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Family Connection is a publication of the Fleet and Family Support Program.

The Navy's Fleet and Family Support Program promotes the self-reliance and resilience of Sailors and their families. We provide information that can help you meet the unique challenges of the military lifestyle.

The appearance of external links in this newsletter does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the U.S. Navy or Department of Defense.

If you have questions or comments, contact Timothy McGough at timothy.mcough@navy.mil.

Visit us online at:



Family Traditions

There is no better month to talk about family traditions than December, as it is filled with reunions, religious celebrations, feasts and vacations. These activities afford us the opportunity to spend time with loved ones, create memories and bond with family and friends; all of which builds a sense of belonging, and helps develop healthy relationships.

As military families, we often start our own traditions, as our expectations are different and we have to maintain flexibility. Sometimes this requires extra planning, creativity and an open mind. Family traditions do not need to follow a universal code of conduct or behavior, but rather a system of beliefs or purpose that fits the uniqueness of your family. A family does not have to have a huge meal, decorations, presents or fly to the Alps for an annual ski vacation in order to have family time. Traditions can be as simple as kissing your spouse in the morning, eating dinner at a designated time, having a pizza and movie night once a month, reading your child a book before bedtime, sharing religious practices and sneaking candy into your children's backpack every Valentine's Day. Large or small, resilient families have traditions in place, but their traditions are special and specific to their family. Remember to keep your family traditions in place and enjoy the closeness that results.

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."

Robert Frost



'Tis the Season...

It's that time of year again to pull out the winter scarves and coats, drink something warm, put up holiday decorations, shop, indulge in good food and enjoy time with family and friends. For many people, this is a joyous and happy season to share with loved ones and create new memories, but for others, this can be a time of grief, stress, sadness or depression. Some of our military community may feel overwhelmed with work, social events, guests and preparing for religious holidays or winter break. As individuals, we experience life based on our experiences and current perspectives. This time may even trigger unpleasant memories of the past that one associates with the holiday season. Please be mindful of your friends, co-workers, children and neighbors during this time.

Some may grieve a loss of a loved one or shared tradition. A few common signs of the "Holiday Blues" are decreased hygiene, increased sleep disturbances, decreased work performance, ambivalent attitude, statements of hopelessness or despair, irritability and inability to enjoy activities that usually are joyful. Having the "Holiday Blues" is a normal human response and all people experience it at some point in their lives.

For sexual assault survivors, the holidays can be a difficult time, as perpetrators are oftentimes trusted family members, friends, co-workers or acquaintances. Survivors may feel anxiety about the possibility of encountering the perpetrator at family, work or neighborhood festivities. Survivors may also feel alone at this time in dealing with emotions related to the traumatic experience, especially those who feel they have no one to talk to.

We are a military community that depends upon and supports one another, especially when one of ours is in need. It is essential during this busy, and — for some — emotional time of year that people take the time to not only care for others, but to also take care of themselves. During the holiday season, take time to be thoughtful and caring of others, but most importantly, take time to care for yourself.

Some self-care tips:

- Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings during this time.
- Engage in activities you enjoy and find relaxing.
- Spend time with and talk to loved ones and others who care about you.
- Treat yourself to something you like or enjoy.
- Don't overload your schedule; get enough sleep.

Ways to care for others:

- Provide a listening ear.
- Volunteer your time to help others.
- Say hello.
- Hold open a door.
- Smile.

If you or someone you care about is having a difficult time this holiday season, please seek assistance from your nearest [Fleet and Family Support Center](#). Professionally trained clinical counselors can provide the support needed to get through these difficult times.

For services and support regarding sexual assault, please contact your nearest Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) office. For immediate, confidential 24-hour assistance, you may contact the Safe Helpline at 1-877-995-5247.

Here are additional resources for services and support during the holidays.

Military Crisis Line
VeteransCrisisLine.net
 1-800-273-8255. Press 1

Military OneSource
 1-800-342-9647

Navy311@navy.mil
 1-855-NAVY-311 (1-855-628-9311)

iPhone, iPad User...

Download JSS
at the App Store

Add JSS to your
Mobile Network
[www.jointservicesupport.org/
jss/Mobile.aspx](http://www.jointservicesupport.org/jss/Mobile.aspx)



JSS Dial-in Access 24/7?

1-877-JSS-NOW1
 (577-6691)



Tips for Moving During the Winter — Plan accordingly

when packing liquids. There are some liquids which moving companies may prohibit you from shipping and others which require special packing and handling.



New Spouse Orientation



New Spouse Orientation is offered as an [on-demand course](#) designed to support new Navy spouses. It provides information on benefits, support services, military culture and resources to help spouses adapt to the military lifestyle.



Military Parenting Website Assists Communication



Service members who deploy or are otherwise separated from their families due to mission needs now have an online resource allowing them to hone their parenting skills as they reconnect with their children. Pam Murphy, the Defense Department's lead psychologist for the website, said the launch of <http://www.militaryparenting.org> offers unprecedented, comprehensive and free computer-based training from a service member's perspective on parenting and building strong relationships with their children.

