



October 2011

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

Dear Families:

This is "pumpkin month" to me. If you have never been to a pumpkin farm with your family, make a special effort to go this fall. There's something about walking around drinking apple cider and picking out pumpkins to take home that really warms a heart. Take a hayride, too, with your feet hanging over the side. These are some of my best childhood memories.

Speaking of memories, send in a special tradition your family observes during the coming months. I know you have some fun ones, and we'd love to hear them. Send them to mcscpao@usmc.mil so we can share them in our "Families On Point" newsletter.

If you're like me, I add traditions each year. My husband says I make everything a new tradition (and, I admit, I may be a little overzealous), but traditions are so important. I'll start by telling you about one of my family's many traditions.

Every Christmas Eve my family opens and wears new pajamas to bed. We then wake up the next day to new slippers placed at the foot of our beds to open and wear. We love staying in our brand-new pajamas and slippers all day long on Christmas Day. We even wore them last year when we took dinner to the duty Marines at our Command on Christmas Day. I don't know if they were more surprised that we brought dinner or that we were wearing PJs and slippers. We love this tradition. These and all traditions make our celebrations with family and friends so very special.

The Marine Corps Ball is a special tradition we celebrate each year. As we learned in our August edition of "The Point" newsletter (Playbook attachment), Marine Corps Birthday Balls are held every year in November where we read Marine Corps Order No. 47 and a message from our Commandant. These together summarize the history, mission and tradition of our Corps. Notice the word, "tradition." We also have a cake ceremony to honor the oldest and youngest Marine present. It never fails to inspire and humble me when I attend the Marine Corps Birthday Ball each year. Those who are serving, have served and have given their lives for our great country are truly heroes. If you've never been to a Marine Corps Birthday Ball, you should go next month. I promise you will be glad you did.

Enjoy October. Go out and spend some family time together. Never put off what you can do today. This goes for work as well as play. As I've often said before, "Live your best life!" If you can't go out, you can always stay inside and watch a family football game together. Our family loves football, and it's a big event in the house when our favorite teams are playing. That pumpkin farm trip may have to wait if East Carolina happens to be playing on TV (That's my school!).

Enjoy fall, enjoy family and enjoy just hanging around together having fun.

Go, Pirates!

Traci Kelley

[Military Community and Family Policy Weekly](#)

The above Web site provides access to the blog post of Robert L. Gordon III, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy), contains the latest information on Joining Forces, and helpful tips for you and your families.

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.

Military Child Education Coalition E-News

Click [here](#) to see the newsletter for friends of the Military Child Education Coalition.

Family members invited to PG15 Open House

Here's your chance to get an off-road ride in a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) and to search for simulated improvised explosive devices with a metal detector. These are just a couple of the activities planned at Ground Transportation and Engineering Systems' (GTES) Open House, 12-3 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18. GTES, MCSC Product Group 15 (PG15), is holding the event at their Transportation Demonstration Support Area (TDSA). This is the first of what the Families On Point Command team hopes to be a quarterly event where family members and Command personnel can learn about the many different organizations within MCSC and PEO LS.

At the PG15 Open House, attendees will have the opportunity to get hands-on experience with GTES products and motor transportation systems such as the HMMWV with tactical trailer and other vehicles. PG15 is also displaying expeditionary power systems such as renewable energy and environmental control units and combat engineer equipment like the medium crawler tractor and the family of metal detectors. GTES subject matter experts will be available to provide information on these systems, explain how GTES provides operating forces with acquisition and lifecycle management of this equipment, discuss their use by Marines and to answer questions. Besides the displays, exhibits and activities, PG15 is also serving refreshments, drinks and snacks.

Also at the Open House, Mrs. Traci Kelley, the MCSC Commander's spouse, will host a Families On Point welcome booth, providing information about the Families On Point Command Team, its purpose, upcoming family events and a warm welcome to those who stop by and might want to participate.

TDSA is actually a part of Marine Corps Base Quantico, but the entrance to the facility is off base just south of the back gate. From the base, drive south on Jefferson Davis Highway (Highway 1). You will pass Hilldrup Moving and Storage United Van Lines on your left and the Quantico Corporate Center, Navy Federal Credit Union and the Globe and Laurel Restaurant on the right. Then just past an old used car lot, turn left on George Mason Road. Continue for about a half mile, behind United Van Lines, until the road ends at a gravel turnaround and the TDSA gate entrance. Through the gate, follow the gravel road and signs for parking.

