



December 2012

A message from the Commander's wife to family members:

Dear Families:

Didn't you just love our Family Power Hour meeting last month? It was great seeing everyone. We learned how to use "I" statements and other basic communication tools. Stephanie Taber shared tricks of the trade and how to set up the "Yes" when talking with others. I want to thank Shelley Bianca for attending (because I heard she had to skip a favorite yoga class to be there), and I hope even more spouses will join us this month. Spread the word. These sessions are for everyone and give us a chance to relax in good company while learning valuable family readiness information.

Join us this month (Dec. 11) to learn how stress affects our body and mind, how food choices can make a positive difference and how to relax using breathing techniques. I know I will soon use these breathing techniques while shopping for gifts in a jam-packed mall.

Speaking of stress... December is a month filled with fun, but also lots of stress. Managing stress is very important because we all experience it. The more stress management techniques we know, the better. Apart from eating ice cream (my usual method to deal with stress), here are helpful tips:

- 1) Breathe slow deep breaths.
- 2) Start with one area in your life and make a small positive change.
- 3) Exercise regularly.
- 4) Laugh, giggle and smile a lot.
- 5) Get cuddly with a special person, pet or favorite blanket.
- 6) Use scents (such as perfume, lavender, orange, etc.) to make you feel energized and rejuvenated.
- 7) Get organized.
- 8) Choose to be happy.

We all wake up each morning and hit the ground running, so choosing to be happy (#8) is important. Happiness is a state of mind. It's your outlook on life and your relationships, so stay close to those you love. Do what's right, too, and you'll be happier. Don't let others control how you feel. You be the one to decide.

To stay happy, you need to know what makes you happy. What are your happy triggers? I have several, but here are just a few: Movie night at home with my family and blankets, hot cocoa when it snows, fishing on a quiet pier or boat, baking cookies when it's cold outside, having coffee with a friend, and watching others open gifts at Christmas.

Isn't it funny how you remember those things from childhood that made you most happy? Moments of special celebrations, such as Easters with family egg hunts, or family reunions in the summers... happiness keeps us healthy and remains in our hearts long after the moments are gone. Create these fun and happy moments every chance you get. You can never start too soon or have too many.

Have a wonderfully happy and low-stress December, and don't forget to hug those you love. Hugs last forever, too, and lets those around us know they are special.

Choose happiness every day, and breathe those deep breaths when the choice seems hard.

Happy Holidays!

Traci Kelley

From the desk of the Family Readiness Officer

By Gerard "Mac" McManus

Now that we are in the full swing of this year's holiday season, I would like to share a few thoughts and ideas to help us all stay happy, healthy and safe.

First, it is never a bad time to check our smoke detectors. Check all your smoke detectors in and around your house and replace batteries to ensure the equipment is in proper working order.

Second, do not overload electrical outlets. Many of us like to have our homes and trees brightly colored with lights and other electrical decorations. If that is you, this year may I suggest investing in a power-surge extension cord or power strip so as not to overload your wall sockets. At the end of the evening before you retire, make sure you disconnect all electrical cords for the wall sockets.

Third, if you enjoy having and decorating a real tree as part of your decorations, be sure to keep it watered to minimize fire hazards.

Fourth, keep candles and all fire products, matches, etc. out of the reach of children. Make sure you extinguish candles whenever you leave the same room.

Finally, do not forget to remove your iPod from your car charger when you park your car for the evening. Not too long ago one of our Marines' vehicles was severely damaged when he forgot to remove the iPod from his car charger. It overheated, caught fire and damaged the car and almost his garage.

The holiday season is a time for enjoying and appreciating our family and friends as we gather together for good food and festivities. Let's take a few moments to follow these suggestions to ensure that this holiday season will indeed be a happy, healthy and safe one.

On an entirely different note, I would like to announce the latest evolutionary phase of Marine Corps Systems Command's Family Readiness Program. The Family Readiness Program held its first meeting Nov. 27 with the newly installed Family Readiness Assistants. These new assistants come from organizations within the Command. Their primary role will be to serve as a communication portal between the Family Readiness Officer, the unit, the Marine or civilian Marine and their contacts. In short, they will become the face of the Family Readiness Program within their organizations. I was greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of these folks as we met for the first time, and I look forward to working with them to improve service to our Marines, civilian Marines and their families. To each of them I say, Welcome Aboard!

Here are the new Family Readiness Assistants and the organizations they will represent:

Karen Gillaspie	WMD
Rob Davis	MRAP
Mark Billow	PM INTEL
Chris Zaffram	PM MC3
Amy Knapp	PM MC3
Lori Forrest	PM IWS
Shelly Bianca	PM IWS
Master Gunnery Sergeant Larry Freetage	PM AMMO
Katie Ruskin	DC SIAT
Valerie Tolan	AC Contracts
Lynda Fullem	Corp Comm
Nicois Harris	CMO
Bobbie Cave	PM CSS
Captain Jason Lindauer	AC PROG
Rod Montgomery	AC ALPS

Chad Kernen	PM AFSS
Jeff Nebel	PM AFSS
Lavonne Robinson	PM ISI
Judy Campbell	PM ISI
Pam Sims	GCSS-MC
Veronica Ackers	GCSS-MC

With that, I wish you all a happy holiday season.

