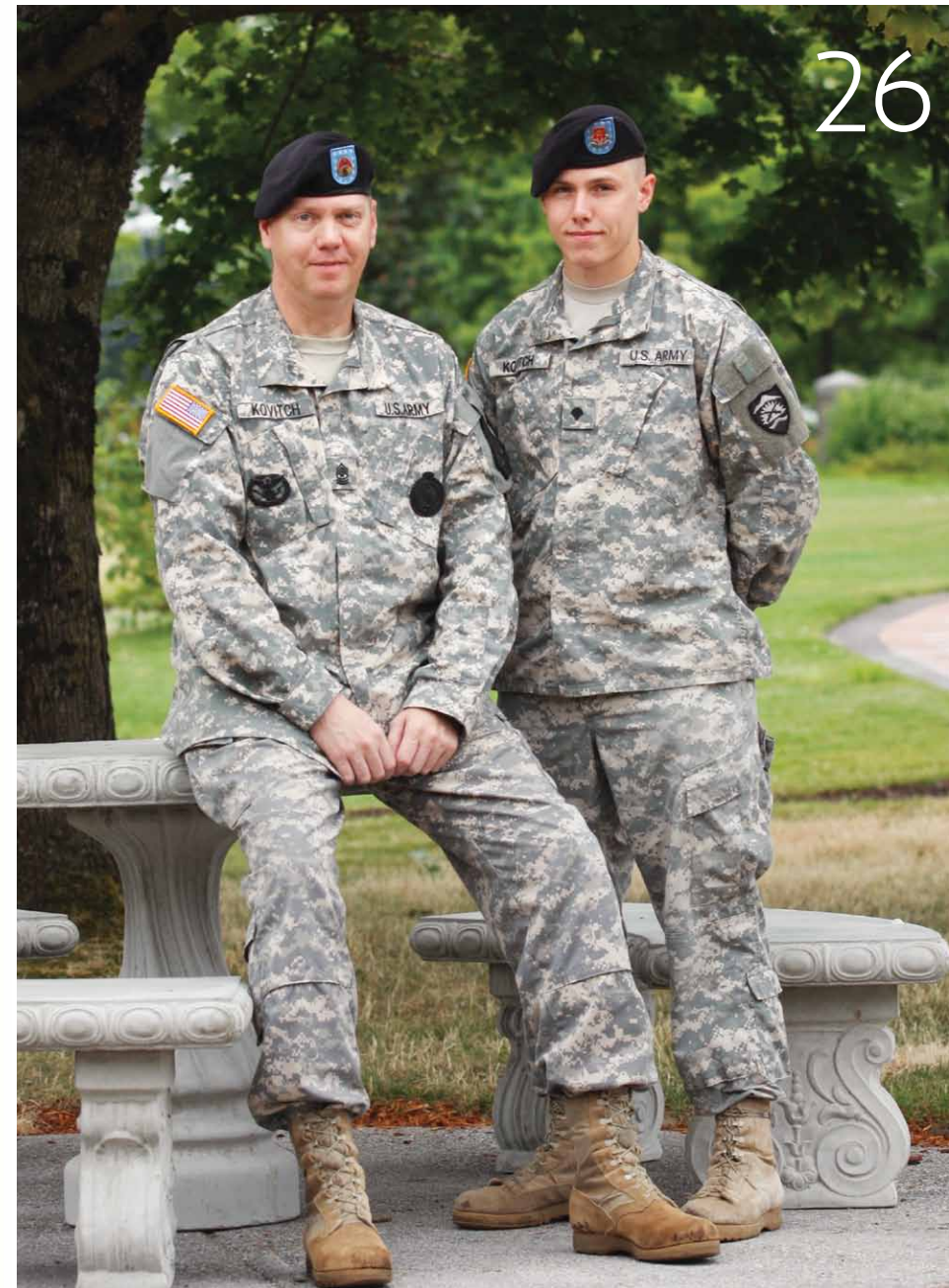
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*For children of: Active, Wounded, Reserve Component, National Guard and Army civilians (including Survivors).



National Guard Soldier & Family
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on the Roots of
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—SGM Charles Kovitch

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COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS

STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Physical

Emotional

Social

Spiritual

Family

FAMILY



Being part of a family unit that is **safe, supportive** and **loving**, and provides the **resources** needed for all members to live in a healthy and secure environment.

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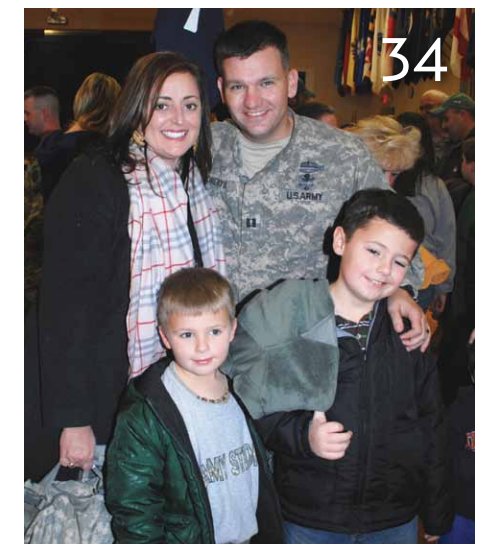
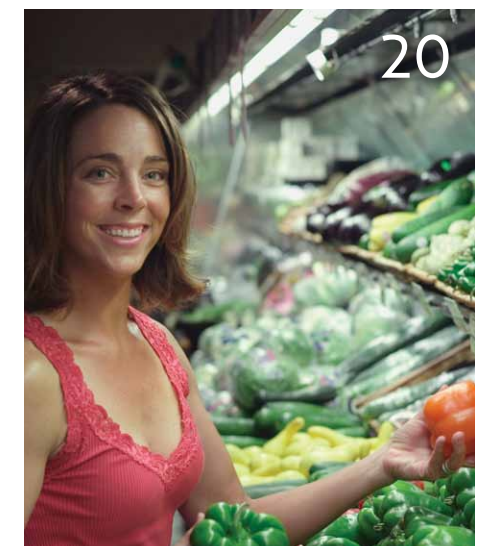
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editor's letter

In my two years as editor of *Foundations*, I've had the opportunity to meet many Soldiers, Airmen, officers, Families and Family program staff members. Conversely, I've only met a handful of Family volunteers. Which is why I decided to attend the National Guard Volunteer Workshop in New Orleans. I have to admit it was a little intimidating walking into a room filled with hundreds of people who've dedicated their lives to helping the Families of our Soldiers and Airmen. And, I quickly realized that what I do as editor of *Foundations* pales in comparison to sacrifices volunteers make everyday.

Meeting volunteers and Family program staff from every state was both fun and inspirational. I learned first hand the many challenges volunteers face supporting the Families of our Soldiers and Airmen, who, unlike Families of other service branches, typically live in rural areas, far from military installations. Sometimes, as an editor, you can become complacent, believing you have all the answers and that you know what Families need to hear. Talking to the volunteers, the people on the front lines at home, gave me, well, a swift kick to the backside along with renewed vigor and exciting ideas for the future of *Foundations*.

So, in honor of the thousands of volunteers, I've dedicated this issue's Above and Beyond spotlight to a volunteer, Marilou Peavley of Arizona. Marilou was presented the Distinguished Center of Influence award by the 363rd EOD of the Arizona Army National Guard for her countless hours volunteering. Marilou represents the unselfish contributions volunteers make everyday. After reading her story, you'll grow to love as much as we have.

This issue's feature article is on sons who followed their father's footsteps by joining the National Guard. I'm sure you'll find their stories compelling and inspirational. Their sense of service and honor is a true testament to the National Guard Family.

For *Foundations* to continue to be a great resource for Guard Families, I'll need your suggestions and comments. Please contact me at Editor@GuardFoundations.com.

Sincerely,
Fred D. McGhee II
 Deputy Editor



SGM Charles and SPC Trevor Kovitch of the Oregon Army National Guard believe being a father-son duo has numerous advantages, from their working together, to the support they give one another.

PHOTO BY JESSICA BAUM

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thank you note

Dear Soldiers, Airmen, Families and Friends of the Army National Guard,

As Soldiers and Airmen, we honor the military values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. Time and again, I've seen those values carry through to our military Family members, as well.

You're loyal to your Service Member, always standing by their side as they serve our country. In that way, you serve, too. It's a duty that is not easy, but one that I've seen Families fulfill with grace, dignity and passion. You illustrate respect for the service and others, and in turn, I have the utmost respect for you.

There's no arguing that selfless service is a value you hold true, as well. When your Soldier or Airman is deployed, you may pick up his or her half of the household responsibilities and shift to a seemingly single-parent home. Or, you may ensure your son's or daughter's affairs are being taken care of in their absence. You uphold honor and integrity throughout those endeavors, always remaining true to yourself and your Soldier or Airman. This, above all else, takes personal courage. You stand up and stay strong through fears and challenges, and you triumph. You are courageous and strong, and without you, we could not so successfully defend this country we all hold dear.

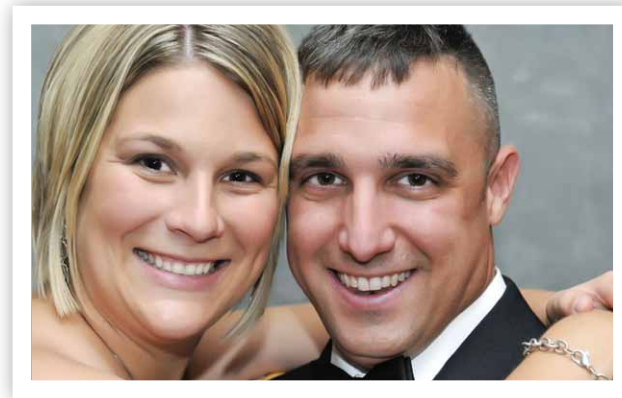
Thank you for all you have done and continue to do!

Major General David Sprynczynatyk
 Adjutant General
 North Dakota Army National Guard



How has the National Guard benefited your Family?

We asked. You answered.



I thought that I could be strong and handle my husband's deployment on my own by surrounding myself with my sons and household chores. I was a divorced mom of two autistic sons. How bad could it be?

During the first few days, I hit a wall. I needed help, but I thought asking for it was a sign of weakness.

The first meeting with the Family Readiness Group was intimidating. I felt out of place, as if no one would understand what I was really going through.

After sitting in my jeep for a while, I finally went in. The group was full of life and open to new people. Each person had a story, and there was one common theme: We were all bound together by a deployment. With each meeting, I felt more at ease and more at home with the people around me.

I have met a lot of people. Some, I went to high school with, and hadn't seen or talked to since graduation. To know that there are others out there that I can call in the middle of the night is a comfort.

I realized that not only was I feeling these emotions, but my sons were too. My oldest boy thought his dad was "gone for the weekend and would be home for Rock Band." We had to sit him down and show him when he was coming home on the calendar. My youngest is ready for him to come home.

As the deployment comes to an end, we're realizing that all of our lives have changed. I have gotten my license, become more involved with our community and—most of all—learned that asking for help is OK.

*Melissa Bronson
Wife of SPC Wayne Bronson
HHT 1/172 CAV
Vermont Army National Guard*

I had almost no military understanding until seven years ago, when I met my husband, Joe. The National Guard has taught our Family about sacrifice, dedication and perseverance.

The Guard has benefited us in so many ways, and although Joe is deployed, and away from me and our infant daughter for the next year, I continue to focus on the positive things the National Guard provides us: outstanding benefits, fabulous opportunities, wonderful Family readiness representatives, and a steady paycheck, just to name a few.

More importantly, my husband had dreamed of being a pilot since he was a child, and the West Virginia Army National Guard gave him that priceless opportunity. Our Family is eternally grateful.

My husband loves what he does. It's wonderful to see him thrive and grow in an organization that he loves, is dedicated to and believes in so deeply. The Guard has made him a better husband and father, and even though I didn't know him when he enlisted more than 16 years ago, I know that over the years, the military has helped mold him into the man that he is today. For that, I am thankful, and all three of us have benefited immensely.