Child Education Coalition responds to investigation

The following is the Military Child Education Coalition's response to the investigation concerning conditions of some school facilities.

Investigatory articles (Newsweek—June 27, 2011, *iWatch*, Army Times etc.), as well as commentary on the recently released Center for Public Integrity Study about the condition of DoDEA and DDESS Schools (which also reference a 2010 Army Installation Command assessment of school facilities) have brought to light disturbing examples of unacceptable school facilities. These, along with subsequent responses from the Congress and the Department of Defense, have spotlighted an important failing infrastructure issue affecting the Nation's quality of education. In summary, the following issues and examples have been highlighted:

- The crumbling infrastructure of schools that is happening in some schools that serve military-connected student populations;
- The competition schools face for reduced state resources and the lack of agreed-upon standards;
- The need to look at population growth, movement and student needs to help states and communities make school facility decisions.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) recognizes that problems with overcrowded, aging or generally inadequate school facilities affect many school systems and students across the country. Though the MCEC's response is specific to military-connected students, the issues raised by the recent articles referring to schools that serve children with parents in the active-duty forces could have been substituted for campuses in urban, rural and Indian Lands from any of America's more than 15,000 school districts. It is important to remember that all school districts have military-connected students with a parent or sibling who has served or is currently serving in the active-duty, National Guard or Reserve forces, so the concerns are not limited to the spotlighted schools.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) agrees with the positions of Secretary Panetta as well as Senators Boxer, Graham, Inhofe and Nelson that every report of substandard school buildings attended by the children of U.S. military personnel must be addressed. The MCEC's position also is that the conditions addressed in the articles are unacceptable for any child. Our commitment to and advocacy for military-connected children includes concern for access to quality teachers, programs and opportunities, including the types of school facilities in which our children find themselves. We also urge Congress to attend to the fact that the vast majority of military-connected students attend U.S. public schools (more than 75 percent). Certainly the MCEC commends recent steps to provide funding and expedite DoDEA school repair, renovation and construction in order to attend to the school facilities issues in the Department of Defense Schools (less than 8 percent); however, the DoDEA schools are only the tip of the iceberg, leaving over 1.1 million school-aged children and youth with the possibilities of attending a school that would be in dire need.

The following points speak to the MCEC's concerns and recommendations:

A. The infrastructure is crumbling in identified schools

1. Of the approximately 1.1 million military-connected school-age children, approximately 800,000 are students with parents who serve full time in the active-duty forces of our Nation. Approximately 80 percent attend U.S. public schools; 8 percent attend schools operated by the DoDEA, and 12 percent attend private or parochial schools or are homeschooled. The majority of public schools both on and off installations are governed by local school districts (LEAs). The DoDEA domestic and overseas schools are governed by their own organization.
2. This summer the investigation, published in the Newsweek (June 27, 2011) article and other follow-on publications and responses, highlighted "bleak" conditions in identified public and DoDEA schools serving military-connected children. At this time there are standards for DoDEA operated schools. In the public school systems standards for facilities are determined at the state level. Thus there is no common national standard. The decision for maintenance, repair and closure for public school facilities is a local determination that may be swayed by available local funding, student growth or many other conditions.
3. It is essential to address the needs of all school facilities deemed as "poor" or "inadequate" and to have a national commitment to assuring appropriate learning environments for all students.

B. States and local schools lack commonly accepted standards and are competing for dwindling resources

1. States set the general standards for what is considered an adequate school facility. Local school districts determine and are accountable for the actual application of those standards and the assurance that schools are safe, orderly, accessible to children with disabilities and adequate for all children. Local school districts are responsible for the maintenance and upgrade of facilities and for providing new school buildings as needed. The federally funded DoDEA is accountable for maintaining, upgrading and adequately assessing their U.S. and overseas schools.
2. We need clearly defined standards for school facilities. Quality national school facility standards will allow leaders to gauge when steps to renovate, repair or replace a facility need to be taken and by whom. For example, the Newsweek article highlighted issues from both DoDEA and LEA schools. According to the article, 39 percent of public vs. 37 percent of DoDEA schools are in poor condition. Certainly, having over one-third of those schools included in the study rated well below adequate is cause for concern, but while there is a standard for DoDEA-operated school facilities, the absence of a consistent standard to evaluate public school facilities makes it impossible to compare the condition of the different schools.
3. Any fix to this issue can't be a one-shot deal. To move ahead, the system and mechanisms for facilities maintenance and replacement must be sustainable and able to track how resources are used to achieve the best

outcomes. The leadership of the LEAs and DoDEA need the help and backing of policy leaders at the federal and state levels along with that of the local military commanders.