"We initially did an environmental scan of everything within the DOD as well as commercially available, and one of the areas that seemed to be at a deficit was a comprehensive parenting program that looks at the basics," Murphy said. The interactive site, she explained, develops and reinforces parenting skills to help families reconnect through in-depth technology solutions that appeal to younger parents. "This is one of the first of its kind," Murphy said.

"Parents can benefit from this site, and I believe they want their kids to grow up to be happy, healthy, fully functioning adults," she said. "Here, they'll find strategies and ideas to [get] even better in terms of helping kids to grow, mature and blossom." To read the entire article visit: <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=120984>.

2014 Military Child of the Year

Operation Homefront, the national nonprofit dedicated to providing emergency financial and other assistance to military families, has announced that nominations for the Military Child of the Year Awards are being accepted online through December 14, 2013. Winners will be recognized in April 2014.

The Military Child of the Year Award recognizes children who stand out among their peers. Ideal candidates for the award demonstrate resilience, strength of character and thrive in the face of the challenges of military life. These young heroes embody leadership within their families and communities. All nominees will receive a beautiful certificate acknowledging their nomination in April 2014, the Month of the Military Child. To learn more or to nominate a child, visit <http://www.militarychildoftheyear.org>.



Scholarships for Military Children

The Scholarships for Military Children Program was created in recognition of the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and to celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community. A minimum of one \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location where qualified applications are received. More than one scholarship per commissary may be available based on response and funding. The scholarship provides for payment of tuition, books, lab fees and other related expenses. Applications will be accepted beginning December 3, 2013. For more information visit: www.militaryscholar.org.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Begins Accepting Payday Loan Complaints

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) <http://www.consumerfinance.gov> is now accepting complaints from borrowers encountering problems with payday loans. Payday loans, also known as "cash advances" or "check loans," are often short-term, small-dollar loans, generally for \$500 or less.

Payday loans are often described as a way for consumers to bridge a cash flow shortage between paychecks or the receipt of other income. They offer quick access to cash, especially for consumers who may not qualify for other credit, but can come at a high cost. Many payday loans are for small-dollar amounts that must be repaid in full in a short period of time at high interest rates. Payment is generally due the next time the borrower gets paid, meaning the loan may require repayment in only a few weeks. Many lenders require that borrowers grant them advance access to checking accounts in order to repay the loans.

To prevent ever having to use a payday loan or other predatory lending source, contact your Personal Financial Management (PFM) specialist at your Fleet and Family Support Center. For the location nearest you, go to www.ffsp.navy.mil.



60 New Corporations Join Military Spouse Employment Partnership

In a show of commitment and support to those who serve alongside uniformed service members, Frank Vollrath, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness and Force Management (ASD (R&FM))



inducted 60 new corporations into the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) on November 5.

Vollrath described the 60 new signatory corporate partners and scores of enduring corporate partners as "patriots" who made a similar business decision to commit to an employee who may face multiple relocations across his or her career. "You have bought into the idea that there is a

certain benefit to turnover in your corporation," Vollrath said. "You have bought into the idea that once you have a good employee, you will hang on to that employee regardless of where he or she happens to have to move because of their spouse's military service."

For more information on MSEP visit them online <https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil/video/military-spouse-employment-partnership> or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MSEPOnline>.

Employment and Transition Corner

The [American Job Center](#) (AJC) is an online network for you to access key federal programs, local resources and information about jobs, training and education programs. The site is designed for your ease, so it offers vital information in one place instead of having to go on a much larger search. This website is part of a Job Center Network that includes nearly 3,000 brick-and-mortar centers for you to physically visit. At the bottom right-hand side of the webpage is a Center locator for you to find the one

nearest you.

To get started, you may want to click on the *Veterans* tab. You will see ten different resources listed, such as the national directory of services for vets, veterans job banks, career exploration, transition information, a place where job-seeking Veterans and employers looking to hire Veterans come together (called VetSuccess), a Veterans Affairs portal and more.

One of the resources is the [Gold Card](#)

Initiative, an effort of the Department of Labor. For six months after separation, the Gold Card provides unemployed veterans with follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. If you fit into this category, you may be eligible for these great services: job readiness assessment, career guidance, career counseling, labor market information and how to relate your skills to a desired occupation, job openings, referrals to training, referrals to apprenticeship sponsors and person-to-person follow-up by your career counselor.



NAVY

U.S. Navy Individual Augmentees

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Returning Warrior Workshops (RWW)

Returning Warrior Workshop Schedule and IA Family Events — www.ia.navy.mil. Click "Links and Resources."

IA Discussion Group Schedule

View the Fleet-wide list of classes, support groups and events.





PARENTING

For Service Members and Veterans

Promote Your Parenting!



This new free online course provides military parents with the tools they need to strengthen their existing parenting skills and reconnect with their families. Many techniques are specifically tailored to address the unique challenges of military life.

Visit militaryparenting.org and start the course today!



militaryparenting.org