*LeeAnne Mizer Jurkowitz
Wife of CPT Joseph A. Jurkowitz
West Virginia Army National Guard*

At first, my husband joined the Army National Guard to help with his education. With 11 people in his Family, they couldn't afford to help him. He's the second oldest and he cares very much about them. He knew joining would help them, so he had no second thoughts about it.

We married not long after he joined the Guard. He was scheduled for Basic Training one month later. For the first five months of our marriage, he was 2,000 miles away. The following year, two weeks before he was scheduled to go to Advanced Individual Training, I found out I was pregnant with our first child.

It sounds like the National Guard took my husband away from me when I needed him, but in truth, they made my husband who he is. While away from us, he embraced the teachings of loyalty, respect and leadership. When he would come back, his heart and mind were on us. He was given the lessons and motivation to become the man he wants to be and the opportunity to get there.

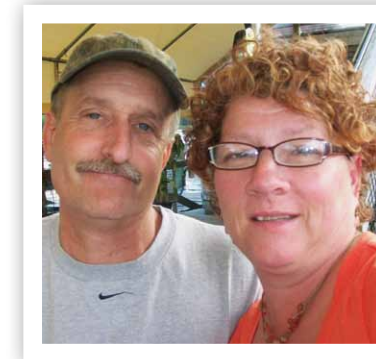
For the last year, he has embraced his new role with his RTI unit—to train and inspire new Soldiers. He enjoys his place in the National Guard and he has never regretted his time in service. I will forever be proud of him and support him in his endeavors, because he is a Soldier of the Army National Guard.

*Ashley Huggi
Wife of SPC Omar Huggi
183rd Regiment Regional Training Institute
Virginia Army National Guard*

I am a Maine Army National Guard Soldier's wife. I feel like the Guard has been as much a part of my life as it has my husband's.

When I first met my husband in 1987, he was a corporal in the 172nd Mountain Infantry unit. They traveled a lot, so it was up to the Families to get close to each other and stay updated on what the unit was doing. I decided to become involved in the Family Program.

All these years later, my husband is a master sergeant, and the Guard continues to offer experiences and benefits that we could not find elsewhere. They've allowed my husband the opportunity to travel. He has been all over the United States, to Central America and Europe, and he did a tour in Iraq.



You might wonder what the Guard has offered me. It has provided me with great friendships and financial opportunities for our Family. The friendships are priceless. The other spouses and Family members have become as much a part of my life as my own Family. Our daughter is in college, and

her father was able to transfer his Post-911 GI Bill benefits to her, so she will not be in debt after her graduation.

We look forward to retiring in a few years. Thanks to the National Guard, my husband has another pension to help with that.

The benefits of my husband having been in the Guard are amazing. I embrace the time he has left until retirement.

*Tracey Rancourt
Wife of MSG Jim Rancourt
HHC 133rd Engineers
Maine Army National Guard*

How will your Family celebrate the Christmas holiday? We want to hear from you!

Email your answer to Editor@GuardFoundations.com, and it could appear in the next issue of *Foundations*.

COURTESY OF SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

1SG David and Deanna Fullerton were able to strengthen their connection by using Strong Bonds.



During the reintegration process, 1SG David and Deanna Fullerton spent as much time as possible with their son, Daniel. Below: Daniel exhibits his passion for music for his proud parents.



Communication Is the Key

Strong Bonds helps Guard Families build stronger relationships

By MELISSA KERBY / Photos by ADAM LIVINGSTON

Thomas Wright Partners (TWP) is a strategic communications firm that works with leadership to develop outreach and awareness strategies and tactics in support of Guard programs. The Strong Bonds brand and supporting outreach was developed by TWP under the guidance of the Chief of Chaplains Office and chaplains Ron Martin-Minnich and Quentin Collins.

The National Guard's Strong Bonds Couples Program offers Warriors and their spouses a free retreat weekend that includes relationship skills training, relaxation and fun. The Army's first relationship program—Building Strong and Ready Families—was introduced in 1999 to address concerns about stress on military Families. That program evolved into today's Strong Bonds.

Chris and Melissa Messina were married on December 23, 2008. In March 2009, Chris left for a yearlong deployment in Iraq. To prepare, the couple attended a Strong Bonds event in January 2009. It also turned out to be a first-rate getaway.

"We were actually super excited about the event," Melissa said. It gave us a chance to get away and just focus on us—kind of like a mini-honeymoon. It was really nice. I enjoyed it."

Second Deployment

A second deployment motivated David and Deanna Fullerton to attend Strong Bonds. David, a 24-year military Veteran and first sergeant of a Blackhawk helicopter unit, was deployed to Iraq in 2004 and again in March 2009.

"One key thing we found during the last deployment is that, although communication was available at all times, it wasn't at the level that we needed as

husband and wife," recalled David. "That put a strain on our marriage."

"I learned this time that when we're validating what each other says, we don't have to solve the problem right then and there," Deanna said. Turning to David, she continued, "I just want to know that you have heard me and you just want to know that I have heard you, and then we can work on solving the problem later."

These types of effective communication skills are part of the Strong Bonds curriculum. A study released in 2010 showed that the divorce risk for couples that completed training was significantly reduced.

Light Bulbs and Life-Changers

Military leaders note the role of Strong Bonds in improving readiness and retention, and saving Families.

"We've been able to communicate intimately and rebuild our Family."

— 1SG David Fullerton

"Strong Bonds is a vital [way] for commanders to provide ... relationship enhancement training to Soldiers, Airmen and their Families," said Chaplain Rebekah Montgomery, Army National Guard Bureau Strong Bonds Manager. "In the Strong Bonds events I have been fortunate enough to lead, I have personally witnessed 'light bulb' moments, where couples hit upon new ways of communicating that bring their



relationships closer and stronger.

“Many Soldiers and spouses have told me that Strong Bonds events saved their marriage and increased Family cohesion,” Montgomery continued. “The greatest part about Strong Bonds is that it’s not therapy or counseling—no one is required or even asked to talk about their personal lives.”

Chris Messina, a major in the Signal Corps and 19-year military Veteran, returned from Iraq in March 2010. Afterward, at Strong Bonds, he and Melissa learned communication skills that they felt were indispensable.

“I think that deployment will either make or break you in communication,” Melissa said. “You’ll either learn to communicate better, or it’ll get worse.”

The two strove to talk daily, but weren’t always

Through Strong Bonds, MAJ Chris and Melissa Messina learned to temper expectations and practice patience. Above: For the Messinas, daily chores and video games were a fun way to transition back to normalcy.



“I have personally witnessed ‘light bulb’ moments, where couples hit upon new ways of communicating.”

— Chaplain Rebekah Montgomery, Army National Guard Bureau Strong Bonds Manager

sure they would. So, they kept notes about critical information. They utilized other Strong Bonds tips, too, such as installing security cameras and establishing a support system of Family, friends and church members.

They also set financial goals through Strong Bonds. “We were able to knock out a considerable amount of debt and still put money in the bank,” said Chris.

Double Duty

Deanna’s greatest challenge in David’s absence was to raise their teenage son while working full-time.

“[You become] a taxi,” Deanna said. “Not only for [your child’s] school and sporting events, but for their social life, too.”

She went outside her comfort zone for things Daniel wanted to do, such as exploring waterfalls and hiking. She learned to play Rock Band. “I was tired from doing all that, but I think it was neat to get to be a part of it—to see him grow and change.”

The Fullertons encouraged Daniel to communicate regularly. They also addressed each other’s personal needs. David encouraged Deanna regularly with words of affirmation, and Deanna sent David care packages—tangible reminders of home.

Both couples respected the need to manage expectations and practice patience. Melissa, a full-time Yellow Ribbon Program manager, said her toughest challenge was to become

more independent in Chris’ absence. “My becoming more independent has definitely helped in a lot of ways.”

Melissa had a chore list prepared for Chris, to help ease his transition from the battlefield to home.

Kid Time


David Fullerton knew his son would have extra needs upon David’s return. “I spent quality time with him and it went great,” he said. “We’ve been able to communicate intimately and rebuild our Family.”

Strong Bonds is a fully funded, chaplain-led organization using proven curriculum, visuals and activities. “It’s the most fun weekend I could ever spend,” said Chaplain Mark Phillips, co-leader of the training attended by the Messinas and Fullertons. “Strong Bonds is a passion for me. I just love it.”

After the Fullertons’ first deployment, it took time to regain ground in their marriage. But, with Strong Bonds’ help, the second deployment actually helped them grow.

For the Messinas, deployment went better than expected. “I think things probably would have been more difficult had we not had this preparation,” mused Melissa.

“I can’t really say enough about Strong Bonds,” Chris added. “I’m amazed at what it has done for us during this deployment and even after deployment.” 

 To learn more about Strong Bonds or find an upcoming event, contact your unit chaplain or visit StrongBonds.org.

What are the benefits of Strong Bonds?

- >> Creates a strong support group for Soldiers and Families.
- >> Connects Soldiers and Families to each other, their unit and important resources such as chaplains.
- >> Helps Soldiers and Family members develop skills that enable them to build resilient relationships and healthy Families.
- >> Proactive and preventive, designed to recognize and correct any issues before relationships are in crisis mode.
- >> Ensures that Guard children grow up in healthy Guard Families.
- >> Enables Soldiers to stay focused on the mission, improving readiness and retention.

Finding the Strength Within

Soldiers show resiliency and camaraderie by completing ultra-marathon

Story by PAT MESSER, DECADE OF HEALTH

They pounded asphalt for 550 miles over the course of 21 days and emerged tired, but fulfilled. They took the last strides on May 28, 2010, at Arlington National Cemetery, on the last leg of the first One Life Warrior Resiliency Run.

COL Jack Mosher and MAJ Jay Brock, members of the Maine Army National Guard, crossed the finish line, having completed an ultra-marathon to demonstrate the importance of health, wellness and physical fitness in overcoming adversity, and to highlight the importance of Soldiers and Families seeking help for behavioral health issues.

This Warrior-focused effort began in Kittery, ME, on May 8. Three weeks later, Jill Shepherd, a former Guard combat medic, Veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and finisher of 17 marathons, joined the two lead runners for the final two days. Decade of Health's Ready and Resilient II "Strength from Within" campaign teamed with the Resiliency Run to highlight its mission as the premier advocate for the health and wellness of the Soldier and Family. Throughout the Resiliency Run, Mosher showcased Decade of Health as a wellness resource, and referred Soldiers, Veterans and Family members to the website's 'round-the-clock wellness community.

The chief surgeon of the Army National Guard, COL Dave Romine, uses the program daily to reach out to Soldiers and Families to create medical readiness awareness and to reinforce the essential role that personal responsibility plays in building resilience and fitness for life.

As Mosher says, "Every American Warrior is a national treasure. Our generation of Soldiers must seek and accept responsibility for their health as the next 'Greatest Generation.' They must be truly fit to overcome adversity and realize the true potential of their lives."

A post-race interview with Mosher reveals his passion for the well-being of the Soldier and for fitness.

Q. You just completed the first annual One Life Resiliency Run. How will the momentum and outreach achieved during this event be sustained, and will there be another run?

A. To sustain our momentum and outreach, we are doing research on life-affirming events that reinforce the Decade of Health resiliency themes with respect to health awareness and risk reduction—e.g., mountain climbing, more long-distance running, other hyper-endurance sports.

The most important goal is to build and balance the four cornerstones essential to increasing resiliency and overcoming adversity—physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological health.

Given what we've learned by visiting VA centers, my generation needs to listen to our elders with humility and respect, because they have a lot to offer. For example, some of the Vietnam Veterans I met said, "Don't mess up your lives—live well for your Family, live well for the people who love you, live well for yourself. You deserve to be happy and live fulfilled lives."

These Veterans built what they call "The Well," and we need to maintain it and use it. Early intervention prevents the compounded problems of addiction and anxiety. If you have these problems, talk to someone now, and get on with your life. Do it for your fellow Vets who lost their lives and don't have the chance to go on living.

Q. Twenty-one marathons in 21 days is quite an accomplishment. How do you feel physically, mentally and spiritually?

A. Physically, it has become normal for us to run 26.2 miles per day, and it's challenging, but not impossible. For some Veterans, a marathon is run from a wheelchair every single day.

