



August 2011

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

Dear Families:

I can't believe it is already August and school is just around the corner. Be sure to enjoy these last few weeks of summer while the days are long and your schedules flexible.

Many things signify summer to us ... Lazy beach walks, endless night talks, cool ocean breezes, ice cream "brain freezes," wildflowers on the hill, hamburgers on the grill, trips to the pool, kids happy there's no school, friends to stay, vacations away, theme parks, amusement parks, water parks and ballparks ... These special symbols and many more provide us with memories to be treasured forever. We hope many new memories are being made with your family this summer.

My family made some wonderful memories during our vacation to the Boston area where we visited family and did some sightseeing. We went to a Red Sox game, traveled the Battle Road, walked the Freedom Trail, swam at the beach, watched a parade and enjoyed some July 4th fireworks. We were inspired all over again by our country's truly beautiful sights and amazing history. We learned of so many extraordinary deeds done by ordinary people over and over again to protect their homes, communities and country. This is still so true today.

Our vacation was chocked full of fun and learning and we hope yours has been, too. Keep the spirit of summer strong in your hearts and enjoy the endless possibilities that await you each day. Fulfill earlier promises to go or do something amazing. Remember, live your best life.

If you were able to attend the Nationals vs. Marlins game July 28, we saw the Racing Presidents! What a fun time and we didn't even have to drive. I don't know about you, but I think my kids enjoyed the bus ride to the game as much as the game itself. Thank you, Corporate Communications, for setting up transportation for our families.

Now, get busy planning some more summer activities for your family to enjoy. Go on a picnic or take a bike ride together. My kids like to gather all their favorite blankets and watch a movie together in the living room. It doesn't take much to create a smile and a memory. Be spontaneous! Do what you never have time to do. Whatever you do, enjoy it with those you love. That's what truly makes it special and worth remembering.

Don't forget to keep reading, too. I read, "Major Pettigrew's Last Stand" by Helen Simonson and really enjoyed it while on the road.

I hope you are having a perfect summer,

Traci Kelley

From the desk of the Family Readiness Officer

By Mac McManus, MCSC Family Readiness Officer

Greetings and happy summer holidays! I'm sure by now many of you are counting the days until the school bell rings. Between the vacation schedule and logistics, working and now getting the kiddos ready for school, you probably need a vacation from your vacation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who came out and attended our annual Family Fun Day. The weather was perfect, the food was great, and we had well over 1,000 MCSC families and friends taking full advantage of these provisions for a fun-filled day. Hats off to the Family Fun Day Committee for all their hard work that resulted in the "best ever" Family Fun Day. Great job and a big time thank you.

Speaking of a great time – mark your calendars for this year's Christmas Holiday Social. Like last year, it will be held at the Clubs At Quantico on Tuesday, Dec. 20. This year we have reserved all four ballrooms as well as the Marathon Lounge, so we will definitely have adequate seating. Once again Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there as well as great food, fellowship and wonderful door prizes. Plan now to attend.

Finally, I would like to encourage one and all to take a few moments to explore the Marine Corps Community Services web page. It is chock full of really good information geared specifically for Marines and their families: www.usmc-mccs.org. Check it out.

May you continue to have a wonderful summer, and I hope you survive until school resumes.

August MCCS happenings

School supply buying is starting and summer's end is just right around the corner, but Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) at Quantico has fun and exciting events and workshops coming your way.

MCCS and Security Battalion want to end your summer right with our National Night Out End of Summer Blast from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 27 in the parking lot by the Quantico 50-meter pool. For more information, call (703) 784-5803.

It's not too late to take advantage of the Thursday glo-bowling special for the summer. This special is every Thursday through the end of August from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1-3 p.m. The fee of \$8 per person per session includes shoe rental and two hours of glo-bowling. For more information, call (703) 784-2210.

Getting the car ready for the summer vacation or Labor Day weekend? Be sure the brakes are ready too. Take the free brake diagnostics class from 5-9 p.m. Aug. 16 at the Auto Hobby Skills Center, Building 2080, behind Pruitt Hall Barracks. Learn how the brake system functions, what to look and listen for to help you diagnose your own repairs. The class is open to all active-duty, retirees, Defense Department civilians and their family members. For more information, call (703) 784-2729 or (703) 784-1401.

New to the area or to the Marine Corps and not sure who to ask? Let the LINKS for Spouses class be your navigator to the Corps. Classes are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 16-17 at the Religious and Family Services Annex, Room 137. To register, call (703) 784-1211.

