Guideline Series

Guidelines for Launching Clubs & Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)

Naval Services FamilyLine

Your Information Resource

The History of Naval Services FamilyLine

Naval Services FamilyLine is a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for every Navy family. Formerly known as the Navy Wifeline Association, the new name was adopted in September 1999 to reflect the changing face of today's Navy and to emphasize our commitment to the entire Navy community.

FamilyLine was established in 1965 by a group of Navy wives who wanted to establish a channel of communication for all Navy spouses. The aim was to provide a welcome and introduction to Navy life and to increase the spouses' understanding of the Navy's mission.

This dedicated group established an office at the Washington Navy Yard and published a quarterly newspaper, providing information and assistance to wives who were moving overseas. These Navy wives had the foresight to see the need for spouse and family support and provided the ground work for what has developed into a worldwide family support network.

With the support of the Chief of Naval Operations and Navy leadership, along with the financial support of the Navy League, Spouses Clubs worldwide, and other Navy organizations, Naval Services FamilyLine has continued to grow and flourish.

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt established the Ombudsman Program in 1970. The Chairman of FamilyLine was appointed Navy-wide Family Ombudsman-at-Large for the Chief of Naval Operations.

In 1988, the first Ombudsman Journal was published and the Navy-wide Ombudsmen Support Network was established.

For more than forty years, FamilyLine volunteers have maintained a worldwide support network for Navy, service members and their families. Today, the spouses of service members work together to continue this fine tradition.

Your individual tax-deductible donations make this publication possible.

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INTRODUCTION

The military way of life is a unique style of living not shared by the civilian world. It calls for sacrifice and effort well beyond the call of duty, not only by the service member, but also by their family. There can be great reassurance in knowing that there are others "in the same boat" when you are left behind during long deployments, temporary duty, adjusting to another move, or trying to get a job in a new area. Some things we all have in common:

- Everyone likes to share a challenge and to know how others are coping successfully.
- Everyone can use a friendly, understanding smile or something to laugh about for a few minutes.
- Everyone enjoys the camaraderie of a get-together and the sharing of information.

Most military spouses feel that being a part of command-sponsored organizations are among the most cherished times of their lives. From these organizations come a lot of the warmth, fun, friendship, and support we all need and enjoy.

Guidelines for Launching Clubs and Family Readiness Groups (FRG) was created to help new groups get started and to re-energize existing groups to help spouses enrich their command experience. It is also filled with helpful information, guidelines, and new ideas. It covers guidelines for starting, organization and structure requirements, expectations and lots of ideas for programs, activities, service projects, and fund-raising.

The change in terminology to Family Readiness Groups reflects current philosophy where the focus is on the change in the OPTEMPO of Navy commands, and the resultant family separations, and the strong belief that family readiness is directly tied to combat readiness.

Note: OPNAV Instruction 1754.5 mandates and governs Family Readiness Groups. We encourage everyone to review this instruction carefully. Portions are enclosed herein but you should always check for the latest version.

FAMILY READINESS GROUPS
OPNAVINST 17454.5 HIGHLIGHTS

OPNAVINST 1754.5 Family Readiness Groups, released in 2006 provides guidelines for Command Family Readiness Groups. A message released in December 2006 supercedes the instruction.

Command Support - Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are command organizations for which use of appropriated funds is authorized (as command funding permits) for the following:

- Use of installation facilities.
  - Use is on same basis as to other command-sponsored activities; if facility charges fee to all, the FRG also pays (command may pick up the cost for the FRG if it has funding to do so.).
- Use of government equipment. Use of a command vehicle (IAW JER and does not interfere with command mission. FRG information may be incorporated or attached to the command/ombudsman newsletter.
- FRGs may provide information to be posted on the command's official web site.
- FRGs may use official mail as long as it is for an official, mission-related purpose and approved by the CO or designee.

Volunteers - May be "official" or "gratuitous"

- Official volunteers
  - Must sign and have file at the command a Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund activities and Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities Form DD 2792.
  - Provides liability coverage and allows reimbursement for expenses.
- Gratuitous volunteers
  - Other FRG members must be advised that their services are provided gratuitously
  - Gratuitous services need to be authorized by CO in advance, in writing.
  - No expectation for reimbursement of expenses incurred.
  - No government coverage for liability.

Fundraising

- Limits fundraising to groups composed primarily of Navy (or DOD) on joint service installations) employees or their dependents.
  - For example, a bake sale in front of the commissary would meet these criteria; a bake sale in front of Wal-Mart in town would not.
- FRG members also MAY NOT solicit outside sources for donations.

Functions and Activities. Command FRGs enhance Navy family life by providing social, informational, care-taking and morale building activities. FRGs have five functions and activities per regulatory guidance.

- Family support including an emphasis on activities during deployments, mentoring new family members and assistance in times of crisis.
- Coordinating deployment farewells and homecomings
- Assisting with the command sponsor program to include welcoming new families and facilitating family member attendance at orientation sessions.
- Unit family networking to include phone trees, websites, newsletter content, unit information and education briefs and other communications and activities that enhance family readiness.
- Plan and conduct social events and activities such as holiday and children's parties.

THE NEW ORGANIZATION: GETTING STARTED

COMMAND FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are command sponsored organizations that consist of volunteers. The groups may operate on DOD installations.

OPNAV INST 1754.5 FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

This instruction was signed in 2006, and requires commands to ensure that all Navy family members have access to an FRG. This includes individual augmentee families. Family Readiness Groups plan, coordinate and conduct social, informational, caretaking and morale-building activities to enhance family readiness in support of the Navy's mission.

COMMAND SUPPORT

Commands are required to sponsor an FRG for command families. If the command is small, it may join with other commands or refer families to an installation sponsored FRG as long as the arrangements are made in writing. Commands are authorized to provide these types of tangible support for their FRGs: .

- Acceptance of volunteer service
- Use of installation facilities
- Use of Government equipment
- Use of command vehicles
- Inclusion of FRG content in command/ombudsman newsletters and linkage of FRG web site to command web site
- Use of postal services for official correspondence and mail
- Assistance with homecoming, command-sponsored parties and functions

Installation and unit commanding officers may require FRGs to have written bylaws. FRGs shall provide the commanding officers with a list of the names of all FRG officers, advisors and chairman or committee heads with their associated roles and functions.

THE ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN/KEY VOLUNTEER

The role of the Command Ombudsman is clearly defined by OPNAV INST 1750. 1F titled *The Navy Family Ombudsman Program*.

Ombudsmen may support the command FRG by:

- Helping to start an FRG, or assisting in recharging a flailing group
- Advertising meetings and events in the ombudsman newsletter
- Introducing themselves and providing information at each meeting
- Assisting with locating speakers and activities for group meetings
- Being available before and after meetings to provide individual information and referral to participants

ADVISORS AND LEADERSHIP

The commanding officer will clearly define the roles of the spouses of the command support team. That team consists of the spouses of the commanding officer, executive officer, and Command Master Chief/Chief of the Boat. Their level of commitment and support may differ by command and personal interest.

The instruction allows COs to select one or more volunteer advisors to the FRG. Advisors are very often more senior spouses, typically those of the CO, XO and CMC or COB. An advisor's role is to offer guidance and make recommendations, reviewing and approving the newsletter, phone tree, flyers, and web site content.

DUTIES OF AN ADVISOR

These are defined by the person and can include but are not limited to:

- Mediator: assist in reconciling disputes
- Cheerleader: provide encouragement
- Liaison: provide command information, when appropriate, and knowledge of how FRGs work.
- Resource: share knowledge
- Coach: tutor from the sidelines

> *Family Readiness Alliance is a network that bundles key support services such as Ombudsman, Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs), Chaplains, School Liaison Officers, Child Development Centers (CDCs), as well as Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) at the local installation level to provide coordinated services in support of service members and their families.*
>
> *OPNAV INST 1754.5*

SHAPING THE FAMILY READINESS GROUP

Before spouses can meet and start planning gatherings and events, the focus of the organization needs to be determined. It should be decided by the Commanding Officer what sort of structure the new organization should take and what goals the CO envisions for the group.

Historically, there have been a variety of formal and informal organizations within commands.

A formally organized group meets all the needs for camaraderie and sharing of information, but functions with elected or appointed officers, by-laws and formal committees. In general, structured organizations work well in large commands, or numerous groups within the command you are trying to draw together.