‘Like’ MCSC Facebook, register in eMarine

If you haven't had a chance yet, take a few minutes to view and "Like" our Marine Corps Systems Command Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Marine-Corps-Systems-Command-MCSC/179229838801763>. You must have a personal Facebook account to access it.

Also, register in eMarine at www.emarine.org. It is available for Marines, their families and civilians in the Command. Contact Mac McManus with any questions regarding eMarine.

Next Family Power Hour features Stress Management and Nutrition

Are you feeling stressed? Has your diet gone awry and it's just the beginning of the holiday season? If you answered yes to either question, the next Family Power Hour is the place to be. Command members and their families and friends are invited to attend from 11 a.m. to noon Dec. 11 in Trailer 2209 at Quantico's Hospital Point. Stop by, bring a friend, or join your spouse. Just show up to enjoy some fun. No RSVP is required, so bring your lunch and enjoy.

Lauren King, a Registered Dietitian, and Patricia Padgett, an RN Educator, will present this fun and informative session you won't want to miss. Learn how stress affects your body and mind, how food choices can make a positive difference and how to relax using breathing techniques. Everyone can benefit with effective stress-management techniques and diet tips.

Treat yourself well during the holidays and enjoy the season with other 'POWERful' people. Take a break from your hectic schedule and see what these Family Power Hours are all about. They promise to be relaxing and probably addictive as well – a habit you just can't break each month.

You may also bring a Toys for Tots donation. We will have a donation box on site. You'll feel doubly good giving to others while giving health tips to yourself, too.

Holiday Social set for Dec. 18

The Marine Corps Systems Command's (MCSC) Holiday Social will take place from 1-4 p.m. Dec. 18 at The Clubs At Quantico. All MCSC and Program Executive Officer Land System employees are invited to bring their children, visit with Santa and enjoy the afternoon's festivities.

Activities for little ones include writing letters to Santa, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, ornament making and rides on a reindeer tractor pull. The Quantico Marine Quartet will provide entertainment, and again this year, the master of ceremonies will be Colonel Mike Bergerud, Program Manager for Marine Intelligence.

Light snacks and finger foods will be served. There will also be a cash bar and lots of door prizes, including a GPS, electronic note pad and the grand prize – a flat screen HDTV.

Section ticket representatives are now selling tickets, but sales end at noon Dec. 14. From now through Dec. 9, tickets are \$6 each and \$25 for a family of five or more. From Dec. 10-14, tickets are \$10 per person or \$30 for family of five or more. Marines are free, but they still need to pick up a ticket to attend. Like last year, family members for Sergeants and below are also free, and so are all children age 12 and under. Tickets are needed for entrance to the party and to also be eligible for door prizes. Tickets will not be sold at the door. A list of ticket reps can be found on VIPER at <https://mcscviper.usmc.mil/Lists/Events%20Calendar/Attachments/66/Holiday%20Social%20Ticket%20Reps.pdf>.

A flyer for this event is also on VIPER at

<https://mcscviper.usmc.mil/Lists/Events%20Calendar/Attachments/66/Holiday%20Social%20flyer%202012.pdf>.

Holiday Social adds dessert contest

A Dessert Contest has been added to the Holiday Social. Command family members and employees are encouraged to prepare their favorite dish – pies, cakes, cookies, fudge, brownies, etc. – and bring them to the Holiday Social. The dishes will be judged on taste and presentation. Judges will choose a grand prize winner and a runner-up. Both will be awarded certificates. First place will receive a holiday cake platter with various holiday mixes for cupcakes and cookies.

To enter the dessert competition, send the entrant's name, name of dessert and type of dessert to dawn.buerke@usmc.mil or lorraine.foley@usmc.mil by Dec. 14. Dessert dishes must be in place at the Holiday Social by 1 p.m. Dec. 18. Dessert dishes that arrive later than 1 p.m. will not be entered into the competition and will not be judged. People who do not want to enter the competition are still encouraged to bring a dessert dish to share with attendees. A flyer for the dessert contest can be found on VIPER at <https://mcscviper.usmc.mil/Lists/Events%20Calendar/Attachments/66/Holiday%20Dessert%20Contest.pdf>.

Organizations compete with gift baskets

SIAT is challenging all Command organizations to come up with a better theme gift basket than what the engineers are creating. They have named their SIAT basket, "The Engineered Elves Basket." It will include only items engineered like Sudoku, Tetris, etc. So far, MRAP, DFM and Corporate Communications have taken on that challenge. The organization that receives the most tickets deposited for their basket will receive special recognition and bragging rights.