Emotionally, we feel affirmed—we feel inspired. There was one Wounded Warrior I met who was completely living his life—holding his son, doing pull-ups, hunting from his wheelchair and then carrying the deer home on his lap. This

"We learned firsthand about the kindness and generosity of strangers."

—COL Jack Mosher

COURTESY OF ONE LIFE WARRIOR

COL Jack Mosher, of the Maine Army National Guard, ran 550 miles over 21 days. He departed Kittery, ME, on May 8, 2010, and arrived at the front gates of Arlington National Cemetery on May 28, 2010.

is his “new normal” and he has adjusted to live his life at 100 percent.

We met dozens and dozens of people like this. An individual can address behavioral health problems and mental illness the same way he or she faces a physical injury. Spiritually, my faith has always been very strong, but now it’s even stronger.



COL Mosher and MAJ Brock completed 26.2 miles per day from start to finish, during their Resiliency Run.

Q. What elements of training and preparation most contributed to the successful conclusion of the run?

A. Training is the key. The hardest part of the run is getting to the starting point. With all my daily activities—taking care of my children, working, traveling—running was the easy part.

Every day that I ran, the stress poured out of me. Sometimes, in order to get my training in, I would put my kids to bed, and then run laps around the apartment building. There were a thousand good reasons not to do the Resiliency Run at this time in my life. But, there were 1.2 million reasons to run for Soldiers and help break down the barriers to seeking help for behavioral health issues.

Q. If there were any bumps along the route, what were they, and how did you overcome them?

A. There were multiple bumps in the road, mostly with logistics. Throughout the run, we asked communities, local people and running clubs for help and they guided us over those bumps. We learned firsthand about the kindness and generosity of strangers.

Q. What did you learn from Veterans/Wounded Warriors that you met along the way? Is there a particular anecdote you would like to share?

A. One time, I was sharing a meal and spending the night with some Veterans in a homeless shelter in Philadelphia. The camaraderie was wonderful—I’d never felt more at home away from home than I did that night. There is a universal spirit among all Veterans, despite the difference in generations.

Q. The last leg of the run featured the Decade of Health campaign. The medical readiness and holistic wellness themes of this program are central to the self-responsibility and resiliency messages of the run. Will you continue to work with the Decade of Health program in the future to encourage Soldiers/Families to take advantage of this free resource?

A. From the inception of the run, the Decade of Health has given us unconditional moral support. Our respective goals are synonymous, and we will continue to spread the word about this worthwhile program.

It would have been impossible to complete this effort without the Decade of Health, and we would like to help the program continue to gain momentum as a mainstream health and wellness resource in the National Guard.



COURTESY OF ONE LIFE WARRIOR

Strengthening Bonds in the Wild West

Getaway in Tetons Brings Families Together

Story and Photos by HEATHER OLIVER

Some might say a first-time deployment is like the Wild West. For the spouse, it’s about holding down the homefront, wrangling household responsibilities and the kids while praying that Daddy will come home safely. For the Soldier who rides off into the sunset, it’s about getting the job done downrange under rugged conditions, and praying for the day he can come home to his Family.

Our prayers were answered in March when we celebrated the end of a yearlong deployment by my husband, SGT William C. Oliver, to Afghanistan with the Georgia Army National Guard. My 5-year-old son, Will, was the first to find Daddy on the parade field and jump into his arms, followed by me and our 4-month-old baby, David. At last, we were a Family again! Little did we know that we would soon embark on a new adventure together to the *real* Wild West—courtesy of the National Military Family Association (NMFA) and the Sierra Club.

Before my husband’s return, I was looking into children’s summer camps for Will. I had heard great things about Operation Purple camps and checked out the MilitaryFamily.org website for more information. To my surprise, I saw that there were also retreats for military Families who had recently finished a deployment. I applied for the retreat at the Teton Science Schools in Jackson Hole, WY, and began dreaming about “Big Sky” country. In the beginning of June, we received an email from the NMFA telling us we had been accepted! We were thrilled.

The Adventure Begins

Fast forward one month later, and the day had finally arrived for us to begin our adventure. (Fortunately, we traveled by plane instead of horse and buggy.) This was Will’s first flight, and he couldn’t wait to be up in the clouds. We finally arrived at the Jackson Hole airport around 9 p.m. and



The Family getaway was a great opportunity for SGT William and Heather Oliver of the Georgia Army National Guard to share an adventure with their two sons, Will and David.

Heather couldn't resist capturing Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park as it erupts.



jumped in a cab with one of the locals, who happened to live on a huge ranch. We explained the purpose of our trip, and she insisted on paying for our cab fare!

After spending our first night at the Painted Buffalo Inn, we began Day One of our trip sightseeing around the square in downtown Jackson Hole. We enjoyed a delicious breakfast at a local bakery called The Bunnery, took a nostalgic stagecoach ride around the square and stopped in at the Yippee-I-O Candy Co. to satisfy Will's sweet tooth.

That afternoon, we checked into the Teton Science School. The campus was amazing, including lodging, classrooms, a place to check out hiking and camping gear, a dining hall and a great playground for the kids. One of the counselors, Brett, showed us to our room and told us to meet him back in the activity center for orientation. There, we met 19 other Families from National Guards across the country, including Army National Guard members and Families from Colorado, Mississippi and North Carolina.

The NMFA staff told us that the next four days would give us an opportunity to get away from the challenges of our everyday lives and allow us to focus on being together as a Family while exploring one of America's great national treasures: the Grand Teton National Park. That night, each Family made a "flag" representing their hobbies and interests and presented it to the group. We were also given "hands to work" responsibilities for the week, such as raising and lowering the flag or washing dishes in the dining hall.

During the next three days, we would hike, canoe, raft and picnic in the glorious Grand Teton National Park. The highlights for our Family were spotting a yellow-bellied marmot and her baby while on a hike around Jenny Lake, spying ospreys and bald eagles while rafting down the Snake River, and marveling as a herd of bison roamed alongside our van. Finn, our counselor, took us on a short trek to an amazing picnic spot

"We got to focus on being together as a Family while exploring one of America's great national treasures."

* * *

called "Wedding Point" with a spectacular view of the Grand Tetons and the Gros Ventre River. We also participated in a group service project with the Forest Ranger Service in which we helped to remove hound's-tongue, an invasive weed that reduces the amount of natural forage available and consequently threatens the wildlife in the park.

Lasting Memories


Spending time with other Families and sharing experiences about our respective deployments was also invaluable. During a small group discussion facilitated by FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress), we talked about the topic of "living in the red zone versus the green zone" as it pertained to parenting. We all agreed that deployments are not easy and that reconnecting as a Family takes time. My husband shared that our older son has had trouble accepting him as an authority figure and still defers to me for guidance. A mom who recently returned from deployment said that her son said she was not the same mommy he

knew before the deployment. Another father said that it was difficult to split his time and attention between his two sons. And still another mom said that it was difficult for her and her kids to change their routine to include Daddy, since he was always occupied with work even after returning from deployment.

Surprisingly, there was more discussion and sharing among the male members of our group than I had expected. A wife of a fighter pilot whom I became friends with summed it up this way: "Usually the military leaves a negative impression, but programs like this are positive, Family-building experiences that strengthen bonds and build lasting memories."

Another exercise that FOCUS conducted was for each Family to create a collage with pictures and words representing our feelings about the deployment—during and after—as well as our hopes for the future. This was a creative, meaningful way for us to capture our individual points of view, as well as to define our Family goals.

The final portion of our trip included three days of hiking and camping in Yellowstone National Park. Highlights included seeing a grizzly bear and her cubs nursing shortly after sunrise; hiking around Trout Lake, where we actually petted cutthroat trout as they swam upstream to spawn; seeing Old Faithful erupt and touring the Old Faithful Inn; viewing the Grand Prismatic geothermal feature from on top of a mountain; and seeing the Grand Canyon portion of the park and waterfalls near Artist Point. Camping was fun too—although I'll admit I didn't sleep as well as my Veteran hubby, who chided "welcome to my world" before zonking out.

When it was time for us to leave, we hugged our new friends, including counselors and fellow military Families, and exchanged emails and phone numbers. We knew this experience was one that would stay with us forever and vowed to return again one day. The trip surpassed our expectations and definitely allowed us to reconnect as a Family and return to our "everyday life" with a better understanding of and appreciation for each other. 



SGT Oliver and his son Will spent quality time together at some of the local attractions.

 For more information on Operation Purple retreats, visit MilitaryFamily.org. Applications are still being accepted for retreats through December 2010. Also, check out the Teton Science Schools at TetonScience.org.



Your Best Body

Part 2 of 4

Nutrition Is the Key

By 2LT HOLLY DI GIOVINE,
SOUTH CAROLINA
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Photos by SGT ROBERTO DI GIOVINE,
SOUTH CAROLINA
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

So, you've decided to get into the best shape of your life and have started making healthy changes. Three or four days each week you go for a walk or maybe even run. You include some kind of strength/core training component, like a body-pump class, push-ups at home or something more hardcore, like P90X. Most days of the week you take your lunch to work and you've even started to eat breakfast.

For fitness ideas and exercises, visit HollyPT.com.

You are definitely eating better and healthier than before. After the first week, you hop on the scale, excited to see the new, smaller number, only to find it hasn't budged—or, worse, has gone up. At this point you can either trust your plan and keep going, or scrap the “New You” project—again.

This scenario is far too common, and while losing weight is actually a pretty straightforward process, time and time again I watch clients sabotage themselves. Why do we do this? Part of the problem is in not truly understanding how the principles of nutrition align in order to get you out of weight-gain or weight-maintenance mode, and shift you into the weight-loss category.

The other part of the problem is psychological. Past experiences and behaviors have a strong effect on our subconscious decisions and motivations. In order for you to master a healthy diet and lose weight, you must first determine your roadblocks, accept responsibility for them, and adopt a positive, proactive approach to overcoming each one.

When Doing Better Isn't Enough

Words like “better,” “more,” “pretty good” and “healthier” provide a way to compare your current status to where you started, but aren't specific enough to get you where you want to be.

In simple terms, we can categorize our days as either weight-gain, weight-maintenance or weight-loss days. In order to lose weight, your weight-loss days must outnumber your weight-maintenance days. Weight-gain days must be limited as much as possible. When you say you are doing better, you are basically saying you aren't gaining weight on as many days as before. That's not good enough when your goal is actually to lose weight.

Follow a Healthy Diet

Eating “healthy” food and creating a calorie deficit to lose weight are not mutually exclusive. A diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, clean proteins and whole grains,

and that is low in saturated fat, alcohol and processed foods, is a healthy one.

However, in order to boost your metabolism and promote fat loss, you must still implement portion control, meal timing and food combinations—i.e., mixing carbohydrates with protein on a regular basis. It always comes back to giving your body specific signals to let it know you want to let go of extra fat. Continue to make healthy choices, but follow the weight-loss day strategies to reach your goals.

Fixating

Do certain foods call your name? Do you find yourself going out of your way to drive past a specific restaurant on your way home? Do you use food to reward yourself when you are happy or sad? These are just a few of the roadblocks that can throw you off course when striving for a weight-loss day.

The good news is that we are creatures of habit, and can therefore identify these habits ahead of time and implement detour strategies. The usual approach when doing something you know doesn't support your goals typically involves thinking about how much you shouldn't do it, followed by guilt. A more positive approach is one that will help you develop habits that will support your goals. Identify the situation that triggers your bad habits and create an alternative action to take.

For example: Situation—After a stressful day at work, you stop by the grocery store that happens to carry your favorite fresh gourmet chocolate chip cookies. Alternative Action—If you must go to the store to buy food for dinner, make a list of the items you need. Select a route through the store that avoids the bakery department and only pick up what is on your list. You will have to mentally coach yourself to bypass the cookies and to be proud as you unload your basket with the pre-approved items. You will leave the store knowing this simple act took a lot to execute and feel empowered knowing you are in control of your choices.



GROCERY SHOPPING STRATEGIES

Remember the five food categories? Combine them with your food budget, and you'll satisfy your financial and weight-loss goals at the same time. Because proteins, fruits and veggies cost more than carbs, you'll allot 25–30 percent, 25 percent, 25 percent and 20 percent of your grocery budget respectively.