4. We don't know the extent of the problem because:
 - Comparing DoDEA and LEA schools is comparing apples and oranges EXCEPT for the 59 stateside DoDEA schools.
 - Without DoE facility condition reports it is not possible to make comparisons;
 - There are no national facility standard to underpin a real review and comparison of facilities based on condition;
 - There is no clear national incentive to support state and local initiatives.

C. *There is a need to study population growth, student mobility and student needs to help states and communities make informed school facility decisions.*

This article reinforces the need for quality student data about military-connected children to provide facts that can speak for themselves with transparency. In order to provide a clear picture of military-connected student achievement to parents, educators, commanders and policy leaders, we must have accurate data over time. We must know how our children are faring under what conditions and situations. These data will provide realistic insights into the achievement of military-connected students in both public and DoDEA schools. These data will provide a factual basis for better understanding of how to use funds for the sake of our children.

Recommendations:

1. The publications and responses (June-July 2011) addressed the school facilities attended by approximately 30 percent of military-connected students who live on an installation. In order to understand the overall picture of our nation's public and DoD schools, the effort to study facilities must be comprehensive and include schools attended by military students not located on military installations.
2. An Education Facility Congressional Commission or Task Force supported by the DoE must be created with the charge to conduct a two-phase review that will:
 - Define the extent of the problem; and
 - Develop alternatives.
3. The DoD has previously submitted a report based on their standards regarding the condition of DoD schools. The results of that report will be provided to the Commission to compare against their results. Include stateside DoD schools in with the stateside school(s) and have the DoD address overseas needs.
4. Congress must direct the Department of Education to gather, through the state and local education authorities, data about military-connected students with parents serving in the active-duty, National Guard or Reserve forces as a report-only subgroup. These data must be reported publicly by campus level.

This review will be divided into two phases with the following tasks:

Phase 1:

- Convene a group including representatives from DoEd, DoD, the National Governor's Association, National Mayor's association and industry experts to develop an acceptable uniform measure;
- Develop methods to use data to gather and quantify impact of poor facilities on education; and
- Provide interim progress report to Congress within six months of commission charter.

Phase 2:

- Gather data on conditions of national school facility infrastructure based on uniform measure and rack-stack based on crisis, near-term, mid-term and long-term condition;
- Identify obstacles (e.g., funding, bonds, etc.);
- Explore funding options (much as was done with the DoD Housing Privatization);
- Identify potential roles in improvement for federal, state and local governments; include the business community; and
- Provide report to Congress within 12 months of commission charter.

Conclusion:

The Military Child Education Coalition supports all improvement efforts by school officials. We recognize that many district leaders are making tough decisions about priorities. We also recognized that the MCEC has a key role in assisting school,

military and policy leaders as they all work to respond to the needs of children and youth. The MCEC stands ready to help.

The bottom line is that all children deserve adequate, appropriate and accessible school learning environments that are orderly and safe and that facilitate teaching and learning. Regardless of the school setting, each child deserves the best that is possible in terms of their total learning experience. The Military Child Education Coalition's purpose is and always...*for the sake of the child.*

Nation observes National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month with many organizations working together to bring attention to and address information about the disease.

Cancer is a disease that occurs when cells become abnormal and divide without control or order. Each organ in the body is made up of various kinds of cells. Cells normally divide in an orderly way to produce more cells only when they are needed. This process helps keep the body healthy. If cells divide when new cells are not needed, they form too much tissue. This extra tissue, called a tumor, can be benign or malignant.

Eighty percent of all breast tumors are benign. They can usually be removed, and, in most cases, they don't come back. Most important, the cells in benign tumors do not invade other tissues and do not spread to other parts of the body. Benign breast tumors are not life-threatening.

The cancer cells grow and divide out of control, invading and damaging nearby tissues and organs. Cancer cells can also break away from the original tumor and enter the bloodstream or lymphatic system. This is how breast cancer spreads and forms secondary tumors in other parts of the body. This spread of cancer is called metastasis.