Theme Gift Baskets donated by Command organizations will be given as door prizes Dec. 18 at the Command Holiday Social. All employees at the Holiday Social are eligible to participate in the drawing.

The following guidelines apply:

- Donations are strictly voluntary;
- You can either donate cash or an item in the theme of the basket;
- Individual donations are limited to a maximum \$10 monetary value;
- Supervisors are discouraged from entering drawings for those gift baskets prepared by personnel from the supervisors' sections; and
- Contractors cannot contribute money. If they want to contribute an item, it has to be worth less than \$20, but that is cumulative for the company, *not* the individual contractor employee. For example, if there is one support contractor company (Company S), then the total for that company, regardless of how many employees it might have supporting a specific office, is \$20 worth of an item (or items) for the gift basket. If there are two companies (Company S and Company R), then each might contribute items worth up to \$20.

If your organization is interested in participating, contact Lynda Fullem at (703) 432-4976, lynda.fullem@usmc.mil.

Toys for Tots drop boxes available

The Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program collects new, unwrapped toys and distributes them as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the local community. According to the Toys for Tots website, these gifts are "messages of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, patriotic citizens."

Marine Corps Systems Command has placed many Toys for Tots drop boxes in most of the buildings around the Command. Employees and visitors are encouraged to make final donations by Dec. 17. All boxes will be emptied Dec. 18 in order to get the toys to children by Christmas. For more information, contact Staff Sergeant Kelly Owens at (703) 432-4315.

MCSC team provides tools for families to cope with challenges

By Traci Kelley, Family Readiness Officer Advisor

Marine Corps Systems Command's (MCSC) Family Readiness On Point Team came into existence in May 2011 with a vision to keep faith with our families by communicating, connecting and caring. We developed a program that provides a caring link to our Marines, civilian Marines, Sailors and their families.

Our program goal is to provide all family members with the tools needed to cope with the challenges of everyday life. It takes a unique family to balance life, career and mission events. Our program is here to empower our families to achieve and maintain this healthy balance.

It's no easy task. With a workforce of around 3,000 people, spread in multiple locations, and with many more civilian Marines than active-duty Marines, the wants, needs and problems that arise within the entire workforce can swing greatly from cubicle to cubicle. We all share the same space, drive through the same gates and have the same mission, so we all need similar life skills to keep us strong.

In the last 18 months MCSC's Family Readiness On Point Team has worked tirelessly, sponsoring several events. These events include town halls, open houses, spouse luncheons, family fun days and holiday socials. The latest is a monthly bring-your-own brown bag lunch series called, "Family Power Hour," where important family readiness topics are discussed together. The first "Family Power Hour" took place Nov. 13 in the T-2209 Conference Room on Hospital Point. The topic was "Effective Communication" and every second Tuesday of each month a new "Family Power Hour" family readiness topic will be discussed. It is open to all Marine Corps Systems Command employees and their families. In case of inclement weather, call (703) 432-3861 to check for cancellations. We hope to see you there.

We have also developed and use important new communication tools to include our monthly newsletter called "The Point," a webpage, two family magazines, an eMarine site and Facebook page. Send your email address to mcscpao@usmc.mil to receive our newsletter and learn about upcoming Command and family events.

Our Family Readiness On Point program is continuing to evolve and grow and is actively communicating, connecting and caring for our families through information, education and training events and activities. We all need family readiness. By partnering together, we will care for and support each other to build stronger families and a better Command.

We encourage you to learn more about our Family Readiness on Point program and volunteer opportunities. Contact our Command Family Readiness Officer at (703) 432-3861 for more information. Get involved, make some new friends, and let's keep supporting and caring for each other while having fun, too.

National Military Family Association newsletters

Click on the links to read the latest electronic newsletters for [Military Family Topics](#), [The Voice for Military Families](#), the [Monthly Bulletin](#) and [Spouse Club eNews](#), all published by the National Military Family Association.

MCCS calendar for December

The Marine Corps Community Services lists events at Quantico at this link:
<http://www.quantico.usmc-mccs.org/>

[Military OneSource connects troops, families to resources](#)

As the Information Age continues to shape modern communication, the Defense Department has revitalized and consolidated the Military OneSource website to better serve military members and their families, a Pentagon official said in a recent interview.

[Spouse surveys critical to family support, official says](#)

Defense Department officials are sending a new spouse survey to select active-duty families to assist in determining programs that best suit their needs.

Hero Summit panel encourages support for military families

A panel of military family members gathered with many of the nation's most influential journalists, civil servants and decorated service members to discuss the challenges of being a military family member and the ways that American citizens can support them.

Family programs offer transition, education, employment aid

Military families now have greater access to programs designed to assist them with a spectrum of family support matters, a senior Pentagon official said.