The purpose of informal, less-structured organizations is to provide an opportunity for spouses to get together on a regular basis for camaraderie, companionship, getting up-to-date information, and forming new friendships. Many groups may not be large enough or interested in having formal officers. Using a committee chairperson and committees is an option when organizing a small group (fewer than 15 members). Generally, less structured groups have a volunteer Chairman or Co-Chairmen to provide continuity for the group and to make sure that get-togethers occur and that spouses are informed. The chairperson of the group hosts the meeting. The group, as a whole, plans and decides what interests they would like to pursue. Committees can then be formed to research interests from holiday parties to the homecoming celebration. Participants in the group can join any committee in which they have an interest.

POSSIBLE COMMITTEES WITHIN THE FRG

Welcome Committee: The Welcome Committee is a committee comprised of volunteers (not necessarily officers) who agree to welcome new members to FRG meetings, make hospital visits, and visit a new mom or new members at home. Members may put together and hand out "goodie bags" of appropriate small items for the occasion. Members may also send out birthday, get well, or other greeting cards.

Communications or Publicity Committee: This committee is comprised of one or more volunteers who prepare meeting announcements, news items, and articles for publication in the ombudsman or command newsletter, be "Web master" for the FRG Web page, and otherwise handle communications and publicity for the group.

Special Events Committee: This group will assist the Program Coordinator in planning special activities and events for the group that may include holiday parties, homecoming events, group picnics, and similar events.

Fundraising Committee: This group will plan and arrange for fundraisers for the group, researching the applicable local regulations, obtaining necessary permissions, and arranging and managing logistics for the events.

Homecoming Committee: Established when the unit deploys, this committee would work during the deployment to prepare for the homecoming. The membership would be focused on accomplishing the arrangements for the homecoming, including production of a plan, scheduling services, working with the deployed command and sister command, when available, and the homeport sponsor. The committee may also arrange for creating souvenirs, painting posters, making a lei, and so forth.

Deployment Support Committee: This group would focus on providing practical advice and support the unit's extended family during a forward deployment (or for that matter, during any extended "out of area" operation). This could include facilitating any contact with the Ombudsman, Fleet and Family Support Center, and Navy Chaplains; arranging for emergency baby-sitting, setting up a child care cooperative; maintaining a list of repair organizations; hosting evening get-togethers; and establishing a small library of reference materials.

Social Events Committee: This group might be chartered to work with the unit's Welfare and Recreation Committee. It could help plan and execute a year's worth of social events: Valentine's Day Dance, Easter Egg Hunt, Summer Beach Picnic, Kid's Halloween Party, and Holiday Ball.

Children's Support Committee: As a one-year task force, a group of informed and concerned spouses might want to examine ways to help the command's children. This could range from collecting and providing information on area schools to setting up educational trips for the command's kids.

ASSESSING YOUR FAMILY READINESS GROUP: A GUIDE FOR INCOMING CO/XO SPOUSES

- Is it a combined (officer and enlisted) group?
- Does your group have a set of by-laws?
- Who is allowed to participate in Family Readiness Group activities (i.e., girlfriends, boyfriends, and relatives of the crew members allowed to take part as well as crew members' spouses)?
- How often does your group meet? Does the schedule change according to the command's schedule? Where are the meetings held?
- Does your group offer babysitting? If so, who babysits? Are the babysitters paid?
- Does your group offer projects or have guest speakers for the children?
- Does your group have refreshments at the meetings? If so, who provides them?
- Is your Executive Board made up of the traditional positions (i.e., President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary)? In addition to the elected board members, are there special committee chairmen? Does your group allow someone other than a crew member's spouse to hold either an elected position or a committee chair?
- Does the command hold a formal installation of the new Executive Board officers?
- Does the command recognize the Executive Board with special letters or ceremonies when someone is leaving or at any other key points throughout the year?
- How often does the Executive Board meet? Where are the meetings held?

GETTING ORGANIZED

There is a belief that groups have to be large, or growing, in order to be successful. This is not true. Whether two people or twenty people are gathered and are enjoying companionship, it is a successful group. Success is not linked to attendance. If the spouses who do come find that the group serves its stated purpose well by providing enough information and enjoyment, it will probably grow. If it doesn't grow, that's all right too, as long as those who might want to come feel free to do so. **Remember, participation is completely voluntary and should be a fun, informative, and memorable experience.**

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

- **Name Your Organization**

The command should decide on a name for your organization. The name could be the official command name or the command nickname combined with the title of Family Readiness Group. Be sure to get command approval for your group's name. If your group will have by-laws, a name will be required.

- **Selection of Leadership in an Unstructured Organization**

When the group is in the process of organizing, you will probably find that you have a loosely formed committee organizing the group. It is important to have one or two persons who can act as liaison with the CO and work with the command. Until your new organization picks a Chairman or Co-Chairmen, or someone volunteers, temporary leaders could be selected.

- **Selection of Leadership in a Structured Organization**

Until your new organization has a chance to hold elections, temporary officers or a chairman could be selected to serve for one or two meetings until regular group elections can be held. In general, elected officers include President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. In larger groups, the job of Secretary is divided into Recording Secretary (records notes of the meetings, etc.) and Corresponding Secretary (drafts letters, thank you notes, etc.)

When elections are to be held, make sure all members have an opportunity to run for a job. IMPORTANT: Avoid the "clique" syndrome – nothing will end your group's chances for success faster than the impression that a clique rules the group.

For guidelines and suggestions on swearing in new officers, please see page 49 for a Sample Installation Program.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

How does an FRG leader exhibit the traits and skills discussed so far and still get the job done? Can the leader be kind and considerate in the FRG and achieve the readiness goals of the command?

What is the "job," really? The job is to improve cohesion, morale, and self-reliance among people who have choices (to participate or not). The list below details different leadership styles:

- **Directing—**Leader is task oriented, with little group input, limited group experience or time. Military leaders must direct their units in order to accomplish their mission.

- **Coaching—**Leader is both task and group oriented; directs and encourages the group's effort, but the group is more experienced and makes inputs to the process. The leader watches progress and coaches the group as needed to keep on track. This style of leadership is prevalent in business (especially big corporations).

- **Supporting—** Leader is group oriented; sets the overall project goals and supports the group's efforts. The group has considerable experience and therefore makes major inputs on planning and decisions. The leader reviews progress at intervals and suggests changes.

- **Delegating—**Leader is more interested in group interaction than the outcome of the project. The group is highly experienced, and they define the project goals, plan, make decisions, and control their own work.

So, which leadership style should FRG leaders use? Very simply, for a volunteer group, coaching and supporting styles work best. With more critical concerns, use coaching, but the directing style should rarely (if ever) be used. More routine tasks call for a supporting style, even delegation for simple ones. FRG leaders may find it necessary to use any or all of these styles. The situation, experience of the group, and time needed to accomplish the task are all factors that help determine the style.

- The Army FRG Leader's Handbook

CAN I LEAD THE FRG? SHOULD I?

The first answer is, "Most Navy spouses can do the job and do it well." However, in the same breath is the caution that, "Some spouses can't or shouldn't take the job," for a variety of good reasons:

- schedule overload
- personal problems
- introverted personality
- fear of public speaking
- fear of failure
- illness or handicap
- lack of interest.

Navy spouses are busy. Many wear several hats— spouse, parent, wage earner, student, caregiver for aged parents, not to mention housekeeper and many other jobs. Some spouses are very private—not the outgoing kind who can lead large, diverse groups. Some take on the FRG leader job simply because their spouses are the commanders, but some spouses don't want the job, which is fine.

Sure, you can do the job. But keep in mind that your decision can affect the morale and lives of a lot of people. They need strong and caring leadership from their FRG leader. So, be honest with yourself and make the right decision. If you decide to take the job, do it wholeheartedly. If not, leave the job to someone who will—and give them your full support.

Borrowed from the Army FRG Leader Handbook

THE ROLE OF ADVISOR

An advisor is an important part of any Family Readiness Group, large or small. An advisor makes recommendations, consults, and provides information. An advisor is typically the spouse of the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, or Command Master Chief or Chief of the Boat. The role of advisor depends on the interest level of the individual spouse.

