175th Wing FRG Newsletter

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How You Can Help: The FRG needs more volunteers. If interested, please attend the next FRG meeting, or contact Jeanne Benden at (cell) 443-992-8280 or Jeanne.Benden.Civ@ang.af.mil

From the Mind of Maureen

Summer Fun

It's summer, what most of us would like to think of as a relaxing time, spent with family and friends, enjoying warm, long nights and vacations. Unfortunately, today, we are so busy with our jobs and activities, that we forget the simple things. This week take some time for yourself, even if it is 15 minutes, doing something you like. Release some childhood memories and try one of theses activities: catching fire flies with you kids at dusk, get a snowball, run threw the sprinkler while watering the grass, play flash light tag with the kids, make a tent in the yard with old sheets, count the seconds between the thunder and lightening during a storm, tell a stupid, corny joke. Call someone and tell them you love them. Use paper plates for dinner and skip the clean up. Cut some flowers from you garden for your table. Life is too short to let it pass us by without some joy in it. Go watch the sunset with someone you love.

Messages From Home

Jeanne Benden has purchased a DVD Camcorder for Guard members to borrow to record messages to their families when they are deployed. If you are interested, please contact Jeanne Benden.

Upcoming Articles

Does your child or you for that matter, wonder exactly what your Guard member does? Submit your request for an interview about Guard Jobs for new articles in upcoming Newsletters: What's My Daddy/Mommy Do?

From the Mind of Maureen …….continued from page 1

Lending a Helping Hand

175th Wing Reaches Across the World With Operation Sleep Tight and Focused Giving

Within the last few months, the Family Readiness Group has participated in two separate projects in support of our Guard members deployed to Afghanistan. What began as an effort to assist in providing new bed sheets for our deploying members became Operation Sleep Tight.

We were able to collect over 100 sets of twin sheets that were distributed to our Guard members as they left for Afghanistan. Guard families and friends donated all sorts of sets, including Transformers, Disney Characters, Super heroes and Princess sheets. Additional sheet sets were sent as rotations left for those who deployed before the Operation started. Hopefully, we were able to provide some home comfort and, occasionally, a smile, to our deployed members. Those sheets are rotated via the base laundry to all personnel at Bagram Air Base, so the sheets we sent will be used by any member of our military.

A little over a month ago, our Wing family program Coordinator, Jeanne Benden, received a forwarded E-mail from Chaplain Howard Bell at Task Force Medical Hospital, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, requesting our assistance in collecting donations for the local Afghan people that the hospital serves. Most locals live in remote villages or refugee camps with limited, if any, access to even the most basic amenities of life. What an overwhelming response we had as the E-mail circulated with the help of our Retirees!!!! Items collected included clothing for men, women and children, toys, blankets, stuffed animals, school supplies and teacher kits. Vans and truckloads of donated items began arriving and, shortly, Jeanne Benden knew she would need some help. Raytheon Company was a local industry that sent a truckload of donations. Lt. Col. Bob Finley contacted Mr. John Von Paris, of Von Paris Moving, to ask for a donation of packing boxes. Within days, Mr. Von Paris, himself, and his son, Sam, delivered 80 boxes to the Base. Those boxes were immediately filled by volunteers from the Retirees, Guard members and Family Readiness volunteers. Lt. Col. Finley again contacted John Von Paris and, within 24 hours, another 80 boxes were delivered. Thanks to Von Paris Moving for their support!! It was hot work, packing all those boxes, the week of July 7th. Special thanks goes to volunteers from the retirees: Russell Hershberger, John Jean, David (from Thursday and Friday, missed your last name), Dick Stedding, Ron Pasko, Frank Darney, Guard members: Bob Finley, Debbie Haller, Dawn Watson, Christine Catherman, Joe Matranga, FRG volunteers: Kyna Abrbogast, Gwen Brown, Danielle Linder, Debbie Frye, Sean Kelly, Dona Matranga, Ursula Kondo, Maureen Finley, and, of course, Jeanne Benden. We collected over 2 pallets of items to be shipped.

Thanks to all who provided any support to either of these efforts.