Pick up your proteins first and keep a running tally on a notepad. Do the same with fresh fruits and veggies, then frozen and canned options. Finally, pick up some high-fiber carb options, and you're good to go. Those “other” items won't have a place on your list, so head to the checkout.

The second part of the strategy is to take cash to the grocery store. Once you have selected your healthy items, you won't have the means to purchase cookies, soda or whatever calls your name. Rather than feeling limited, you'll feel proud and in control.

Give it a try. Take \$20 to the store and pick out \$6 worth of protein, \$10 of fruits and veggies (\$5 each) and the last \$4 goes to carbs. Get creative and you'll end up with something delicious, healthy and affordable. Maybe a little vegetable sauté tossed with whole wheat pasta and grilled chicken for starters.



Life's Too Short

This line of reasoning is classic: Life is too short to deprive myself of cheesecake, to be on a diet or to eat boring food.

That's great if you want to go through life being unhappy about the 10 pounds you can't lose, not having energy, or being on medications to combat high cholesterol or high blood pressure. As with all things "bad," foods high in fat and sugar provide instant gratification, but leave you dealing with negative effects. Exercise, on the other hand,

is just the opposite. You hate it at the time, but afterwards you love how you feel and what it does for your body. Unfortunately, unless you are an elite athlete, you cannot exercise enough to counteract the effects of fatty foods. The result is a maintenance day at best, but more than likely a weight-gain day.

I challenge you not to give up the things you love entirely, but to find a balanced way to incorporate them into your life. A simple strategy: After a full week of structured weight-loss days, plan a 90-minute cardio session on the weekend. This can be walking, jogging or a combination of activities that get your heart rate up to at least 65 percent of your max heart rate. After a hard

workout is the best time to reward yourself with your favorite treat. Still apply portion control, and follow your plan the rest of the day to stay ahead of the weight-loss curve. 📌



ZLT Holly Di Giovine of the South Carolina Army National Guard earned her bachelor's in Nutrition and Fitness from the University of Missouri. She earned her fitness certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) in 2008. ZLT Di Giovine works as a personal trainer and as a fit camp leader. You can contact ZLT Di Giovine with your fitness questions at Holly@HollyPT.com.



WHAT DOES A WEIGHT-LOSS DAY ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE?

- << Consume 16 oz. of water every three hours, starting when you wake up.
- << Eat a mix of clean protein (about 22 grams—try egg whites or protein powder in a smoothie), fruit or veggie (one piece) and whole grains (oatmeal or whole grain toast) within one hour of waking.
- << Include 100-calorie snacks (with at least eight grams of protein and a fruit or veggie)
- << Lunch and dinner will include about 22 grams of protein (baked or grilled fish or chicken, tuna, or hard-boiled egg whites are good options) and a big salad or grilled veggies. Wrap it up in a high-fiber wrap or enjoy a small potato on the side.

YOUR NUTRITION ROAD TRIP

Pick a Destination

What is your weight-loss/body-fat-loss goal?

Through diet and exercise, plan to lose about two pounds a week. Don't be discouraged by mega weight loss seen on TV. Follow a smart plan and the weight will stay off.

Pick a time frame of four to six weeks, multiply that by two, and the resulting number will be a good starting goal.

Road Map

When you tell your GPS where you want to go, it gives you a step-by-step plan to get there. To reach your weight-

loss destination, you need to follow the same type of step-by-step plan—otherwise, you'll end up back where you started.

Use the weight-loss day strategies as your road map. Track your progress on a calendar so you can see how far you've come. Day 28 will seem far away in the beginning, but four weeks and 8-10 pounds later, you will want to see how you got there.

Gas in the Tank

Studies show that women need to eat about 300-400 calories every three hours, and men need to eat about 400-500 calories every four hours to keep their metabolism

revving. Eat less often than that, and your metabolism drops. Consume more calories at one time than that, and your body will store it as fat.

Food for the Road

Head out on your "journey" with an ample supply of healthy snacks to help you avoid getting hungry and stopping for fast food. Leave the house with fresh or dried fruit, almonds, soy nuts, string cheese, lowfat yogurt or chopped veggies to supplement your tank between refueling.

Pick a Road Trip Buddy

The journey will be a lot easier and more fun if you have a navigator to help you stay

on track. Find someone with a similar goal and challenge each other along the way.

Focus on Your Destination

When I have a vacation coming up, I like to put pictures and maps on the wall so I can mentally prepare for the trip. I imagine what I'll do, places I'll visit, what I will wear and how it will feel to be in such a great place. The same thing goes for your weight-loss goals. Take time every day to picture where you are going, what it takes to get there and what it will feel like once you arrive. The great part is, this is a destination you won't have to leave after two weeks.

✦ Separate the food you eat into the following categories and aim to eat the recommended number of servings:

Clean Protein	Veggies	Fruit	Whole Grains	Other
(5-6)	(3-5)	(2-4)	(5-6)	(?)

"Other" includes foods that don't fit into the first categories. Some "other" foods are healthy, like olive oil or green tea, while others obviously aren't, such as fast food, processed/boxed dinners, sweets, alcohol, etc. So your perfect day might look like this: 6/5/4/4/1. Rate yourself using this plan each day and you'll know where you are excelling and where to improve. How are you doing so far today? _/_/_/_/_/_



In order to lose weight, your weight-loss days must outnumber your weight-maintenance days.

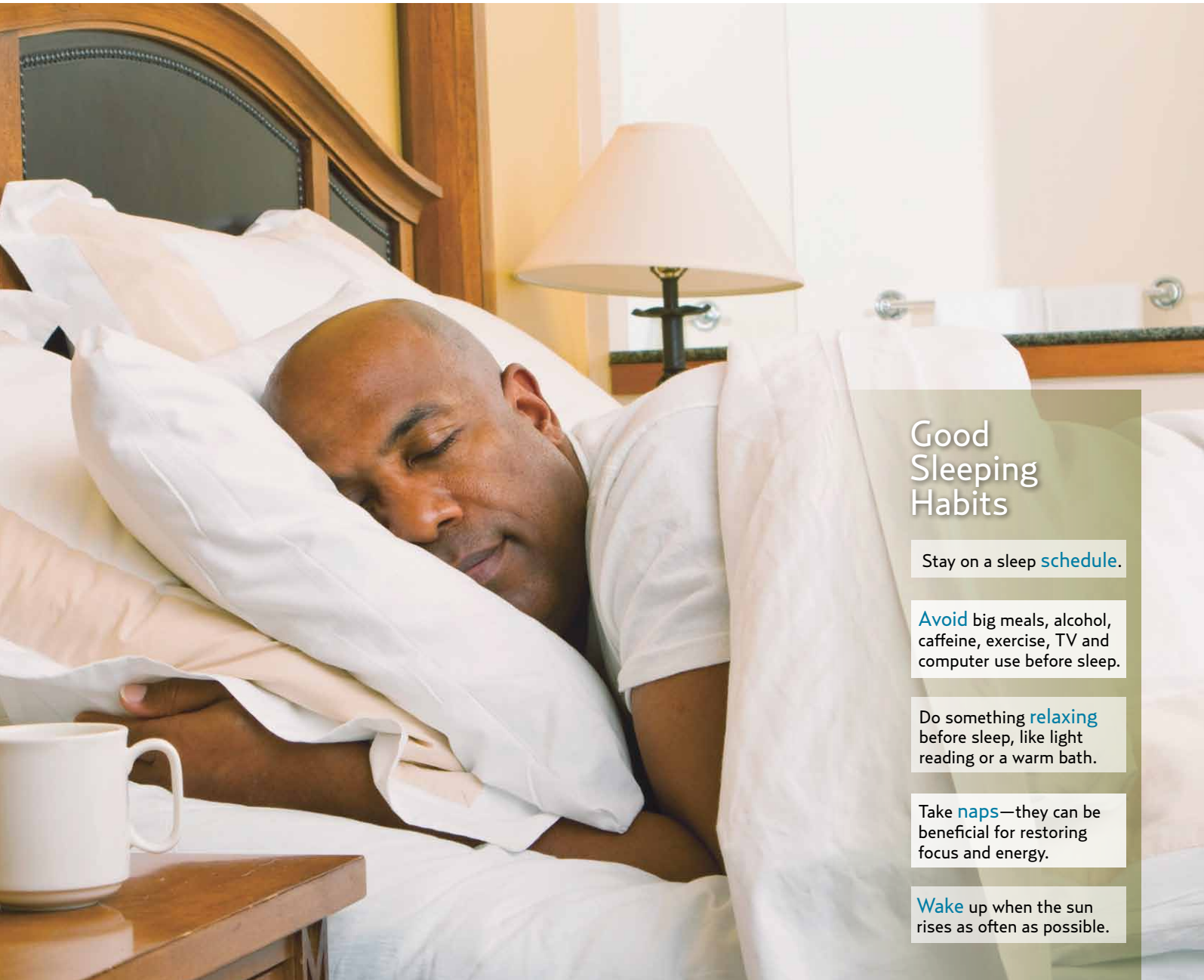


- ⚡ Include at least 30 minutes of exercise every day. Some days you may just go for a walk, while other days will include circuit training or more intense cardio workouts. Set your minimum for the week at an average of 30 minutes per day and increase from there to burn more calories.

Sweet Dreams

Tips for a good night's sleep

By KEVIN T. MASON, M.D., MPH, AND ANN STARK, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD DECADE OF HEALTH



Good Sleeping Habits

Stay on a sleep **schedule**.

Avoid big meals, alcohol, caffeine, exercise, TV and computer use before sleep.

Do something **relaxing** before sleep, like light reading or a warm bath.

Take **naps**—they can be beneficial for restoring focus and energy.

Wake up when the sun rises as often as possible.

Sleep is an essential part of living. It is regulated by internal hormone cycles and affected by daylight cycles. When the sun goes down, we get sleepy. When the sun comes up, we have an urge to wake up.

Without sleep, we can develop poor judgment, mood changes, gastrointestinal upset, memory difficulties and hallucinations. Eventually, deprived of sleep, your body will simply shut down and you will fall asleep involuntarily.

The Five Stages

Sleeping is a complex process comprised of five stages. The first two are light sleep, where sounds, light and motion might awaken you. You're physically active, with restlessness and jerking movements of the extremities.

The next two stages are deep sleep. The brain waves slow down, muscle motion stops, and it's harder to wake up.

The final stage is the rapid eye movement (REM) stage. This period is full of dreams, talking and other brain activities. Some people solve problems or come up with good ideas in REM. We lose body temperature regulation and may feel cold.

It takes about 90 minutes to complete the five stages, and then the process begins again. We go through about three to five cycles per night.

How Much is Enough?

The definition of "a good night's sleep" is highly variable among people and changes as we age. The old adage "Early to bed, early to rise" may hold true for some, but there are many combinations of individual sleep patterns. Some people need less sleep and fewer cycles to recharge their batteries, and some need more.

One thing is certain, however: If you're deprived of sleep, you won't be healthy. Unfortunately, the transition from a slow-paced, farmer lifestyle to a high-paced, industrial lifestyle increases the risk for "sleep debt"—the amount of quality sleep that you owe your body. In the near term, if sleep-deprived, you'll have poor mental performance at school or work, mood swings, altered thoughts and increased risk for accidental injury. In the long term, you're at increased risk for weight gain, cardiovascular

disease, mental disorders and social problems.

Don't Be a Sleepy Soldier

Data collected by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center shows that visits by male Soldiers to sleep disorder clinics have risen significantly in the last three years. According to the Walter Reed Institute of Research's Department of Behavioral Biology, "Sleep deprivation, both partial and total, degrades cognitive performance. The ability to do useful mental work declines by 25 percent for every successive 24 hours awake."

All Service Members must learn how to function in spite of the sleep disruptions caused by training and combat operations, such as crossing time zones or entering high-tempo operations. Be aware of your unit's sleep discipline policies. If there aren't any, ask your command surgeon to develop some. Following sleep policies reduces your risk for poor judgment and accidents, and improves combat effectiveness, mission completion and well-being.

Sleep should be regarded as one of the most important elements in

How Much Sleep Do We Need?