Duties:
These are defined by the individual and can include but are not limited to:

- Mediator: Assist in reconciling disputes
- Cheerleader: Provide encouragement
- Liaison: Provide command information, when appropriate, and knowledge of how FRGs work
- Resource: Share knowledge
- Coach: Tutor from the sidelines

Tips for Advisors:

- Ask for and read all old minutes of the group if already established. This will give you a fairly clear picture of the history of the group.
- Ask for and read the present by-laws of the group. This will define the duties of each office holder.
- Ask for and read all previous treasurer's reports. This will show you how club money is spent.
- Keep eyes and ears open to ascertain the atmosphere of the club in order to make recommendations for improvements.
- Meet and try to talk with each club officer separately. Make the effort to get to know each officer.
- Encourage all avenues of notification of club meetings: command newsletters, command Plan of the Day; Ombudsman's tape (Careline), email, local civilian newspaper and base newspapers, sponsors packets, etc.
- Encourage fundraising for a specific purpose, rather than for some undefined use in the future.
- Attend each meeting or arrange for someone to represent you.
- Offer "advice" when asked. Be diplomatic. Share your experiences, both good and bad.
- Acknowledge your group's leadership through nametags, certificates, and recognition from the command.
- Remember: This is not your group, but the command's.
- Do not accept this position if you do not wish to assume it. Delegate it to someone else. Once delegated, do not interfere.

Remember that your success should not be measured by the number of spouses who attend, but by the enthusiasm and camaraderie of the group's members and the quality of the programs. Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm.

THE ROLE OF PRESIDENT/CHAIRPERSON/COORDINATOR

The president represents the command at all times, to the spouses and to anyone they may come into contact with while in the role of president.

Duties:

- Know your current by-laws/procedures.
- Have a prepared agenda for the meeting.
- Start and end your meeting on time. You also need to think about: opening the building or room where you meet; arranging the room; cleaning up; locking up.
- Sign official correspondence.
- Appoint committee chairmen and maintain a list of committees.
- Establish a working relationship with your advisors/sponsors.
- Recognize committee volunteers.
- Delegate responsibility evenly throughout your group or among committee members.
- For more formal meetings, be familiar with basic parliamentary law and procedure (Robert's Rules of Order).

Sample Agenda

- Call the meeting to order.
- Welcome participants.
- Introduce new members/participants to the group.
- Introduce guests or guest speaker.
- Ask for the secretary's minutes and ask for corrections or additions. If none, say "Minutes stand approved as read."
- Ask for the treasurer's report.
- Ask for committee reports.
- Review unfinished business.
- Ask for new business.
- Ask for announcements.
- Adjourn.

Tips for Presidents

- Be prepared for your meetings.
- Begin and end meetings on time.
- Be diplomatic.
- Be flexible.
- Be a good listener.
- Be courteous.

THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president's job is probably the least defined. The vice president traditionally performs the duties of the president in their absence. Many groups have the vice president lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and act as the group's program coordinator.

Duties:

- Chair the meeting in the president's absence.
- Secure guest speakers.
- Know your by-laws/procedures.
- Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Coordinate publicity.
- Perform other duties as assigned in your by-laws/procedures manual.

Tips for Vice Presidents

- Communicate with your president in order to be aware of all aspects of your group's activities
- Check local papers, resources, and Ombudsmen for ideas on speakers for your group.

Program Coordinator

The program coordinator, often the vice president, is responsible for asking a guest speaker to address the group. Here are seven steps to guide the program coordinator's activities:

1. Learn: what topics are the participants interested in?
2. Find: who can provide the information?
3. Secure: call the agency to secure a speaker.
4. Remind: verify the date, time and place of your meeting for the speaker.
5. Greet: greet your speaker when they arrive at the door.
6. Introduce: introduce your speaker to the officers of your group.
7. Thank: thank your speaker for attending your meeting and send a thank you note within a week after the program. People are more likely to come back if formally thanked!

Tips for Securing a Speaker

Successful programs for Family Readiness Groups tend to be relatively short (30-45 minutes). Interactive programs are the best! The program/presentation should be educational and informative. It is not necessary to have a speaker at each meeting, people need time to enjoy each other's company. Develop a six-month or annual plan for inviting speakers to come to your group and vary the topics.

Tips for Program Coordinators

- Provide your name, number, and email address to the speaker.
- Will your meeting facility support video or overhead equipment or microphones? Check with the speaker for any audio-visual needs. Do not videotape without prior permission.
- As a courtesy, schedule your speaker's presentation prior to conducting your business meeting.
- Send a thank you note to the speaker.

THE ROLE OF SECRETARY

The secretary is responsible for taking minutes at the meeting. Minutes are written records of your group's meetings and contain what was accomplished, not what was said, by participants. It is a record of where the group has been and where it is going. Minutes also provide information about the last meeting for those who were not able to attend.

Duties:

- Write minutes of the meetings.
- Read the minutes from the previous meeting at the next meeting or email to participants ahead of the next meeting.
- Maintain membership list.
- Compose correspondence.
- Maintain file of incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Sample Minutes: (formal)

- Name of the organization.
- Date, hour and location of the meeting.
- Attendance and who presided over the meeting.
- Guest speaker and topic.
- State each main motion and the name of the person making it.
- State whether the motion was passed or not passed and record the vote on the question.
- State whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read or corrected.
- List committee reports and who read them.
- Record old and new business agenda items discussed.

Tips for Secretaries:

- Write the minutes as soon as possible after each meeting.
- Note the date on all committee reports and minutes.
- Note the process of organizing events such as parties, bake sales, etc. The process should include methods of organizing events, contacts, committee structure, and lessons learned. Having this report to refer to will save time in the future if you choose to repeat the event.
- Hand write thank-you notes, personal invitations, and condolence cards.
- Type formal or business correspondence.
- Confirm spelling, title, rank and the appropriate mailing address for civilian or military guests.
- Proofread correspondence for content, grammar, and spelling. It is better if someone else proofreads as well.
- Keep a box, binder or folder of official group business information. The following information should be available to incoming advisors and officers: minutes, committee reports, correspondence copies, by-laws/procedures and attendance records.

THE ROLE OF TREASURER

The treasurer is the person who manages the group's finances. Treasurers need to be trustworthy, good with money and have excellent bookkeeping skills. The treasurer must be designated in writing by the CO and must have an appointed alternate.

Duties:

- Maintain records of all funds.
- Provide a statement of finances as often as required.
- Provide complete financial report after an audit.
- Reconcile bank statements every month.
- Submit receipts within 30 days of purchase.
- Deposit money within 7 days of receipt.
- Check with command for information regarding tax-exempt status and setting up a checking account.
- Require two signatures on checks. Do not hand out blank checks.
- Submit records annually to the CO for audit.

Tips for Treasurers:

- Purchase and maintain a ledger.
- Keep a file of receipts, ledger and account information.
- Keep a box for cash, donations, dues, etc.
- Keep accurate records.
- Keep all receipts and log all check and cash transactions.
- Ensure all transactions in the ledger match receipts and check amounts.

- **Forming Committees**

Discuss the formation of committees such as Membership, Programs & Activities, Hospitality, Ways and Means, Morale/Welfare, Service Projects, Historian/Archives, Newsletter, Parliamentarian, and Publicity. Not all committees fit into the focus and structure of all associations and groups. Let your group decide which committees will work for them and encourage the spouses to join those that interest them.

- **Volunteer Forms**

All volunteers of the FRG must fill out a Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund Activities and Non-appropriated Funds Instrumentalities available at: www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2793.pdf

- **Preparing By-laws**

The by-laws of a structured organization cover issues such as association name, purpose, membership, officers, meeting requirements, etc.

If your group is going to have by-laws, organize a committee to prepare by-laws for submission to the group for approval. Before group approval, a copy should be provided to the Commanding Officer for approval. You may also wish to have a Judge Advocate General (JAG) Officer review the by-laws.

For ideas and guidelines in writing your new association's by-laws, a sample has been included on page 46.

- **Dissolving the Group**

OPNAV INST 1754.5 states, "FRGs will be more active during periods of deployment, homeport change, or crisis and may be relatively inactive at other times. However, there may be occasions when it is in the best interests of the FRG to disband. The FRG may be dissolved by vote of the members, or at the discretion of the CO. Reasons for disbanding an FRG may include, but are not limited to, when the group has outlived its purpose, membership has been so significantly reduced that it no longer represents the command, personal conflicts amongst members is having a negative impact on command morale, or the group is not following Navy or DOD regulations. Group funds shall be dispersed by expenditure on an activity for command family members, donated to a charitable organization such as Navy Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS), base military chapel(s), or similar activities whose purpose is support of Navy personnel and families."