Don't forget Girls Night Out. Are you getting ready for back to school? Kit is saving her money to buy school supplies and some material for her mom to make a couple of dresses. Find out what changes Kit makes in her life. Think of ways you can earn money to help your family. Bring in your ideas. Don't forget to bring your doll and share in the story of Kit. Snacks will be provided. The For Kids LINKS session is 8-7:30 p.m. Aug. 25 at the Marine Corps Family Team Building House, Quarters 126. For more information, call (703) 784-1211.

Cooking with kids can be fun and a great learning experience for the youngsters. Children ages 5-12 will learn a focus skill while making fun summer snacks and treats. Kids in the Kitchen is 4-5 p.m. Aug. 30 at the Religious and Family Services Annex. For More information, call (703) 784-0189.

Military Community and Family Policy eMagazine available

This issue includes tips and resources for handling the many phases of military life – from information about programs and services intended to help through various transitions, to the start of a new career, deployment, reunion or new school for children.

2011 Family of the Year Award winners

Families from the Army and the Air Force shared the honors as the National Military Family Association's 2011 Family of the Year for their service to the nation and their communities.

VA issues first payments to caregivers

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin to send out more than \$430,000 in caregiver stipend payments to roughly 200 eligible caregivers of veterans in July. These family caregivers were the first to complete their caregiver training under the program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Institute of Medicine hears from military families

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies requested the National Military Family Association provide information to the IOM Committee on Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Management of Substance Use Disorders in the U.S. Armed Forces last week in Irvine, California.

CFPB is open for business

On July 21, 2011 the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) official opened its doors for business. The core function is to give consumers the information they need to understand the terms of their agreements with financial companies.

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy formally repealed

On Friday, July 22, following a meeting with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman ADM Mike Mullen, President Obama certified to Congress that repealing the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which banned gay service members from serving openly, would not jeopardize the military's ability to fight.

Childcare pilot launched by the VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced the pilot of free, drop-in childcare services for eligible veterans. The U.S. Congress established this childcare initiative as part of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-163), which was signed by President Barack Obama on May 5, 2010.

What's important to you and your family?

Each season, the National Military Family Association is asked by Members of Congress and others about the critical challenges facing military families, about what's working for them, and about what is important to them. To answer these questions, we routinely confer with families on military installations through our volunteer network, social media, emails, conferences and surveys.

My discovery of mild TBI

The phrase, “can’t see the forest through the trees” seems to describe a bout of cluelessness I recently experienced. Or perhaps, the more common “if it was a snake, it would have bit me” is truly the best fit.

Consultant program supports troops, families

With portable, flexible care, the Defense Department’s Military Family Life Consultant program has become a critical component in service member and family support, the director of the Pentagon’s office of family policy, children and youth said.

Blogger meets ‘Extreme Makeover’ star

I must admit I was a bit star struck last week while visiting the set of a military-focused episode of ABC’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” in Fayetteville, N.C.

First Lady joins Navy Veteran on ‘Extreme Makeover’

With First Lady Michelle Obama at her side and hundreds of volunteers and well-wishers cheering behind her, Navy veteran Barbara Marshall and her family faced a giant bus emblazoned with “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” parked right in front of their home.

First Lady, Dr. Biden launch ‘community challenge’

First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, unveiled a new program intended to celebrate Americans going above and beyond to improve military families’ lives.

First Lady, Dr. Biden ‘Join Forces’ with Guard, Reserve

First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, took their “Joining Forces” campaign to New Hampshire, telling National Guard and reserve families to “keep doing what you’re doing,” while they work to support military families in the best ways possible.

First Lady takes ‘Joining Forces’ to Oceana

First Lady Michelle Obama brought the national “Joining Forces” initiative to Naval Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va., where she attended a screening of “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2” with hundreds of military family members.

Explaining war to our children

Explaining war to kids is always hard, but when you’re part of a military family, the task is even more difficult because it’s so personal. When my sons were little, their father was in the Navy Reserve as an intelligence officer with the Seabees, the Navy’s construction division. The boys understood what the military was in a very hazy “It must involve a ship, Daddy going away, and a large yellow bee” kind of way. But because their father wasn’t directly in harm’s way, I was able to gloss over hard questions about war and just concentrate on the fun parts of having a dad in the military from a toddler’s perspective – serving the country and wearing really cool hats.

Employment partnership marks new chapter

I attended the launch of the Defense Department's Military Spouse Employment Partnership, a program that will expand career opportunities for military spouses among companies that are eager to hire them.

Holly Petraeus works to protect military families' finances

As a longtime financial advocate for military families, Holly Petraeus knew she could bring extensive work experience to the table when she was tapped to lead the new Office of Servicemember Affairs earlier this year.

Office strengthens families financially

I sat down with Holly Petraeus, wife of Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, to discuss her role as chief of the new Office of Servicemember Affairs, which officially opened for business as the military arm of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.