- Infants**
 - 0-2 MONTHS 10.5-18 hours
 - 2-12 MONTHS 14-15 hours
- Toddlers/Children**
 - 12-18 MONTHS 13-15 hours
 - 18 MONTHS-3 YEARS 12-14 hours
 - 3-5 YEARS 11-13 hours
 - 5-12 YEARS 9-11 hours
- Adults**
 - 7-9 hours

health and wellness. The need for eight hours of sleep should not be viewed as a sign of weakness. Leaders should reinforce the need for rest. Soldiers should become aware that sleep is as important to physical and mental well-being as good nutrition and regular exercise.

Assess your sleep intelligence by visiting the "Sleeping Better" section of AfterDeployment.org, and learn more from peers and experts to help you get a good night's sleep.

*Sleep Tips for Soldiers

Acknowledge that sleep is not a choice—it's a necessity for optimal mission performance.

Know your unit's sleep plan or work with the command surgeon to develop one.

Stick to a healthy, allowable sleep schedule. Limit late-night activities such as socializing, video games and phone calls.

Be aware that sleep problems, particularly nightmares, can signal more serious mental health issues.

Do not dismiss sleep concerns. Professional help and advice is readily available.

ISTOCK

SGM Charles Kovitch is not only the proud father of SPC Trevor Kovitch, he is also the drummer for a commercial rock band, Almost Friday, along with two other members of the Oregon National Guard. Their third video, "The Home Lines," was written and dedicated to all military spouses and Families.



JESSICA BAUM

ISTOCK

Legacy of. Service



By RACHEL GLADSTONE, STAFF WRITER

Making the decision to join the Army National Guard is a personal one, and there are as many reasons to do so as there are Soldiers who serve.

For three dynamic father-son duos, however, the choice was an easy one to make because of the Family ties that bind them. When *Foundations* spoke with the Kovitchs, the Hudsons and the Trauths, they filled us in on where they get their sense of service and what makes their relationships so special.

SGM Charles Kovitch and SPC Trevor Kovitch

SGM Charles Kovitch of Salem, OR, has served in the military for most of his adult life. Beginning with a stint in the Army in 1982, he joined the Guard in 1986. A recruiting and retention officer for the Oregon Military Department, he is a self-proclaimed military brat.

“I grew up in the military lifestyle,” Charles said. “My dad served in the Air Force for 27 years, and upon graduation

from high school, I joined the Army. It was definitely the right choice for me.”

Growing Up

Charles’ son, SPC Trevor Kovitch, spoke about his decision to join the Guard.

“My dad was an influence on me,” he said. “I grew up believing that every man should serve in his country’s army. I think that’s just part of my patriotism.”

But that wasn’t the only reason Trevor made the decision to join the Guard.

“In the end, it all came down to what would benefit me. Coming out of high school, the Guard gave me opportunities like an education and great career choices.”

As is often the case, the lineage of those in military service

“When you’re a father with a child serving in the Guard, it makes you grow a lot closer.”

— SGM CHARLES KOVITCH

extends to many branches of the Family tree.

“We come from a long line of military men,” Charles told us. “My brother, Trevor’s grandfather and his uncle on his mother’s side were all in the Guard. So, Trevor had a lot of exposure to military service. My younger son, Carsten, is in junior high now, but he’s also thinking about joining the Guard when he’s eligible. I’m very proud of Trevor, and I’m very honored that he made the decision to join.”

A Dynamic Duo

Being a father-son duo has numerous advantages, from their working together, to the support they give one another.

“When you’re a father with a child serving in the Guard, it makes you grow a lot closer. You’re able to speak the same language and you get to live through similar experiences,” Charles said. “Like when my son went through Basic Training, I could relate to the things he was sharing with me. That, right there, builds a pretty strong bond. Plus I got the opportunity to go back to Fort Benning and watch him graduate from Basic Training. As an SGM, watching a private—who also happened to be my son—graduate, was a special and proud moment for me.”

Trevor also remembers that day with great fondness. “To have [my dad] there in uniform when I graduated made me feel so good.”

Although father and son don’t necessarily work together every day, Trevor’s job as an office assistant for the recruiting headquarters, where Charles is a recruiter, makes them even closer.

“My son works in my office, which is great,” Charles told us. “And he’s about to go to the New Mexico Military Institute, which has an early commissioning program. When he graduates, he’ll be a commissioned lieutenant. I’m so proud of him. It’s the greatest thing.”

Trevor wrapped things up by telling us how much his father’s guidance has helped him in making decisions about his career and how much he enjoys the day-to-day life of being in the Guard.

“It’s a good team atmosphere around here,” he said. “It takes all of us to get the mission done, and we all get along

great. There’s a strong bond between us. A lot of times people think that a son working with his dad creates more pressure for the son. But I don’t feel that. I feel like I’m charting my own career.”

2LT Kelly Hudson and SPC Jacob Hudson

2LT Kelly Hudson and his son SPC Jacob Hudson live in Grand Isle, LA, where Kelly works as an engineer for the 1022nd Engineer Company, 527th Battalion.

Kelly had always been intrigued with engineering, and saw the Guard as an opportunity to both further his education and contribute to his community. He joined in 2005.

“When a disaster strikes, it always seems to be the engineers who are working at the tip of the spear, both domestically and abroad. I wanted to be part of that,” he said. “So I got my initial training in the Gulf Corps, and then I went to Officer Candidate School to become an officer. Soon, I’m going to attend engineer officer second corps, which will round out my education. But, while it’s true that I have gotten all my engineering education from being in the Guard, it’s not the primary reason I joined.”

Kelly’s sense of service came naturally to him, as many in his family were also in the military.

“My father was in the Army,” he explained. “He served during WWII. My oldest brother was in the Air Force. My family’s always been very patriotic. We were raised with a real sense of duty to country and that whole ‘ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country’ mentality. That was the philosophy in our household, and my wife, Lisa, and I are raising our boys that way.”

Jacob, 20, who has three younger brothers, has plenty to say on this subject.

“My sense of service came from my dad. I grew up hearing about my grandfather’s experiences and things of that nature. That’s just how he raised me. So, it was not a hard decision for me to join the Guard.

“I’ve been in the Guard for two years now, and although my dad influenced my decision to join, that wasn’t what convinced me. I’ve always been interested in history,



JESSICA BAUM

ISTOCK

“We were already the best of friends, but his joining the Guard has strengthened that bond.”

— 2LT KELLY HUDSON



2LT Kelly Hudson and SPC Jacob Hudson of the Louisiana Army National Guard recently spent time on the Louisiana coastline in the Guard's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

especially WWII. Seeing what my grandfather [and other Service Members] did [in WWII], putting their lives on the line for our country, motivated me.”

A Special Bond

Kelly and Jacob have a mutual understanding of the bond that makes their relationship unique.

“We were already the best of friends, but his joining the Guard has strengthened that bond, because it’s a bond that’s unique to Soldiers,” Kelly told us. “And, that enhances our bond as father and son. I think it’s made us closer than we ever would have been otherwise. And I think it drives the point forward that the Guard really is a Family. And, our sense of duty and responsibility to our brethren is increased by the fact that we’re looking out for one another.”

Jacob agreed. “It’s a unique bond that he and I get to share. Being as close as we are—being best friends and then having that father-son relationship—is great. If we get deployed, I’m always going to have him to talk to, and I can be his motivation as well. The sense of respect I have for him, especially with his being an officer and me being enlisted, is a very special thing.”

The Competition

Of course, bragging rights come with the territory when it comes to a father being proud of his son’s achievements.

“Jacob was chosen as the company representative for the Best Warrior Competition, part of the Soldier of the Year Competition, which was held a few months ago,” he told us. “He won at the company level, the battalion level and the brigade level, and then went on to finish second in the state.”

“I had the opportunity and privilege to be his sponsor during the state competition,” he continued. “It was great to be out there with him, watching him work diligently through all the different obstacles. It really impressed upon me what a privilege it is to serve with him, because, although every Soldier had someone out there that he was close to, there were no other father-son combinations. And all the other competitors had a great deal of fun laughing at us because I’d be yelling at Jacob in a way that probably only a father can.”

Jacob agreed. “I had a motivational aspect that the other contestants didn’t. My dad knows me better than anyone else, and when I’m not necessarily doing the best I can, he can get me to extend that extra inch—to push myself that much harder.”

Second Family

Kelly had nothing but great things to say about serving his country and state in the Guard.

“I love the opportunity to be able to contribute,” he shared. “When disasters occur, when citizens are in need and when the country’s in need, to be able to respond and make a difference is a tremendous honor and privilege.”

“The sense of responsibility to keep everyone safe and to leave a place much better than we found it is also an incredible feeling,” Kelly continued. “I think anything that improves your commitment to your country and your state has to make you a better person. It’s certainly done that for me. The brotherhood and the camaraderie makes [the Guard] feel like a second Family, and it also makes my relationship with Jacob unique.”

SMSGT Gary Trauth and TSGT Brian Trauth

SMSGT Gary Trauth and his son TSGT Brian Trauth work together at the Naval Air Station in New Orleans, LA. The senior Trauth, who works as a quality assurance inspector, has served in the National Guard for 33 years. His son has been a Soldier for nearly nine.

“Originally, I joined to get an education,” Gary told us. “But when I joined, I was also looking for a job, and wound up getting one here. I had a lot of fun and enjoyed the people I was working with. I decided to make a career out of it.”

Brian, who works full-time for the Guard, also joined to further his education. But there was a bit more to it than that.

“I kind of grew up around it, and I knew a lot of the people,” he said. “I knew some of the jobs already and it was kind of a Family thing. Plus, the Guard has great benefits. The education and job security are great, and so is the pride that comes along with it.”

Like Father, Like Son

The Trauths have a Family history of serving in the Guard.

“My father was in the Guard,” Gary told us. “And my brother Steven still is. My Family had a strong sense of service. But my father didn’t suggest I join—it was something I thought of.”

“My kids used to come out to the base quite a bit and watch me play flag football [with my fellow Soldiers],” he continued. “So, my son saw a lot of friendships and camaraderie,” recalled Gary. “He saw that [the Guard] was a pretty good thing to belong to.”

“My son Brian was about 18 when he expressed an interest in joining. He asked me what I thought about it. I told him the Guard offered a lot of [career] choices. He chose [one that allowed him] to travel, which is something I had done a bit of. [Traveling] has created a certain bond between us, because we can talk about this trip and that trip. On one trip, we got to travel together—to Iceland. That was a blast.”

Brian also remembers his dad’s influence over his choice to join. “Hearing the way my dad talked about [being in the Guard]

and the pride he had from serving made me think it would be a great thing to try. I have a lot more respect for authority, and I’ve learned discipline. I’ve definitely matured a lot and learned about leadership. Without the Guard, I think it would have taken longer for me to get to this point. It’s fulfilling.”

We’re Not Alone

Another huge benefit of serving in the Guard is the friendships that bind Soldiers together for life.

“What I love about the Guard, the biggest thing, is the camaraderie—the sense of belonging to something larger than myself,” Gary shared. “My fellow Soldiers are my Family.”

“I know quite a few other Guard members who have Family members that serve,” Brian said. “It’s like being in the Family business, only it’s a little bit bigger of a business,” he joked. “I like the sense of service I have and the sense of pride. Yesterday, I went out to eat with one of my [fellow Soldiers] and [a stranger] picked up our check. The gratitude people show you really makes you feel phenomenal about what you do.”