Marriage Enrichment Weekends

Looking for a great way to spice up your life or get away from the kids for a weekend for some quality time? Consider one of the upcoming Marriage Enrichment Weekends to be held at various locations across the state. Dates include:

Sept 13-14, 2008 at Crowne Plaza, Timonium
October 24-26, 2008 (Wisp Resort)
November 14-16, 2008 (Gaylord, National Harbor)
January 23-25,2009 (O'Callaghans, Annapolis)
April 24-26,2009 (Location TBD)
July 24-26,2009(Location TBD)
September 25-27.2009 (Location TBD)

For Questions contact Jeanne Benden

***See attached Registration to Sign Up!**

Thoughts on Deployment

A letter from an Active Duty Guardsman

Looking back at my time in Afghanistan I, like so many others, am filled with mixed emotions. I remember long days, PT uniforms, reflective belts and lots of dust...just a few of the things that most people would just as soon forget. But there was another side of my time at Bagram Air Base that I will remember for the rest of my life. While stationed far away from my family and friends, literally on the other side of the planet, I was given the opportunity to help my fellow Americans in ways most people only wish they could. It's no stretch to say that my actions, and the actions of my fellow guardsman, had a direct and lasting impact on literally thousands of U.S. and allied forces currently fighting the war on terror in the mountains of Afghanistan. What an awesome opportunity, and what an awesome responsibility.

Undoubtedly you've heard about the living conditions, the rules and the danger associated with being stationed in a combat zone. But have you heard the sound of the radio crackling to life as you fly through the darkness in southern Afghanistan, and a young soldier on the ground telling you his guys have secured the drop zone and you're "cleared to drop"? I'm one of the lucky ones....I've had this opportunity. And as I sit here looking back I think of how many people it took to make that moment happen, and I am completely humbled. Everyone, from the person building the airdrop load, to the airmen who compiled and presented the intelligence brief, to the maintainer who made the last minute repairs on the aircraft, had a direct impact on a group of soldiers deep in enemy territory, entirely dependent on air support for survival. This was just one mission, and alone it would have been enough for me to justify my time away from home.

More than likely, by the time you read this I will have returned to Afghanistan for my second rotation. Fortunately, I'll have your mom/dad/husband/wife/brother/sister/son/daughter looking out for me while I'm there. My wife and family are worried; as are you I'm sure. So here's what I can offer...the safe return of your loved one is the number one priority for this unit. There's no denying the place we're going is dangerous, but I can tell you from personal experience that we will not be alone. We will be among thousands of airmen, soldiers, sailors and marines that comprise one of the most elite fighting forces ever assembled. I know this fact alone can't remove all worry, quite frankly nothing I can say will have that effect, but I can tell you it sure helped me sleep easier at night.

In closing, I'd like to personally thank each of you for all of your support. Believe me when I say your letters, e-mails, care packages and conversations mean more than words can say. You are, after all, the reason we do what we do.

1stLt. Christopher Meyer

135th Airlift Squadron, Maryland Air Guard

Recipe of the Month: August 3 is National Watermelon Day, so in honor of that, try the below recipe for *Watermelon Vinaigrette*:

Ingredients:
4 cups fresh watermelon, chopped and drained
1/4 cup red onion, diced small
2 Tbsp honey
1/4 cup champagne vinegar
3/4 cup canola oil
2 Tbsp fresh basil chopped
1 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

Preparation: Combine watermelon, red onion, champagne vinegar, canola oil, basil, and parsley in blender. Pulse on and off about 30 seconds until combined. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Taken From:
http://homecooking.about.com/od/saladrecipes/r/blcon125.htm

Dealing with Depression
Written By: Donna M. Young, LCPC

Depression: A Very Treatable Illness
Lately have you been feeling very sad and tired, crying more than usual and feeling as if you have no energy or interest in doing anything? If you have been feeling this way for more than a few weeks, you may have depression. Each year, more than 20 million American adults (9.5 percent of the population) are diagnosed with depression. About 10 percent of men and up to 25 percent of women will experience depression in their lifetime.

What is Depression
Everyone occasionally feels down or sad. But depression is much more than an occasional blue period. It is a serious medical illness that is very treatable. People with depression often complain of feeling sad or down every day. They often feel tired much of the time, lack energy, and have no interest in socializing. Many people with depression also complain of decreased motivation and diminished interest in or ability to perform every day life tasks. Even getting up to go to work can feel like a chore. Restlessness, irritability and thoughts of suicide are also signs of depression.