MEETING PLACES

A meeting can take place in a building, a home, a restaurant, a park, the beach, a church, and so on. The meeting can take place on a regularly scheduled day or evening, on the weekend, or can work around the command's inport schedule. Either the Chairman of the Family Readiness Group, the president of the group, or other appointed person should be responsible for finding an appropriate meeting place, checking to see if any fees are involved, and reserving the room and time. The following are some ideas and suggestions:

- Military Base or Station: Most military bases and stations have suitable rooms and buildings available for meetings.
- Fleet and Family Support Center
- The Officers' Club
- The Enlisted Club
- The Reserve Center
- The local USO
- An available room at the Chapel
- Picnic pavilions at local parks and beaches
- Community centers
- Local schools: Many times auditoriums and classrooms can be made available
- In a member's home (for obvious reasons, this works better for smaller groups)
- At a local restaurant–choose someplace affordable to all members.

NOTE: Keep in mind when planning meetings and get-togethers that not all members of the group can afford (or want) to pay continually to attend a meeting. Try to vary your events, activities and meetings between fee and non-fee to avoid this problem.

CONDUCTING MEETINGS

- **Get Acquainted**

When you have your first meeting, have a get-acquainted period. During this time, it would be nice to serve refreshments such as a beverage and a light snack.

- **Name Tags**

Name tags are always very helpful whether it's the first meeting or the tenth. They help put new members at ease.

- **Planning Meetings**

Why leave it to the Chairman or Co-Chairmen to plan every event and activity for the group? There are a lot of creative people and ideas available. Consider having a Program Committee or person to be responsible for the group's activities. One idea is to pass around a sign-up sheet for the next six months and let the spouses sign up for a particular month and to be in charge for that month's activity. That means place, event, publicity, etc. This encourages group participation and ownership.

- **Setting the Time**

In a structured organization, it is generally written into the by-laws when meetings will be held. It can be as specific as the second Wednesday morning one month, and the second Wednesday evening the next month, or as loose as "once a month." In less structured groups, meetings often take place around the command's schedule. Whatever your group decides on, remember to consider spouses with small children and those who work outside the home.

- **Social Time vs. Business Time**

If you have a guest speaker or business to attend to at a particular meeting, keep the social time to a minimum at the beginning of the meeting. Also, it is suggested that you conduct any business at the end of the meeting so the guest speaker does not have to participate in the business part of the meeting and is free to leave once the presentation is over. Additionally, those who want to socialize will not hold up those who do not have time.

- **Refreshments**

Ask for volunteers to bring refreshments to the next meeting if it is permitted in your meeting place. This helps defray the costs to the group and gets others involved in the group's activity. Request that refreshments be kept simple. Sometimes, the command can help with refreshments, such as providing a batch of cookies or a cake. If children are included, think about juice boxes and appropriate snacks to minimize mess. If babysitters give children snacks, check for food allergies.

- **Using Parliamentary Procedure**

When books on parliamentary procedure are desired, the following books may be obtained from most libraries:

- Robert's Rules of Order
- Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, by A. Garfield Jones
- Other titles are available under the subject heading: Parliamentary Procedure

- **Establishing a Telephone Tree/Email Network**

Establishing a telephone tree is an ideal way for information to get passed quickly to the group, especially if there is a last minute change. It can be an alternative system to a prerecorded Careline. Telephone trees should be used for urgent needs. Email is preferred for routine information.

Ombudsmen cannot share official roster information with the Family Readiness Group. The Privacy Act of 1974 allows Ombudsmen access to that information, but it makes no provision for the Family Readiness Group. Therefore, if a spouse wants to be part of the telephone tree or email network, because of privacy regulations, they must specifically sign up to participate.

Advertise the phone tree/email network at command indocs and have the CMC/COB give the phone tree coordinator's phone number to service members. Advertise the phone tree/email network well at your meetings, so all spouses know it exists. Ask the Ombudsman to advertise the phone tree/email network in the newsletter.

The email network is used to notify group members of upcoming meetings and social events. All phone tree/email network messages must be approved by an advisor and have only official contents. Because phone tree/email network information is private, the phone tree must not be used for selling or soliciting.

An advisor calls the phone tree committee chairperson to activate the phone tree. The committee chairperson calls each volunteer who is a "phone tree caller". In turn, they call the group members on their list of names.

Tips for Phone Trees:

- Write down the message from the committee leader and read it back for clarification
- Read the message as it was stated to you.
- Be friendly and brief.
- Do not give out unauthorized command information.
- Do not repeat rumors.
- Encourage group members to participate.
- Refer group members to the Ombudsman for assistance with problems or resources.
- Leave messages on machines if necessary.
- Call back if a child takes the message for the parent.

- **Publicity**

An effort should be made to keep all spouses within the command informed of the group's activities. Use of the phone tree/email network, the Ombudsman newsletter, the Careline, and word of mouth are common ways to get the word out. There is an excellent discussion on Publicity on page 24.

NO CLIQUES ALLOWED

When a group is small in the beginning, it may appear to be an exclusive "clique". **It is very important to maintain an open and friendly atmosphere that will allow the group to grow naturally.** Show friendliness and make a special effort to approach, invite, and include those who may be hesitant about joining the group.

Nothing will remove command support faster or destroy chances for a group's success than the appearance that the organization is excluding any spouse in the command. **Every spouse should always be kept informed as to the group's meetings and activities regardless of attendance.**

HELPFUL HINTS

- **Maintain Communication**

Communication between the command and the group is vital and encouragement from the CO can mean a great deal to members. Let the CO and XO know they are always welcome to attend or speak briefly to the group.

- **Protect Lists**

Be extremely careful with lists of names, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers. Everyone should be aware that such lists are for the private use of the members only and ARE NOT for distribution for any purpose.

If your command has both a Command Roster and a Social Roster, check with the CO/XO about the proper use of these rosters.

A Social Roster is distinctly different from the official Command Roster. The Social Roster consists of voluntary roster information gathered by the Family Readiness Group. It can be shared and used by all who voluntarily choose to have their names and other information (address, phone, email, etc.) included on the roster.

- **Don't Gossip**

Don't let meetings or get-togethers turn into gossip sessions. Remember the old adage, "Loose lips sink ships." Gossip among members will diminish or destroy the group's chances of success.

- **Personal Problems**

Members becoming involved in the personal problems of other members may cause trouble in your organization. If such a problem arises, it should be referred to the advisor or the Command Ombudsman/Key Volunteer in order to obtain further assistance from the appropriate professional. Offering friendship or a helping hand is a fine way for members to help, but leave the advice to a professional counselor.

- **Phone Log**

If you are an FRG leader or advisor, you may want to keep a phone log to keep track of calls and action items. Here is a sample on the next page.

Phone Log					
Date	Name	Action/Issue	Talked To	Left Message	Returned Call

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a natural part of living; it will happen in the FRG now and then, too. J. Stewart, author of Bridges, Not Walls, reminds us that "for a conflict to arise, the behavior of one or both parties must have consequences for the other." It's a fact of life that people are going to have different ideas and opinions, but the key to conflict resolution lies in how the people involved handle it. S. L. Tubbs, author of *A Systems Approach To Small Group Interaction*, gives five guidelines to remember in resolving conflicts:

- Make sure you agree on the use of your terms/definitions.
- Build on areas of mutual agreement.
- Determine the specific changes necessary for a satisfactory resolution of the issues.
- Avoid personal attacks.
- Stick to the issues.

There will be times when the FRG leader has to help resolve conflicts between FRG members, but this should be done only when necessary. It's best to solve conflict at the lowest level. This means allowing the members involved to work out their own disagreements if they can.

If a conflict cannot be solved at that level, perhaps the FRG leader can help, but this must be done impartially and tactfully. Stephen Covey's famous *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* advises us to find win-win solutions to problems when we can. That is, enable both parties to win something in the resolution of the issue. If the group as a whole has a stake in the issue, perhaps brainstorming or a vote would resolve it.