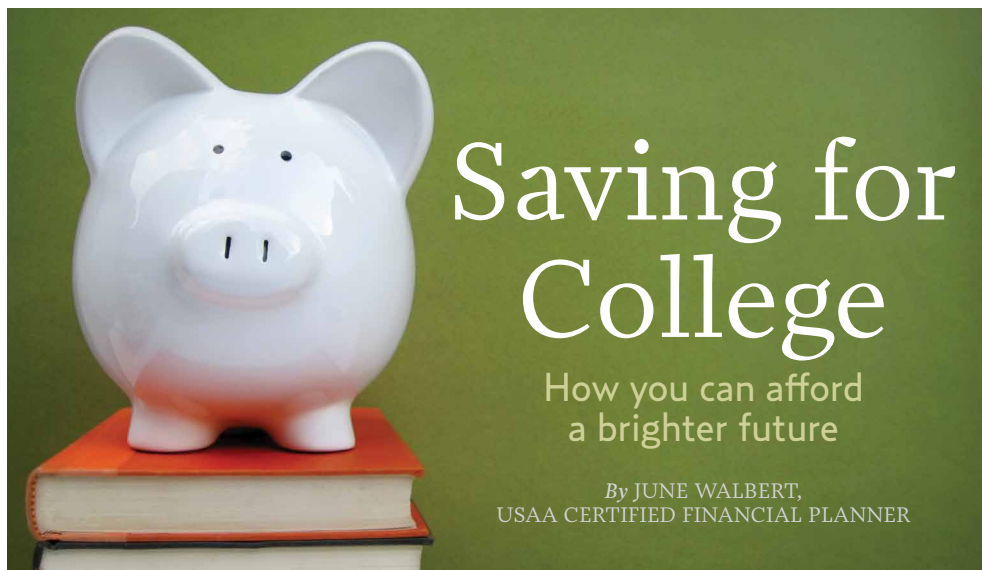
Continuing on in this vein, he concluded, “The Guard has tons of resources, and the benefits they offer make it a great organization to join. Seeing what my dad has accomplished and being raised around the Guard have really given me my sense of service.”

“The gratitude people show you really makes you feel phenomenal about what you do.” — TSGT BRIAN TRAUTH



Airmen SMSGT Gary Trauth and TSGT Brian Trauth both agree that what makes the Guard special is the friendships that bind Airmen and Soldiers together for life.

PHOTOS COURTESY LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Few things in life are more valuable than a college education. But, with a four-year public education carrying an enormous price tag these days, parents are wondering if it's worth it.

The argument for college

College pays. A 2006 Census Bureau report estimated that a college graduate will earn a minimum of \$1 million more over their lifetime than those whose highest degree is a high school diploma.

A college education also provides a safeguard against a bad economy. At press time for this magazine, the national unemployment rate was about 10 percent. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that for people under age 24 who had dropped out of high school, the unemployment rate was about 30 percent.

A few statistics

According to The College Board, in 2009 the average cost of an in-state higher education was \$15,213 per year, including tuition,

room, board and fees. This was a 5.9 percent increase over 2008. A private school averaged \$35,626 in 2009.

So how does one pay for college? Usually, it's through a combination of savings, employment income and loans. In addition, the average undergraduate student receives more than \$5,000 in grants that do not have to be repaid.

Loans

GOVERNMENT LOANS

With the average college student graduating with over \$23,000 in debt, the government recently made that debt more palatable. Starting in 2014, repayment of government loans will be limited to 10 percent of the graduate's income and the balance will be forgiven after 20 years of payments. For

those entering certain public service careers—the military or nursing, for example—the remaining debt will be forgiven after 10 years.

Additionally, the government has cut out the middleman, now making loans directly through school financial aid offices.

PRIVATE EDUCATION LOANS

Private education loans can help cover what government loans don't. Interest may be tax-deductible and repayment terms may be flexible, but credit scores will be checked, and these loans generally carry higher variable interest rates. Plus, they won't be forgiven like government loans.

Savings

But, it's cheaper to save than to borrow. Earning interest

on savings rather than paying interest on loans makes more sense. If you're a parent who wants to give your kids a jumpstart, here are a few options.

THE 529 COLLEGE SAVINGS PLAN

The 529 College Savings Plan allows for investing after-tax funds into a tax-deferred account from which growth may be withdrawn tax-free for higher education purposes. In other words, you make a deposit, select from investments offered by the plan, and avoid paying annual taxes on any growth and withdrawals down the road. Therefore, the power of tax-deferred compounding is working for you.

With no income limits and high contribution limits, anyone can donate to the cause. If you add Aunt Emma's \$25 birthday check to the college fund, it's a gift that grows.

These plans are flexible. You can switch beneficiaries. Another plus is that using your state's plan may result in a state income tax deduction.

One caveat to a tax-free withdrawal is that it must be used for qualified higher-education expenses. Other withdrawals are subject to income tax and an additional 10 percent penalty on earnings.

An important note is that there are 529 "savings" plans and "pre-paid tuition" plans. Savings plans allow for funds to be used at virtually any school in the U.S., plus several international institutions. The pre-paid plans buy a particular state's tuition credits at today's rate (plus a premium) for the

future. A potential downside is that the pre-paid tuition plans are dependent on that state's economic health. With all the news coverage of state budget shortfalls lately, a savings plan may be a better choice.

per year per child. The income limit phase-out for contributors begins at \$95,000 for singles and \$190,000 for married filers. These contributions, like the 529 Plan, are after-tax funds, and any growth can

at age 30, and taxes plus a 10 percent penalty will be due on earnings. Finally, the CESA can be used for education expenses from kindergarten through college.

UNIFORM TRANSFER/GIFT TO MINORS ACCOUNTS

Uniform Transfer/Gift to Minors Accounts are held in your child's name. Here, you are giving the child a gift and investing it in their name. At your state's age of majority—usually 18 or 21—the money becomes theirs. Some parents don't like this feature. After all, college may not sound appealing when you could buy a cool car with that money.

Additionally, balances count more against a financial aid application than does a 529 Plan or CESA. Also, there are taxes to consider. The first \$1,900 of investment income that a child earns is treated

favorably, but beyond that any additional investment income is taxed at the parents' marginal rate.

Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill could fill the bill. This benefit substantially helps pay for a National Guard member's higher education. A notable improvement over the previous GI Bill is that, once benefits are earned, they can be transferred to your spouse or children.

This bill provides for a total of 36 months (four school years) of tuition. It also partially covers housing and book expenses. Check it out at GIBill.va.gov.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill covers four years of college tuition, plus some housing and book expenses.

Because the parent is the owner of the 529 Plan and the child is the beneficiary, the account has very little impact on financial aid.

COVERDELL EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT (CESA)

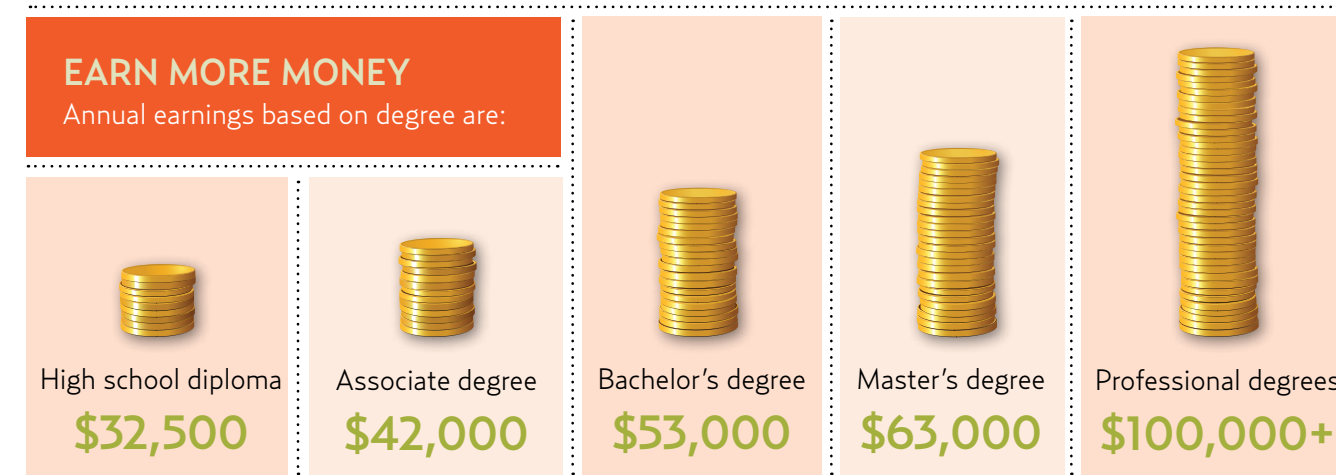
The CESA annual contribution limit is \$2,000

be withdrawn tax-free when used for qualified education purposes. The account can be invested at your discretion in whatever mix of stocks, bonds and mutual funds you choose.

Unlike the 529, the CESA account becomes the property of the beneficiary



Do you have a financial question for June? Visit June's website, AskJune.military.com.



(THIS INFORMATION IS BASED ON THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU'S 2007 MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS AT LEAST 25 YEARS OLD.)

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Service and Sacrifice

Guard Family shows resiliency during reintegration

By CPT DARRIN HAAS

Photos courtesy of TENNESSEE NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CPT David Roberts waited in his tent, flaps closed in spite of 100-degree heat, for the call to come. When it finally did, it was a bittersweet moment. It was his mother-in-law, calling so that David could hear his wife, Cathey, give birth to their second son. Holding his cell phone to his ear, David tried desperately to ignore the noise of camp so he could hear what was happening on the other end of the line. When he heard his new son, Samuel, cry for the first time, David cried too.



Mason runs to his father, David, after David's return from his second deployment with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Scenes like this happen often throughout the multiple deployments Army National Guard Soldiers have been making since September 11, 2001. But, it's not just the Soldier who feels the sacrifice of those missed moments, holidays and events—the Family back home feels it as well.

During David's 20-year career—which includes three deployments for the Global War on Terror and Desert Storm—all he and Cathey could talk about was how the challenges brought on by being in the Guard had positively changed their lives.

Duty Bound

Roberts, his wife, and their sons, Mason, 9, and Sam, now 6, have always been a Guard Family.

"When I first met David, he was a specialist with the 101st Airborne out of Fort Campbell," Cathey said. "I have always known him in uniform, and it has always been a part of our life."

After deploying for Desert Storm and finishing his enlistment, David joined the Tennessee National Guard.

"I really wanted to stay in the military and serve my country," said David. "I enlisted and started working in Tennessee's counterdrug division. I then started working on my [officer] commission."

After getting married, becoming a second lieutenant and having their first son, David deployed to Kuwait with the 267th Military Police Company for the buildup leading to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Cathey was pregnant for the second time, and they knew that David would probably not be home in time for the big day.

"My wife mailed me a cell phone so I could at least hear [him being born]," David said. "I was grateful for that. Not being there for it was one of the hardest things I've ever endured. But, it was harder on my Family."

"It was so hard on everyone to not have him there," said Cathey. "I never thought I could go through something like that on my own. But, I did, and I feel stronger for having done so. I now feel like there's nothing that I can't do."



David and his Family reunite after his return from his third deployment with the 1/16th Agribusiness Development Team.

"It has been through [my Family's] support and sacrifices that I have been able to keep serving my country." —CPT David Roberts

“You are stronger than you realize, and you can learn and do lots of things you wouldn’t think you could.” —Cathey Roberts



David and his Family reunite after David’s return from his second deployment with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

When David returned from Iraq in 2004, he had no way of knowing another deployment was right around the corner. He deployed again in 2005 with the 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

“I missed a lot of my sons’ firsts and holidays,” he said. “But, it seemed a little easier, since we all knew what to expect.”

David’s third tour was with Tennessee’s 1/16th Agribusiness Development Team. He served as an infantry officer in charge of the ADT’s Security Force Team in Afghanistan in 2009–2010.

“The deployments have been a sacrifice—more to my Family than to

me,” he noted. “It has been through their support ... that I have been able to keep serving my country.”

Learning Life’s Lessons

“Being the spouse of a deployed [Guard member] is tough,” Cathey said. “You aren’t around others who are going through the same thing, and to the rest of the world, you seem like an ordinary civilian.”

Cathey is an elementary schoolteacher. With two children at home and a full-time job, things could not be more hectic when David is gone.

“During deployments, it was tough to maintain the daily rhythm of life,” she said. “The routine I was used to was gone, and the jobs of two people were now replaced by one. While that’s the same for Active military spouses, they usually live on post or near one another. The Guard has a great Family Readiness Group program established, but if a [Soldier] deploys with a unit that is stationed hours away, which is common, the support group is hours away as well.”

“I live on a small farm with acres of grass to mow, fence rows to weed-eat, kids to shuffle from place to place, animals to feed, a pool to take care of, flowerbeds, et cetera,” she explained. “That’s in addition to the normal grocery shopping, housecleaning, bill-paying, and working 40 hours a week. It can be

incredibly overwhelming.”