Sometimes depression can cause physical problems such as body aches and pains, headaches, nervousness, problems with memory and concentration, sleep and appetite changes.

Common causes of depression
The jury is still out on the exact cause of depression. However, it is believed that there may be several causes:
Genetics- Depression can run in families. So if someone in your family has been diagnosed, your chances of having depression are greater.
Grief and loss- Death of loved ones or other types of losses such as divorce and separation can lead to depression
Stress- Exposure to stressful events such as sudden financial problems, loss of a job, and physical abuse can lead to depression
Physical illness- Some illnesses can cause changes in your brain that lead to depression. Symptoms of an under active thyroid can look like depression
Hormones- Quick changes in hormone levels can lead to depression. Women may get depressed before their period, after giving birth or during menopause
Medications- The side effects of some medications are depression. It is important to tell your doctor about all medications you are taking
Drugs or alcohol- Drugs and alcohol affect chemical balances in the brain and can lead to depression.

Treatment
Unfortunately, everyone that is diagnosed with this illness does not seek treatment. This is sad, because this illness is very treatable. The two most common forms of treatment are medication and talk therapy. Your family doctor or psychiatrist can tell you which will be best for you.

Medication: Medications used to treat depression are called antidepressants. They can be prescribed by your primary care doctor or psychiatrist and usually take a few weeks to work. You

may need to try different medicines to determine which one works best, so it is important to stay in contact with your doctor about how you feel.

Talk therapy: Therapy involves talking to a counselor, therapist, social worker or psychologist. Therapy helps you to change your thinking, feelings and behavior.

How to get help
Your family doctor is a good place to start. She will most likely ask you a series of questions, may have you complete a questionnaire, and will have you talk about you feel. Your physician will also evaluate you to rule out any other medical problems that may be the cause of your symptoms.

A psychiatrist can also evaluate your symptoms and suggest the most effective treatment for you. You may also talk to your religious leader or chaplain to point you in the right direction for help. The most important thing to do is to seek help.

How to help someone with depression
If you are concerned that someone you know may be depressed and in need of assistance, here's how you can help:

- Tell the person you are concerned about him
- Let the person know the illness is not their fault
- Suggest the person see their doctor
- Help the person make the appointment
- Accompany the person to the appointment
- Give the person articles or pamphlets on depression
- Be available to talk to the person once they start treatment

If you are worried that someone you or someone you know may be depressed and thinking of suicide, by all means seek help. Call 911, talk to a family member, doctor, supervisor, chaplain, friend.

Things to remember:
It's not your fault that you have depression.
Depression is very treatable.
Recovering from depression is a process.
This is an illness that can decrease your energy and concentration so take it easy; make lists and set small, attainable goals.
Don't isolate yourself. Stay around people for comfort and support.
Exercise, eat well and take care of your body.
Avoid drugs and alcohol, as they will make the depression worse.

For more information:
National Institute of Mental Health
866-615-6464
www.nimh.nih.gov

American Psychological Association
800-374-2721
www.apa/org/topics/topicdepress.html

Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program 2008

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM
MARYLAND

Service Member Name:
_____

Unit Affiliation:
_____

Name of Attending Partner: _____ **SSN:** _____
(*Spouse*) *(Must have for reimbursement)*

Date Attending: _____

Home Address:
_____
_____

Estimate Round Trip Mileage from Home of Record to the Hotel Site: _____

***If your residence is more than 55 miles from the hotel, you are authorized to stay overnight Friday night.**

Please indicate which nights you will be staying at the hotel:

Friday Night_____ **Saturday Night**_____

Day Time Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Smoking Room _____ **Non-smoking Room** _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY WHILE I AM AT THE TRAINING WORKSHOP PLEASE CALL:

PERSON TO CONTACT: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

MAIL COMPLETED REGISTRATION PACKETS TO:

Family Readiness Office
2701 Eastern Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21220
Attn: Jeanne Benden
Or email to:
Jeanne.Benden@mdbalt.ang.af.mil