When all else fails, however, it may be necessary to resort to some other avenue for resolution. The least comfortable route, perhaps, is the Chain of Command; but the outcome may not be win-win.

- From the Army FRG Leader's Handbook

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR FAMILY READINESS GROUP FUNDS

Note: This section is directly quoted from OPNAVINST 1754.5 for clarity's sake. Please ensure you review the latest version of the instruction

- **Authorized Purposes and Functions**

FRG funds may be authorized to support legitimate FRG activities. Legitimate purposes and activities for FRG funding include, but are not limited to, classes and workshops, Sailor and family welcoming activities for newcomers, holiday parties, command or FRG parties or outings, volunteer recognition, and supplemental deployment, and homecoming activities.

Use of Funds

Use of funds is limited to expenses consistent with the purpose and function of the fund to support the goals and missions of the FRG.

- FRG fundraisers shall be used as stated in the fundraiser event. The event's purpose should be in writing and approved by the CO, or representative, prior to the event taking place.
- FRG informal funds should be maintained *for specific planned purposes* and all acquired funds should be earmarked accordingly in the FRG fund ledger. Funds should only be collected for a specific goal, event, or activity. For example, if an FRG is planning a Holiday Ball, the FRG must be able to state the planned use of the funds, i.e., total cost is $3,000 (dinner $2,000, hall rental $250, and band $750). Any disbursements that are made should be for those purposes and should be for the benefit of the FRG members as a whole.
- FRG funds should not augment other unit command informal funds such as "sunshine funds" (used to provide cards, flowers for illness or deaths, birthday cakes, or other mementos for command members) or provide traditional military gifts, such as Sailor farewell gifts, which are not related to family readiness. FRG funds are to benefit the entire FRG organization.
- FRGs should not fund events that are the command's responsibility to conduct and fund.
- The use of FRG funds should not duplicate what other organizations or agencies already provide. This includes establishment of a loan fund or emergency food locker. Such requirements should be fulfilled by Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, American Red Cross, and other organizations.
- The FRG should ensure that general sub-accounts, such as "general morale," are carefully monitored to insure that the entire FRG membership has an opportunity to benefit. A sub-account could cover modest expenditures such as unit packets for newcomers, new baby welcome gifts, and FRG officers (volunteers) farewell gifts. While these expenditures might not directly benefit each and every member, they affect the morale of the organization.

FRG Treasurer

The CO should sign a letter designating the FRG treasurer and an alternate. The treasurer or alternate are responsible for fund custody, accounting, and documentation and are volunteers covered by reference (e).

- The FRG Treasurer and alternate are liable for any personal loss or misuse of funds under their control. The treasurer should not allow misuse of FRG funds by others.
- The FRG treasurer or alternate may establish a bank account under the FRG's name (never an individual's name). The FRG officers authorize opening of the account and prepare a letter naming the person(s) authorized to sign checks drawn on the account. Two signatures should be required on checks and for cash withdrawals.
- The treasurer should provide quarterly reports to the FRG advisor and president and/or FRG members consistent with the unit FRG's by-laws and/or policies. Fund audits are recommended upon change of command, upon change of treasurer, and whenever there is a suspicion of irregularity. FRG books may be maintained like a personal check register. FRG quarterly reports should summarize the fund's financial status to include current balance, total amount earned, and how funds were spent.

Fund Cap

Although there is no fund cap for informal funds maintained, it is recommended that FRG funds be capped at $5,000 average balance per year, to avoid Federal income tax liability. Should FRG funds exceed this cap, a plan should be instituted to reduce those funds to appropriate levels to insure that the average FRG fund value remains below $5,000 per year. All fundraising should cease until the FRG funds are reduced.

- FRGs are not required to register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a non-profit organization by maintaining an average fund balance of less than $5,000 per year. If an FRG desires to maintain an average balance higher than the recommended cap, they may be required to register as a non-profit 501(c) organization with the IRS and abide by all IRS procedures regulating non-profit organizations found in reference (f). Consult with the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) or Regional Legal Service (RLS) provider if considering becoming a non-profit organization.
- The requirements of Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) may require a fund cap for some Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) FRGs. COs and fund custodians in overseas locations should consult their Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) to ensure they comply with the SOFA and any local policy or rules regarding informal funds.
- Audit. Account records should be reviewed at least annually and at change of command by a command member appointed by the CO who shall certify the accounts to the CO. Receipts for expenditures and authorization documentation as well as copies of the quarterly reports and bank statements must be provided to the auditing official.

- **Family Readiness Group Fundraising**

The FRG mission is to provide activities and support that enhance the flow of information, morale, and esprit de corps within the unit. The FRG is not established for the purpose of being a fundraising organization. Nonetheless, FRGs may conduct limited fundraising to meet the needs of the organization within their own membership. FRG fundraisers should be conducted for *specific planned purposes* and all acquired funds should be earmarked accordingly in the FRG fund ledger. Use of government vehicles, official postage, and reimbursement of volunteer expenses with APFs (Appropriated Funds) are not authorized for FRG fundraising.

Approval

FRGs may only raise funds to support activities approved by the CO. It is recommended that the local Staff Judge Advocate review FRG fundraising issues for the command.

Endorsement

FRG members may only raise funds in their private capacity. Due to the close relationships between FRGs and DOD organizations, it can become difficult for an outside observer to distinguish between the FRG and the Navy unit with which they are affiliated. Thus, it is very important for FRGs to prevent the impression that they are acting on behalf of, or with the endorsement of, the Navy command. In order to avoid this perception, FRG members (and participating service members who are off-duty) should do the following:

- FRG members should clearly state they do not represent the Navy or the command, but rather that they are members of "USS Eversail's Family Readiness Group."
- FRGs should never use Navy or command letterhead, symbol, motto, or documents officially signed by members of the chain of command. FRG members should prepare written correspondence on FRG letterhead. The FRG letterhead may not include the phrase "Department of the Navy" or "Department of Defense" and may not use the official DOD emblem. FRGs shall use a prominent disclaimer on all print and electronic media distributed to members clarifying that the FRG is not a part of Department of the Navy (DON) or the command (e.g., "USS Eversail's Family Readiness Group is an organization of family members and friends and does not officially represent the Department of the Navy or the USS Eversail.").

- Off-duty personnel who are assisting with FRG activities may not wear their uniforms under any circumstance while fundraising for the FRG. Sailors should also refrain from using their titles and ranks.

Location Rules

The location where fundraising is conducted is critical to determining which rules apply. All fundraising must comply with the Joint Ethics Regulation and require the approval of the CO and installation ethics advisor.

- Fundraising within Navy offices and workplaces. Generally, no fundraising should take place at Navy offices and workplaces. Limited fundraising may be permitted when the fundraising is conducted within the command.
- Fundraising on base. Any organization, including FRGs, may request permission from the regional or installation CO to engage in limited fundraising on base. Installation CO's may provide the same limited logistical support they provide any other organization requesting permission to raise funds on base. Sailors are not allowed to wear military uniforms when fundraising on base and cannot be compelled to participate in FRG fundraising activities.
- Fundraising off base. The Navy may not officially support or endorse FRG fundraising off base. All Federal employees, including military personnel and family members must be careful to avoid implying that the Navy officially endorses FRG off base fundraisers. Sailors may not wear military uniforms and are prohibited from using their command, rank, or duty position when fundraising.
- Local ordinances. FRGs should check with the local city, county, or State government in advance for any permit fees, health ordinances, liability insurance requirements, tax liabilities, and other requirements necessary to conduct fundraising off base.

Advertising

Fundraising conducted by the FRG must not be advertised as a command event. Example:

NO: USS Eversail Bake Sale
YES: Bake Sale for USS Eversail Family Readiness Group

The fundraising event, and any communications including flyers, posters, or signs, must also include a disclaimer that the event is not sponsored or endorsed by DOD, Navy, or the command.

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) , Navy Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) , Navy Exchange (NEX) , and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR). FRG fundraising activities may not conflict with the CFC and NMCRS campaigns. FRG fundraising activities must not compete with NEX or MWR.

Fundraising Incentives and Prohibitions

FRGs will not hold military leave or pass auctions or sell tickets for fundraising that allow Sailors to wear civilian clothes on duty or be absent from physical training. COs are prohibited from offering military benefits (i.e., passes, training holidays, or authorized wear of civilian clothes during the duty day) to Sailors involved in fundraising as an incentive or reward for their participation or donation to the fundraiser.