“I feel I have learned some of life’s lessons earlier than usual, thanks to being a Guard member’s wife,” Cathey said. She has a new understanding of her limitations.

“You are stronger than you realize, and you can learn and do lots of things you wouldn’t think you could. I pretended I was Rosie the Riveter. Now I can change a belt on a zero-turn mower, work a miter saw, put up molding, cut down trees, chop up stumps in the yard, overcome the fear of the dark and noises at night, and build cabinets,” she said. “I can also pick up a frog, which completely grosses me out, to try and make my boys be tough.”

When it comes to missing David, Cathey learned a lot about her love for him.

“Distance does make the heart grow fonder,” she said. “Sadly, deployments end [some] marriages. But, if you survive them, you can come out stronger and more in love. I am very thankful for the bond my husband and I have.”

Cathey always felt David’s presence missing from her life, especially when their children needed him.

“The thing that bothers me most about deployments is what it does to the kids,” she said. “Not having a dad for three years is tough—especially for little boys. Nothing can get that time back.”

But, Cathey learned that there were things she could do to make the

absence less painful. “When David was deployed for the third time, we knew he would return home a few days after New Year’s Day,” she said. “We learned that if you ask nicely, Santa will wait for Dad to get home so Dad doesn’t miss out on Christmas morning.”

Cathey had asked her Family to give her sons gift cards instead of toys. This would allow them to go out with their father and have fun picking out things together.

“It worked out really well. Some of our relatives even gave us movie passes, so David and the boys could go to the movies together,” she said.

Stronger Than Ever

David’s Family has learned a lot over the years about how the rest of the world treats people who are in the military.

“Most of the world goes about its business, never realizing what military Families go through,” Cathey said. “I often wanted to wear a sign in public that said ‘My husband is deployed and I am worn out!’ to explain why I wasn’t the freshest and most polished person. It is amazing, the things you can let slide. Being a stressed-out parent made me not that much fun to be around at times.”

Overall, being away from each other has made the Robertses love each other

even more. They celebrated David’s return from his final deployment by renewing their vows in Las Vegas, dressed as Elvis and Priscilla.

“We get to have that ‘first time’ [again],” said Cathey.

“If not for the strength of my wife and children, I would not be able to continue serving my state and country,” David added.

For information on National Guard Family support groups, visit JointServicesSupport.org



David and Cathey enjoy David’s homecoming from the 1/16th Agribusiness Development Team.

One of Marilou Peavley's more famous images is of the Arizona Army National Guard's 158th Infantry Division's coming home ceremony in 2007.



above&beyond

A True Patriot

Showing the volunteer spirit

By RACHEL GLADSTONE, STAFF WRITER

If you were to look up the word “volunteer” in the dictionary, it wouldn’t be surprising to find a picture of Marilou Peavley beside it. A professional photographer from Scottsdale, AZ, Marilou has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Joint Family Programs Office (JFPO) in Phoenix, AZ, and it seems she never says no to anything that’s asked of her.

Valerie Speltz, the Family Assistant Relationship Manager for the JFPO, is fond of her star volunteer, who has become a good friend.

“Marilou is a great volunteer,” she shared. “Whenever there’s a need, she’s the first one to raise her hand. And she stands out because of her hard work and dedication to the military Families and Service workers.”

In the Beginning

“It all started when a lady from Tucson asked me to help with a homecoming four years ago,” Marilou told *Foundations* when we spoke with her in June. “That was when I met Valerie. Her husband’s unit, the 158th Infantry, was coming home and there were over 700 Service Members. My job was to get cookies and water for the Families who’d be waiting for the units to come in.

“I had about five days to do it, but I came up with 2,680 bottles of water and 124 dozen cookies. I got bars, grocery stores and people in the community to donate everything. But the last unit got delayed and I knew all the food and water would be gone. So a friend and I went to the store at 2:30 a.m. and bought a whole grocery cart full of food.

Everybody was so grateful, and they didn’t expect it.”

After such an experience, less hearty souls might have backed off, but Peavley enjoyed that first event so much, she continued to volunteer as often as she was needed. She also began adding photography to the mix.

“I do all the Welcome Homes and Farewells, and I also photograph them,” she told us. “I’ve learned to watch for the emotion, some special little touch, some little spark. I try to get pictures of every Soldier.” She then transfers these photos onto discs for Valerie, who forwards them to the Families. “She offers her time and talent by taking pictures at every event, and she does it at no charge,” Valerie told us.

PHOTOS COURTESY MARILOU PEAVLEY

Keep Coming Back

In addition to the 10 Farewells and 10 Homecomings Peavley has organized, she’s also helped put together events such as Operation Home Front, which was a huge success. During the Christmas season, VFW Post 3513 in Scottsdale, where she serves as the Family Support Chairwoman, became a makeshift store where Family members of deployed Soldiers were able to shop for Christmas presents free of charge. “We had every table and every chair covered with toys, clothing, toiletries and food,” Marilou said. “There were wall-to-wall products and wall-to-wall people.”

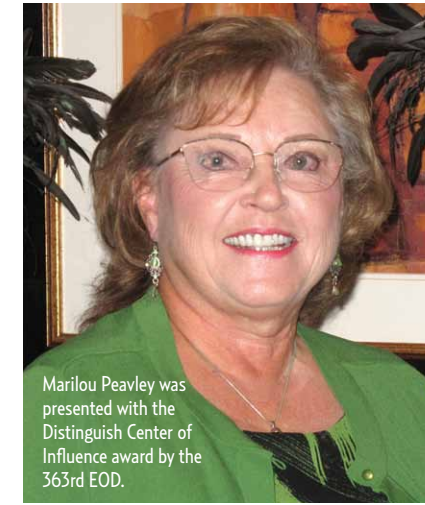
Several ongoing events are geared toward the children of Soldiers, such as Operation Military Kids, the first of which was also held at Peavley’s VFW post. “It was an opportunity for the kids to learn how to deal with a parent being gone,” she shared. “It was also to let them know that there were other kids just like them—that they weren’t the only ones with a parent serving overseas.”

“We also held an event for Wounded Warriors and their Families,” Valerie Speltz told us. “And Marilou kept the children entertained while Military One Source briefed the parents. One of the things she did was to bring in sugar cookies, and the kids got to decorate them and present them to the Wounded Warriors.”

Continuing to brag about her favorite volunteer, Valerie could barely contain her affection for Peavley. “She’s very committed to making sure the Service Members and their Families are well taken care of. She’s very patriotic and wears her VFW smock proudly,” she said. “Marilou is like the mom that everybody would want. She has a heart of gold.”

Awards and Rewards

Although Peavley has won six awards for her outstanding service to military Families, she’s modest about her



Marilou Peavley was presented with the Distinguish Center of Influence award by the 363rd EOD.

achievements. “When I saw the list of things I’d done I couldn’t believe it,” she shared. “But when you’re doing it, you just keep going, and you don’t stop to think about all your accomplishments.”

Among the awards she’s received is one from the Arizona Coalition for Military Families in thanks for the breakfasts she provides for their monthly meetings. Another is a commendation for feeding a Guard unit that was returning home in two waves. Peavley spent \$100 of her own money and hours of her time making 50 pounds of barbecue for 80 Family members who were waiting for the Soldiers’ arrival.

To Marilou, it’s all in a day’s work. And work she does. Besides holding her current position at the VFW, she’s been post president twice and also served as the president for District 4 for the state of Arizona. This year she’ll serve as the DSW Auxiliary Officer as well as Americanism Chairwoman for the Department of Arizona. And as if that isn’t enough, Peavley is also a Patriotic Instructor and runs two businesses.

“Being of service is heartwarming for me,” she told us. “It gives me a good feeling, helping my community and helping the military Families. My husband was a 24-year Veteran of the Air Force, but when I met him, he was retiring, so I was never a Service wife.

support

To see more of Marilou’s work, visit the following websites:
mariloupeavley.fineartamerica.com

Now I have a chance to give back. It doesn’t take a whole lot to make people happy. It’s just a matter of being there for them, listening to them and getting involved in some events. It’s a feeling of patriotism for me.”

A Little Help From Her Friends

Marilou insists she couldn’t have accomplished everything she has without a little help.

“I could never have done all this without the help of the members of VFW Post 3513 Auxiliary in Scottsdale,” she said.

So, what’s next for this dynamo? In addition to other events, Marilou is working in conjunction with Valerie Speltz to organize the largest Packing Party they’ve ever done.

“We’ve done Packing Parties in the past where volunteers put personal packages together for Service men and women overseas. We’re about to do a huge Packing Party this August, and we’ll be sending over 500 packages.”

When all is said and done, it’s a wonder that Marilou has a moment to breathe. But the work is a natural for this tireless volunteer, who also happens to be the mother of two grown children. “Volunteering is heartwarming. It shows that you’re thinking about others before you think about yourself,” she shared. “It’s the most rewarding feeling, and one that money cannot buy.”

Do you know of a person or organization going Above and Beyond in support of our troops? Let us know at Editor@GuardFoundations.com.

A Network of Support

Minnesota Yellow Ribbon Program Unites Communities

By SPC MILES EAKINS, MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Annette Kuyper's vision clouded with tears as her son boarded the bus that would carry him and his fellow Minnesota National Guard Soldiers to war. In her mind, he was still a little boy in a Batman costume. In reality, he was a strong 22-year-old Soldier who was willing to drop everything to serve his country.

She saw a young female Soldier hug her father. The father was distraught. She watched a Soldier who had carried his newborn baby onto the bus, tearfully pass the infant back to the front just before the doors closed.

At that time, Annette, a resident of Farmington, MN, knew only the heartbreak of the moment. Little did she know these memories would last for the rest of her life.

An FRG is born

To her surprise, her son had volunteered her to be the leader of his unit's Family Readiness Group (FRG).

"I had no idea what [a Family Readiness Group] was at the time, but I quickly learned that it was a support system for military Families," said Annette. "It allows Soldiers to focus on their mission."

Realizing the importance of FRGs for Guard Families, Annette turned her group into a tight-knit support network over the course of the unit's two-year deployment.

In 2008, Farmington, a growing city located about 40 minutes south of the Twin Cities, was in turmoil in many areas—politics, growth, business and housing, to name a few. Even the city's annual celebration, called Dew Days, looked like it might not happen due to the lack of donations and volunteers.

Yellow Ribbon around Minnesota

In the summer of 2008, Annette heard about a new Minnesota National Guard program called Beyond the Yellow Ribbon. They were looking for state communities to get involved.



"I decided to start one in my community, because I saw how isolated military Families could be without support," said Annette.

Annette placed an ad about the first meeting in Farmington's local newspaper. She expected a minimal response because of the problems in the community. Yet, 30 residents attended.

As the Farmington Yellow Ribbon Network grew, so did the community. The town quickly came together to form the Farmington Warrior to Citizen (W2C) group. W2C held monthly meetings and formed an action plan detailing how they would support local Service Members and their Families. This common goal helped community members see past their differences and focus on working together.

With a core committee led by Annette and over 140 volunteers, W2C organized Family support, provided community education and recognized Service Members and their Families in a variety of ways. In February 2008, Farmington was recognized for their efforts by Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty. For going above and beyond in their support of Soldiers and Families, they were named Minnesota's first Yellow Ribbon City.

"I decided to start [an FRG] in my community, because I saw how isolated military Families could be without support."

—Annette Kuyper

* * *


Vision leads to success

Through the vision of the Minnesota National Guard's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program, the Farmington W2C and several new Yellow Ribbon Communities, the Yellow Ribbon Campaign continues to grow and flourish in communities across the state.

Watching her son deploy, feeling her sadness and seeing firsthand the stress it caused other Families helped drive her to support other Guard Families. Little did she know this would mend her torn community, too.

Still the Farmington W2C leader today, Annette is also the State Yellow Ribbon Coordinator for Beyond the Yellow Ribbon. 



 For more information on Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, visit BeyondTheYellowRibbon.org.



Annette Kuyper was surprised to be nominated as the leader of her son's unit's Family Readiness Group.