Breast cancer is cancer that forms in tissues of the breast, usually the ducts (tubes that carry milk to the nipple) and lobules (glands that make milk). It occurs in both men and women, although male breast cancer is rare.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), an estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the United States last year. Approximately 1,910 new cases are expected in men. The ACS also reports that an estimated 40,610 breast cancer deaths are expected in 2009 (40,170 women, 440 men).

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women, aside from skin cancer.

Breast cancer is considered advanced when it has spread from its original site to distant areas of the body. Physicians will look at a number of factors to determine the stage of breast cancer, including tumor size, lymph node involvement and whether the cancer has spread to other areas of the body. Once the stage of the disease is determined, there are two different ways advanced breast cancer can be classified: locally advanced or metastatic.

For more information and to see treatment options, visit the [National Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#) web site.

[DOD program gives spouses career options](#)

Balancing a civilian career with a military spouse's career can be tough. While the service member might see a permanent change of station move as an inconvenience associated with furthering their military career, such moves can leave spouses stuck hoping to find a new job in a new area.

[Mullens leave legacy of family support](#)

I've heard Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife, Deborah, speak at a variety of events, and can't remember a time when the topic didn't turn at some point to military families.

Officials seek troop, family feedback

Officials hope to hear from troops and their families on a variety of issues – from the quality of education within Defense Department schools to [USO](#) support programs and services.

Dealing with kids' fears

My husband called me down to our laundry room last night to show me water damage from the recent deluge of rain. Between the earthquake, hurricane and ongoing downpours, I would have been surprised if we had walked away from it all damage-free.

New TRICARE Prime enrollees pay adjusted annual fees

Military retirees enrolling in the TRICARE Prime health plan after Oct. 1 will begin paying slightly higher annual fees. The fee change for fiscal year 2012 means the plan will cost \$260 per year for members and \$520 per year for members and family.

Keeping relationships healthy

If you could have the ideal loving relationship, what would that look like? For some couples, it would involve a lot of time together and shared interests, and for others, it may include more space and time spent separately. There are many ways to be a loving partner, and the key is discovering what your partner needs from you, rather than what they aren't giving to you.

Medal of Honor recipient issues scholarship challenge

Medal of Honor recipient Marine Corps Sgt. Dakota Meyer plans to raise \$1 million in scholarship money for the children of wounded Marines and Navy corpsmen, and challenges the American public to match it.

First Lady praises military families, lauds efforts to help veterans

First Lady Michelle Obama praised military families and applauded a Navy veteran who is working to help homeless women veterans in Fayetteville, N.C.

First Lady: Military families deserve nation's support

Service members and their families have done all the nation has asked of them over this past decade of war; it's now time for the nation to return their service and sacrifice with honor and appreciation, First Lady Michelle Obama wrote in an op-ed published in USA Today.

Marine Corps Systems Command

Family Readiness

MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES

OCTOBER 2011 EVENTS

"OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH"



Family Care

Child, Youth and Teen Program (703) 784-0674/4453

PART-DAY PRESCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM: Going on now, registration is open all year long, (703) 784-4453.

FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER (FCC): Become a certified family FCC provider and enjoy the benefits of a home-based business. We provide resources and tools to foster the brains of your business. Call (703) 784-2011.

YOUTH CENTER OPEN ENROLLMENT: Available for school age care, (703) 784-4453.

Exceptional Family Member Program (571) 931-0524

RFSA: Religious and Family Services Annex TCAQ: The Clubs at Quantico

MWC: McHugh Woods Community Center, 18005 Cutts Avenue

MCFTBH: Marine Corps Family Team Building House, 126 Neville Road

TRAINING

SPECIAL EDUCATION BOOT CAMP: Saturday, Oct. 8, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at RFSA and Wednesday, Oct. 26, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at MWC.

EFMP RESPITE CARE PROGRAM CLASS: Tuesday, Oct. 11 and Oct. 25, noon to 12:30 p.m., MWC, and Tuesday, Oct. 18, 5:30-6 p.m., MCFTBH.

EFMP SPEAKER SERIES (MENTAL HEALTH): Thursday, Oct. 13, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., MWC, the EFMP Speaker Series will provide helpful information about the many behavioral health programs available to family members.

NETWORKING

EFMP COSTUME and CRAFTS: Wednesday, Oct. 26, 6-8 p.m., MWC, join the EFMP staff for a night of Halloween treats and crafts. Come dressed up in your favorite costume.