Voluntary Participation and Donation

All donations and participation in fundraising activities must be on a voluntary basis.

- **Solicitations and Donations**

FRG members must be careful to avoid implying that the Navy officially endorses their solicitation of local businesses to support their fundraising.

Acceptance of Gifts

The local Staff Judge Advocate should provide guidance to the commander when an FRG is offered unsolicited donations.

Recognition for Donors and Gifts

FRGs may recognize businesses for their contributions and donations by letter or in the newsletter. However, neither the FRG nor the CO may endorse the business, or encourage command members to patronize a particular business. Thank you letters are encouraged and should be on FRG letterhead (not command) and signed by the FRG leader (not the CO).

- Businesses donating prizes or goods cannot receive any special privileges, concessions, or military or command endorsement by virtue of their contribution. Example: a Certificate of Appreciation from the CO to a local business would be a prohibited endorsement.
- FRGs may recognize donors for gifts and donations so long as the recognition is not required as part of a negotiated agreement with the donor. Recognition should be kept low key and may be given at FRG meetings or events.

Other Rules

- All communication and coordination with local businesses for fundraising events must be by FRG leaders/members. FRG members who are Sailors must not discuss fundraising with businesses while on duty, in uniform, nor identify themselves by command position or rank.
- The FRG must not imply that donations are tax deductible. Businesses may be encouraged to speak with their tax adviser regarding business tax deductions.
- FRGs should avoid seeking or accepting private donations that exceed their approved needs or fund cap. FRGs are not organized to cope with the complex tax ramifications and stringent accountability requirements that can result from handling large donations. FRGs who are offered large donations should consider referring the prospective donor to government or private organizations such as NMCRS, American Red Cross (ARC), United Service Organization (USO), local tax qualified charities, foundations, fraternal or service organizations, or to the installation CO to make a gift to the Navy or MWR programs.

Solicitations

- Door-to-door solicitation is prohibited on base.
- DOD employees will not solicit donations for FRG fundraising from their subordinates, defined as those who are junior in grade, rank or position, or to the family members of such personnel.

Commercial Sponsorship

FRGs may not enter into commercial sponsorship agreements with local businesses. Commercial sponsorship is an agreed upon arrangement under which a sponsor provides assistance, funding, goods, equipment, or services in exchange for public recognition or other promotional opportunities on the base. Commercial sponsorship is only authorized for official MWR programs and events.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Fundraising can be fun and enjoyed by all. Before planning a fundraiser, your group should have a specific focus and purpose for raising the funds.

- **Getting Command Approval/Legal Office Approval**

Before a group undertakes any moneymaking project, a representative should meet with the Commanding Officer to clear all details of the project and obtain permission to proceed. It is necessary that the CO understand the details and proceedings so that the group will have the approval and the support of the command. Some projects may require the CO to obtain legal advice before giving permission to go ahead, so give the command plenty of time to approve your request.

> NOTE: In these times of close scrutiny and constantly changing rules and regulations, it is probably a good idea to run any fund-raising project by the CO/XO to make sure your group will comply with the command's wishes as well as with local laws and military and base regulations. If the command or unit is deployed, your group or club can contact Legal Assistance at your local base or installation.

IDEAS, IDEAS, IDEAS

With the diversity of personalities, talents, and backgrounds of military spouses, there is never a loss of ideas for get-togethers and fundraisers. The following is a sampling of some successful and popular projects used by groups around the country and around the world:

- **Sales**

Very traditional, but always successful, the bake sale is a good fundraiser to hold on or immediately after payday. Freezer sales are where foods such as cookies, appetizers, sauces or anything that can be frozen are sold. Lunch sales have proven to be very successful aboard ships and stations. Your group chooses an area favorite such as chili, hot dogs and hamburgers, tacos, sloppy joes, chicken and ribs, submarine sandwiches, etc., and schedules the sale on or immediately after payday.

> NOTE: If your group is considering sales involving prepared food, you should check with the command or base regarding rules and regulations about selling food. It is probable you will be required to take a food-handling course.

Other sales to hold include candy sales, plant sales and rummage sales.

- **Bazaar Booths**

If your base/station is having a bazaar or fair, your group could set up a booth and sell food or crafts. Food ideas include nachos, tapas, pies, hoagies, etc. See "Note" on last page about food handling.

- **Car Wash**

These are generally weekend events and can be fundraisers that involve the whole family. Sometimes large businesses will not only allow you space and water, but may have a matching fund program which will double your profits.

- **Cookbook**

Ask your members to contribute favorite recipes, compile them into booklet form, and sell them. These are work to put together, yet are fairly inexpensive to produce. This is a great project to include moms and aunts not in the area.

> NOTE: You may consider employing a publisher that specializes in printing cookbooks for charity and fundraisers. They take all the work and hassle out of this very profitable fundraiser.

- **Bingo**

Charge for cards and get prizes donated. This can be a fun family event too. Again, check with legal/base regulations ahead of time.

- **Auctions**

  - **Ticket Auction:** The items to be auctioned are displayed on tables around the room. In front of each item is a receptacle. Participants buy tickets upon entry (10 for $5.00 for example), and place one ticket into the receptacle for each item on which they wish to bid. At auction time, one ticket for each item is selected and whoever has the matching ticket or whose name appears on the ticket, wins that item.

  - **Silent Auction:** Instead of putting a ticket into a receptacle, a sheet of paper sits in front of the item. All participants write down their names and the amounts that they want to bid for a particular item. The bids are to be made in increasing order. When the auctioneer closes the bidding, the last person listed (the highest bidder), wins the item.

  - **Time & Talent Action:** Items put up for auction are donated by members and can be things such as baby-sitting, baking a cake, putting on a dinner party, knitting a sweater, washing a car, etc. Items can be bid for by using an auctioneer, a ticket auction, a silent auction, or a combination of several ways. Auctioning services

can bring a lot of humor to the event as well as funds (i.e. CO washes your car.)

- **T-shirts**

Designing a t-shirt is a good outlet for creativity. Don't duplicate or sell t-shirts that are sold in the ship's store! It's not a good idea to be in competition with the command's store. However, you can sell command logo items that differ from what the command sells (with CO-permission, of course).

- **Door Prizes**

A simple item is wrapped and participants pay fifty cents to one dollar for a ticket. Have the drawing at the end of the meeting.

- **Garage Sale**

Individual or group sponsored garage sales are profitable. One or two people in the group donate their garage space for the sale. Spouses who want to participate in the sale can donate goods and the profits from the sale go to the group.

- **Theme Baskets**

Decorate a basket with a specific theme – holidays, romance, cooking and kids are popular choices. Have a drawing for the basket.

- **Flags**

Sell small American flags at your meetings for everyone to wave at homecoming. Make sure young children cannot poke each other with the tip.

- **First Kiss Drawing**

It's simple and fun. At each meeting or function, participants who are interested may buy a raffle ticket. At the last meeting before homecoming, a ticket is drawn. The person who wins is able to be the first in line to get that "First Kiss." Keep in mind that the person who wins the "First Kiss" gets that opportunity after the official party has boarded the ship and possibly after new parents.

REMEMBER TO GET PERMISSION AND GUIDANCE FROM YOUR COMMANDING OFFICER FOR ALL FUNDRAISING IDEAS. THERE ARE LEGAL CONSTRAINTS FOR FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES THAT MAY VARY FROM LOCATION TO LOCATION.

PUBLICITY

Printed publicity is invaluable to both newly formed and established groups, not only for getting the word out BEFORE an event, but also for getting credit for good deeds AFTER an event. It can spark the interest of the hesitant spouse. All publicity should be done well in advance to assure maximum coverage.

There are lots of ways to reach the spouses of the command. Below are some ideas for your organization.