PHOTOS COURTESY MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Right Place, Right Time

Oklahoma Soldiers provide aid to crash victims

Story and Photo by OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lady Luck herself couldn't have asked for a more fortuitous outcome when four Oklahoma National Guard Soldiers provided aid to four victims of a rollover accident on a rural Nebraska highway in June.

The four Soldiers are pursuing careers as a sheriff's deputy, a physician assistant, a nurse and a respiratory technician, forming a team tailor-made for handling the incident. Platoon leader First Lieutenant Anthony Clark and Specialists Craig Owens, Tamesha Lewis and Jessica Dobbins, along with approximately 50 fellow Soldiers from the 1245th Transportation Company, were traveling to South

He treated him accordingly and then wrote everything down in preparation to hand the patient over to the EMTs.

"When it was over," said Owens, "my adrenaline was going so fast, I was looking around, ready to help someone else."

The 1245th Transportation Company, along with the 1345th Transportation Company and the 345th Combat Service and Support Battalion, were on their way to Golden Coyote, a multi-force exercise held annually in South Dakota that provides opportunities for real-world training in preparation for deployment overseas. The two transportation units have been hauling wood cut by the U.S.

Forest Service to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for use in home and ceremonial fires.

According to Clark, a sheriff's deputy and the group's officer-in-charge, though only the four were officially recognized, managing the accident scene took the efforts of everyone present. After gasoline

was discovered leaking out of the vehicles, several non-commissioned officers used their military training to monitor and contain the gasoline, set up checkpoints on either side of the highway to control the flow of traffic, and allow the passage of emergency vehicles. Other Soldiers used their wet-weather gear to build temporary shelters over the victims to protect them from the heavy rain and wrapped them in blankets for warmth. Others made a human barrier between the victims and the road to shield them from curious onlookers.

Comfort and support

Dobbins, a supply specialist from Altus, found herself assuring an agitated female victim that everything was going to be OK. After a quick assessment to check for injuries, Dobbins discovered the woman was very confused and disoriented. The woman bonded quickly with Dobbins and held tightly to her hand until she was taken away in the ambulance.

"I kept telling her that they were there to help her and everything was going to be OK."

—SPC Jessica Dobbins

Dakota on Highway 83 when they came upon the accident.

Lewis, a truck driver for the 1245th and a nursing student at the University of Central Oklahoma, said her first thought was somebody in that accident was going to be dead.

"I have not seen a dead body yet," said Lewis, of Del City, who treated one of the victims for a head injury and a broken finger, "but when I got out there everything clicked. I think that would be really hard to see—that you couldn't save someone's life."

Right to work

Owens, a cook for the unit and a physician assistant studying at the University of Oklahoma, headed toward the scene with Lewis. Owens, of Lawton, said the adrenaline just took over.

"We immediately began taking care of patients, starting with a head-to-toe assessment and treating the worst injuries first."

Owens found one of the victims had a possible broken hip.



Oklahoma National Guard Soldiers 1LT Anthony Clark, SPC Craig Owens, SPC Tamesha Lewis and SPC Jessica Dobbins assisted victims of a rollover accident on their way to annual training in South Dakota. The four Soldiers have civilian skills that made them the perfect fit for the incident.

"She couldn't remember her name and age. Whenever someone new came over to help her, she would get angry with them. I kept telling her that they were there to help her and everything was going to be OK," said Dobbins, a respiratory therapy student from Cameron University. The names and conditions of the four victims were not released.

Chief of Staff for the Oklahoma National Guard, BG Robbie Asher, presented the four Soldiers with coins at South Dakota National Guard Headquarters June 18, saying the four represented "all National Guard Soldiers" by their actions. The adjutant general for the South Dakota National Guard, BG Timothy Reisch, also attended the ceremony.


Coins bearing a unit's crest and motto are an informal way of recognizing a Soldier's hard work and are highly prized by military personnel. The bus the four were riding on was the second wave of Soldiers headed for the forward operating base in Custer National Park. The first wave took the larger Highway 81 while the bus Clark and his team were riding on took Highway 83. Clark, of Midwest City, said he wondered

why they were stuck on this little two-lane highway that was "taking forever."

Destiny

"Maybe it was meant to be," he said later, in the command post situated in the Black Hills. The other three nodded in agreement.

"As a Soldier you learn how to do the job of the person one rank below you and the person one rank above you. It gives you the flexibility and mind-set that you can do whatever it is you have to do," said Clark. "No one hesitated. Everyone jumped in to help."

"These guys," he said, indicating the other three, "are not only medical personnel. They are Soldiers." 

How is your community supporting the Guard?
How is the Guard serving your community?
We want to hear about it. Contact us at
Editor@GuardFoundations.com.



For more information about the Missouri National Guard, please call 1-800-Go-Guard or visit moguard.com.

Hundreds of children at Kelly High School in Benton, MO, participated in Fun Day with the Army National Guard. Here, two students play with inflatable pugil sticks while SPC Vikas Chaudray observes.

A Day of Fun

Missouri students spend time with the National Guard

Story and Photo by MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Dylan Harbison said that the weapons simulator she got to use as part of Fun Day with the Missouri National Guard was “sick.” It’s a general term the 10th-grader uses to refer to something in a good way.

“It was pretty cool,” Harbison said of the high-tech, computerized simulator that allowed her to shoot bad guys as part of a virtual world that emphasizes marksmanship training. “There were screens all around me, and we had to watch out for these guys who were trying to attack us. It looked so real. It was really, really sick.”

Harbison was among 600 Scott County junior- and senior-high students who participated in Fun Day with the Guard recently at Kelly High School in Benton. In addition to the popular weapons simulator, students got to rock-climb, mock-fight with pugil sticks and race on an inflatable obstacle course.

Also very popular among the kids was a push-up challenge that allowed them to earn Missouri National Guard T-shirts.

Bell said. “We want them to know that we are directly involved in the communities all around them. This is supposed to be fun, today.”

Rhonda Ratledge, a counselor at Kelly High School, said the Missouri National Guard is a good option for a lot of their students.

“Some of our students may not go to college or don’t come from a strong educational background,” Ratledge said. “So an event like this one introduces many of our students to the National Guard and lets them know that it’s another option for their careers after high school.”

Kelly High School has never had an event like the one sponsored by the Missouri National Guard, she said.

“We hadn’t ever done anything like this before,” she said. “The kids are still talking about the good time they had. We really appreciate the Guard doing what it did for our students. Members of the community noticed it going on and also voiced their appreciation. The kids just thought it was great. We all did.”

Chase Pinson, a 17-year-old senior from Benton, said he especially enjoyed the rock-climbing wall, despite the fact that he’s afraid of heights.

“This is pretty neat,” he said.

“I’m afraid of heights, and I faced

it and still did it. I guess that’s what the military is supposed to be about.”

Terry Moreland, a 17-year-old junior from Sikeston, recently joined the Missouri National Guard and leaves for Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood in June. It was events like this one that encouraged him to join the National Guard, he said.

“I think it’s a good way to encourage people and show people what the Guard is about,” he said. “It shows them that when they join, they’ll be out in the community, and we do work with the community. It really is a chance for people to do things they never thought they’d be able to do.”

“I think it’s a good way to encourage people and show people what the Guard is about.”

—Terry Moreland

The Missouri National Guard Mobile Events Team brought down much of the equipment, and the weapons simulator was provided by the National Guard Bureau.

“We’re just trying to introduce some of the students to the Missouri National Guard,” said SSG Steven Bell, a recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer based in Cape Girardeau. “We want them to know that we’re an option for them after high school. We provide options for college or [for making] the National Guard their career right after high school.”

But Bell said the event wasn’t just a recruiting tool.

“We want them to understand that we are Citizen-Soldiers,”

It's a Small World



Tips for surviving the stress of deployment from a Guard spouse

By MICHELLE REITEMEYER

Our Family trip to Disney World was supposed to be a dream vacation. I'd saved my husband's military separation pay and hazardous duty pay for the year he was deployed. I'd researched hotels, transportation and the best deals on passes. We were going to have a great time, by golly.

Instead, once we arrived, I ended up calling the airline every day to see how much it would cost to go home. Staggered by the quotes, I kept convincing myself the next day would be better. But, that never happened.

Our four children, ages 6 months to 5 years, were taking turns having meltdowns. Even though my husband had been home for several weeks, he had not yet readjusted to life as "dad." And, after doing it for so long, I had lost my stamina to deal with cranky, whiny children whose schedules had been completely disrupted by travel.

I thought if we could just get them to the park, they would see how much fun it all was. It was late morning by the time we first got through the doors. The baby was hungry, so I had my husband take the other kids on the "It's a Small World" ride while I fed her. Within minutes, they were back.

"What happened?" I asked. "Too scary," said my husband, pointing to the 4-year-old.

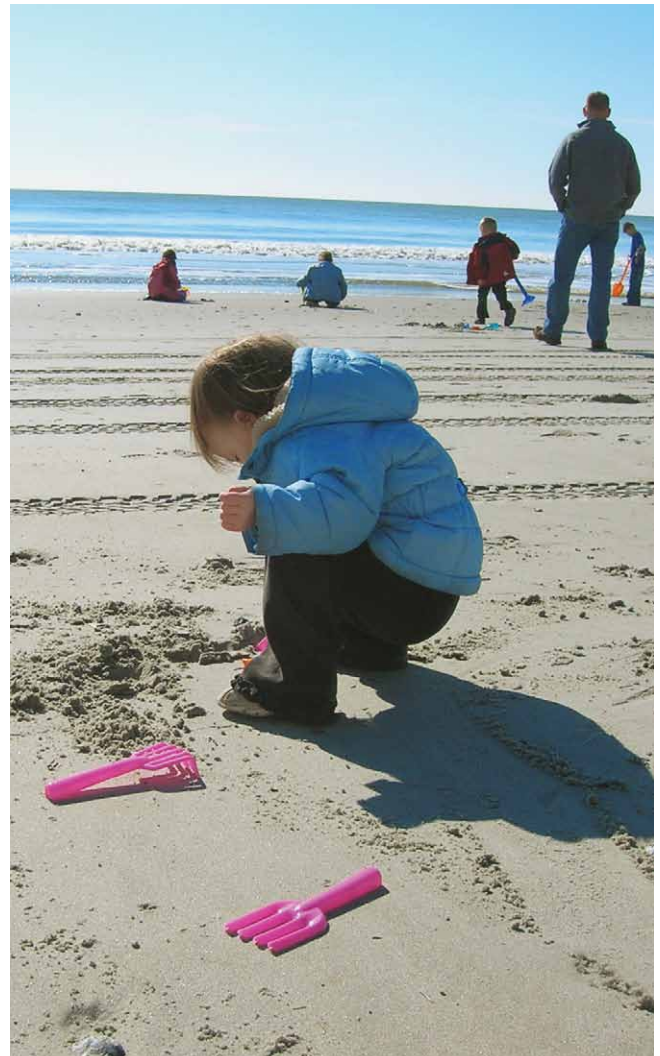
Maybe they just needed to eat. We got in line for food. Again, our 4-year-old started fussing. I took him outside for a talk. "You will eat. You will ride rides. You will have fun. Got it?" With that clear guidance, we ate lunch and then went back to "It's a Small World." OK—there was tinny, repetitive music echoing among mannequins with blank eyes and painted smiles. I can understand why he freaked out. But I made him ride it, and by the end, he decided it wasn't so bad.

Next up was the Peter Pan ride. This time, my 5-year-old was digging in his heels. It was dark; he was terrified. I forced him on. The attendant had a look as though he'd seen this a hundred times before. "Great," I thought, "I'm one of 'those' moms."

I wish I could say that was the worst day, but there always seemed to be something that was upsetting them. We did survive the week, but just barely.

When my husband returned from his most recent deployment, we opted for a quiet getaway to Myrtle Beach, in February. Just the snowbirds and us. We played board games. We did jigsaw puzzles. We played in the sand wearing winter coats. We just enjoyed each other's company and learned how to be a Family again.

Funny thing, though. If you ask my kids, they'll tell you that, although they liked Myrtle Beach, the best vacation ever was when we went to Disney World. 📍



MICHELLE REITEMEYER

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