- Use the established telephone tree/email network.
- Advertise in the Ombudsman's newsletter.
- In many commands, the Ombudsman has a "Careline" telephone with current information about the command. Putting a message about the organization's activities on the Careline is another excellent way to get the word out.
- Ask the command if you can publish events in the Plan of the Day.
- Place posters in strategic locations around the base or station such as the commissary, exchange, Fleet and Family Support Center, etc. Be sure to get prior approval from the facility's manager.
- Give a flyer inviting newcomers to join your group to the Command Sponsorship Program Coordinator, PSD, or the relocation assistance manager to put in the "Welcome Aboard Packets." The flyer could include recent service projects or programs and the name and phone number of a volunteer from the group who would be willing to assist the interested person.
- Send a press release to the base or station newspaper. Address it to the editor.
- Don't forget the local morning and evening newspapers.
- Often, radio stations and television stations give announcements of group activities.
- In overseas locations, many of the family member postal service centers have bulletin boards available.
- Advertise through word of mouth.

Remember, if your group has raised money or volunteered time for a community project, don't forget to get publicity for your good deeds and successful results. Publicity is another positive way to encourage membership and participation as well as future cooperation from the military and civilian communities.

- **Newsletters**

Newsletters may be produced by the Ombudsmen or the command. To show that the Family Readiness Group is in touch with everyone in the command, take time each month to write a short paragraph to incorporate into the newsletter. Some commands support a Family Readiness Group newsletter, and a committee coordinates production, collects information and maintains birthday/special occasion lists for command families. Talk with your command to see how you can make newsletters an effective tool for communicating with command families.
Items to include may be:

- Mark your calendar. Dates and times of upcoming events, such as group meetings, board meetings, fund-raising events, and socials.
- Special Acknowledgments. Welcome new spouses and note farewells to departing spouses. A special section of birthdays/special events is nice for families to see in the newsletter.
- Ship's Quiz. A quiz to help build awareness of the command's history. List questions one month and follow up with answers the next.
- Old Salt. The old salt explains various military terms and acronyms. A good source of information is Sea Legs, available through Naval Services FamilyLine.
- Author, Author. Offer to print short stories and poems that spouses would like to share.
- Chef's Corner. Highlight a member's favorite recipe for all spouses and families to share.
- Year in Review. In January, run a Year in Review to highlight all the activities of the command and the Family Readiness Group. Incoming families see the accomplishments of the group and it may generate interest in your group.
- Command Notes. Have the command note promotions and other shipboard news.
- Messages from the CO, XO or CMC. Invite the CO, XO or CMC to write an article for your newsletter.

Tips for Newsletters:

- Resources: Command; Housing Welcome Centers; Child Development Centers; Local and military newspapers; Public library; Fleet and Family Support Center.
- Writing is a Learned Skill: Write, rewrite and then rewrite again. Three to four drafts are often required before the final version of your story is ready for print.
- Effective Headlines: Use active voice-subject first, then verb. Use present tense even though most events occurred in the past. To show the future, use infinitives (e.g., to award, to eliminate).
- Readers are Impatient: Get information to your readers before they get your newsletter into the trash can. Keep it short-use familiar words; paragraphs of four to six sentences; stories of five or fewer paragraphs.
- Proofreading: Proofreading is very difficult. Once you have created the material, you are too familiar with it to see your errors. Always ask someone else to proof your work. A proofreader should read material one element at time. Do all the body copy, then the headlines, then all the extra material, such as page numbers. Check for spelling.

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Keeping in mind the size of the group and the interests of the membership, there are many areas from which free, interesting, and suitable programs may be arranged. What follows are some helpful hints and a collection of just a few program suggestions contributed by various groups and spouses from around the country.

HELPFUL HINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Some groups invite all the service members, both married and single, to participate in the group's activities. Also, when considering meeting places, if you're inviting parents, girlfriends, boyfriends, and fiancés of service members to attend functions, remember they might have limited access to bases and military facilities. You should also ask the service member if they wish a significant other to be invited. Be sure to check with the command before inviting non-command sponsored guests.
- If you have an organized Planning Committee Hospitality Committee, ask them to plan and discuss ideas for get-togethers. Also, they can help assess how often the group will want to meet for activities.
- Regardless of the activity, enlist the help of the Command Team. Their coordinated efforts can help ensure that planned activities are meaningful and well received by all.
- When choosing a project, keep in mind the number of members who will participate and the available finances.
- Don't forget to use the vast resources of talent within your own group when searching for ideas for projects and activities.
- The command may also have program ideas and suggestions for your group and may request your group's assistance.
- If the unit is going on deployment, TDY or TAD, it is a good idea to meet early to plan activities for spouses and families while the command is deployed. Usually, Family Readiness Groups increase their levels of recreational activities so that the actual separation is less emphasized. However, most activities that can be planned while the service member's unit is deployed or TDY can also be planned while the unit is at home. Keep in mind that activities are good during a deployment, but be careful not to overdo it.
- Vary times and activities so that most of the spouses can participate in something – talents, abilities and interests are not all the same. The ultimate goal is to foster goodwill.
- Encourage members to keep their eyes and ears open for ideas to share with the organization. It is your group – enjoy it!
- Don't forget about the children in the command, especially when the service members are away on deployment. It is essential to have several activities scheduled to include the children.
- Remember, the Ombudsman should not be the social director in a command-sponsored organization, so be sure the group has a committee or individuals willing to take on the responsibility of initiating activities. Let your Ombudsman relax and just be part of the group.

PROGRAM & ACTIVITY IDEAS

The best program ideas often come from within your own group. You might glean ideas from the extensive list below and apply your own touches of originality and local interest.

- **Engage a Guest Speaker**

Suggestions include: the Commanding Officer, the Executive Officer, the Commissary Officer, the Exchange Officer, the MWR Director, the Fleet and Family Support Center staff member, the Legal Officer, the Chaplain, the Patient Affairs Advisor at the hospital, the Health Benefits Advisor, representatives from the Better Business Bureau, and representatives from local government and/or its agencies. Often, guest speakers will have their own topics to discuss, but suggestions can be made to them on subjects of interest or concern to the group. The Fleet and Family Support Center can provide speakers on a variety of topics.

- **Have a "Demonstration"**

Ideas for demonstrations can come from many different places. The following are some ideas:

- Many local department stores offer programs such as "Dress for Success," home decorating, fashion shows, etc.
- Make-up, skin care, and hair design presentations provide new ideas and many times are free.
- Some travel agencies or airlines will have a representative available to demonstrate "How to Pack a Suitcase" or show slides/films on various tourist areas.
- We all have talented individuals in our organizations. Have members share their hobbies and crafts.
- Exchange home decoration ideas.
- Many local fire departments and police departments have units available for demonstrating everything from "Why Not To Smoke Around Hairspray" to "How To Secure Your Car And Home Against Theft", etc.
- Red Cross CPR demonstrations are generally well attended.
- Perhaps a florist will show the group how to arrange a beautiful table centerpiece with what one has around the house at little expense.
- Any ideas related to cooking such as cake decorating, carving garnishes, etc., are always fun and popular.

- **Tours**

Tours of museums, parks, libraries, historic homes, gardens, special churches, synagogues or temples, specialized shopping areas, and art galleries are only a few of the many possibilities. It's great when you can involve the children and the whole family in some of these tours. These activities are especially good if by going as a group, you get a discount or other special treatment that you cannot get as an individual.

- **Food**

Potlucks, dessert parties, barbecues, picnics, restaurant outings, brunch, and progressive dinners – you name it, and if it involves food, it's always a success. Try international nights where each person brings a dish from a different country, or designate a particular country as a theme and have everybody or a committee bring the "native" dishes. Try a low-fat, no-cholesterol dinner where each recipe must fit the guidelines. Exchange recipes after dinner. If you can get a large group of your members together, ask a local restaurant if the chef could come and give a gourmet cooking demonstration (with taste-testing afterwards, of course!).

> NOTE: Unless it is a couple's function, it is not recommended that alcohol be served at such get-togethers. You don't want to worry about serving minors or about others leaving your function driving under the influence of alcohol. If you feel that someone is impaired, offer them a ride or get them a cab!

- **Children**

Kids love picnics and picnics are a great way to involve them in an activity. Zoos and "hands-on" museums are always fun too. Holidays are an ideal time to include children in group activities. A December Holiday Party is always successful but don't forget Valentine's, Easter and Halloween. These gatherings can be a good opportunity to acknowledge special accomplishments such as scholastic, sport and scouting awards.

- **Tapings & Photographs**

Many Family Readiness Groups arrange for a mid-deployment taping to send to the command for viewing by all members of the command simultaneously.

> NOTE: Be aware that individuals and groups should be given the courtesy of viewing any tapes and photographs before they are sent to the command. Not only do you want to make sure they are in good taste, but also that individuals don't have objections on how they are portrayed. Remember, assume that the whole command will see the tape, and that photographs will get passed around. Sheet posters with photographs, drawings or even handprints are an excellent idea.

If the command also has a video camera, suggest that the command also take videos while deployed. It's a great way for families to see mom or dad at sea. It's a good idea to preview the tape to let people know if their spouse is in it. A popular program in many commands is to videotape sailors reading to their children while at sea and mailing them back home

- **Holidays**

As you know, naval units deploy during holidays. It is always a benefit to everyone if these special occasions are recognized with some sort of a Family Readiness Group get-together. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, Easter, and the Fourth of July are all easy times to plan for but don't forget Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, President's Day, Columbus Day, St. Patrick's Day and others.

For fun, try celebrating some of our "National Weeks" such as National Chocolate Week, National Be-Nice-To-Mom/Dad-Week, or make up your own week!

- **Potpourri of Ideas**

Play sports among yourselves or challenge other groups in softball, bowling, tennis, golf, putt-putt golf, etc., or join a league. Go ice-skating or roller-skating. Attend a lecture series, make-up artistry sessions, or interior decorating seminars. Go to a play or dinner theater. Make "care packages" or Christmas stockings for the deployed command (and don't forget the single personnel). Make a sheet poster to hang in the mess decks. Have a dessert party and share wedding albums.

SERVICE PROJECTS

With the great need for volunteers, it should not be difficult for everyone who would like to volunteer to find an interesting and rewarding project to enthusiastically donate both their time and talents.

Within the military itself, there are several organizations that depend a great deal upon volunteers. The following are a few ideas for your group. Your group may choose to have a member serve as Service Project Chairman who will keep the membership aware of the organizations, both military and civilian, which need volunteer help. Also, your members are a great source for ideas and will undoubtedly have additional suggestions for your group's consideration.

- **COMPASS Teams**

A spouse-to-spouse mentoring program, COMPASS needs mentors, childcare providers, food angels, and administrative help. Whether a new or seasoned spouse, consider attending this course.

- **Fleet and Family Support Centers**

Although these centers are fully funded and staffed, the valuable ideas and assistance of the volunteers who have "traveled the route themselves" are essential to the program. These centers are also an excellent resource for ideas and suggestions for service and volunteer projects in the military and civilian communities.

- **Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society**

This organization is always in need of volunteers. While your local auxiliary or branch may need individual help such as receptionists and interviewers, possibly your group or club could consider a group project. Some ideas include staffing a regularly scheduled day at the thrift shop, teaching everybody to crochet and/or knit for the layettes, redecorating an interview room, or shopping for the food locker. Check with your local auxiliary or branch for complete information.

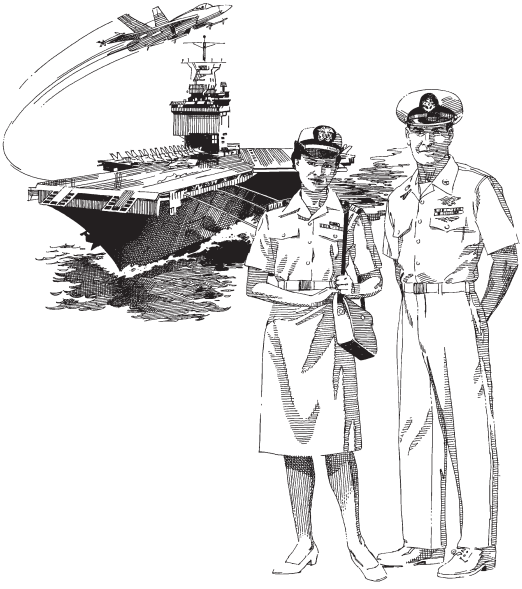
- **Miscellaneous Ideas**

If a group is truly interested in a community service project, there are many places where volunteers are needed and appreciated. Some ideas include:

- Naval Services FamilyLine, in the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. welcomes group work parties to help with shipping out literature requests and other administrative office work.

- Traveler's Aid Stations and USO counters across the country and around the world are manned by volunteers. Maybe your group could commit to a certain day each month for staffing their counters. Their services have been more than a welcome sight to many a weary service member or family member in strange cities or airports.
- Red Cross Hospital and Clinic Volunteer Program is a very rewarding way of spending volunteer time. All volunteers must take the basic orientation course.
- VA Hospitals, community hospitals, retirement homes, and nursing homes welcome volunteers to cheer up patients with simple activities such as visiting, reading, making table decorations, shopping, etc.
- Have your group sponsor a COMPASS class. Provide all the food required for a class.
- If there is a Fisher House associated with your local military hospital, there are several services that your group can provide. Holiday decorations and activities, meals, and donations of magazines, books, toys, and videos are always welcome. Contact the director of your local Fisher House.
- With budget cuts, local schools are always looking for volunteer help. Check with your local PTA to see if there are any school projects that could use a helping hand.
- Clean-up crews are always a big help. Does your local park or beach need help?

NOTE: Remember to publicize your group's good deeds!



EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Meetings can be informal by using chairmen or formal by using officers. The choice usually depends on command leadership preference and the size of the group. If the group is small, under 15 participants, having chairmen and using committees makes sense. The group will not appear to be "leadership heavy."

By-laws/procedures should reflect the simplest way of running a business meeting to keep order and to have a process of decision-making. Keeping by-laws uncomplicated with limited rules and regulations will help the group run most efficiently.

- **Ideas for Meetings**

  - Have an agenda for all meetings, both formal and informal. Post it or distribute it to membership.
  - Start meetings on time to discourage latecomers. If meetings always start on time, participants are less likely to be late.
  - It is easier to set dates and times if everyone is encouraged to bring a calendar to the meetings.
  - Set a time limit on agenda items to be discussed. An agenda item that is discussed over and over is frustrating to your group.
  - If many ideas will be discussed, assign a committee to take the ideas for action and research. Have them report back at a future meeting.
  - Establish a convenient voting method. One simple method of voting is to allow only those in attendance at the meeting to vote. Groups can sometimes get bogged down in a complicated voting procedure that inhibits the group, and the voting procedure itself can become an issue. If voting on an important issue will cause the group to split, ask the group to compromise by attempting to reach a consensus or to agree to do more research. No one wins when half of the group is unhappy with an important issue. Remember to get permission from the command and talk to the advisors if decisions are controversial and warrant command attention. Make sure the "squeaky wheel" does not control decisions but all sides are heard.

- **Icebreakers**

The saying goes, "It's a small world." The purpose of the icebreaker is to give people an opportunity to get to know each other and find out what they have in common. Even if participants do know each other, it is still a great way to start meetings. It is an upbeat way for participants to relax and get to know all of the people in the room, not just their close friends.

Ideas for Icebreakers

- Questions for participants: Questions should be general in nature and not too personal. Have participants take turns going around the room, giving their names and asking questions like:
  - What is your home state?
  - How many children do you have?
  - What is your favorite vegetable?
  - What is your zip code?
  - Where did you meet your sailor?

- **Who am I?** Pin the name of a famous person on the back of each group member. Have everyone ask questions requiring "yes" or "no" answers of one another for a preset amount of time. At the end of the time limit, go around the room, starting with yourself, and have everyone guess who they are. Keep the game as simple as possible by using themes – couples, famous athletes, and other recognizable celebrities.

- **Don't Say "I":** Give each person three pennies. Ask participants to move around the rooms, introducing themselves to one another and asking questions that might prompt a person to say "I". If anyone does, the participant collects a penny from the person who said "I". The person with the most pennies at the end of the preset amount of time wins a small door prize. Dimes work too!

- **No Hands Directions:** Divide the group into small groups of two or three. Ask participants to sit on their hands facing each other and then give directions to their house or directions from their house to the closest mall. It's amazing how some people can't remember street names or indicate left or right turns without using their hands.

- **M&M Game:** Pass around a bag of M&M candies and tell everyone to take some. After they have taken some say, "OK, now you have to tell us something about yourself for each M&M."

FAMILY READINESS GROUP ACTIVITIES

Building a unified Family Readiness Group is a must for good teamwork later down the road. Joint activities are one way to build teamwork. Choose any of the ideas presented in this booklet that fit your group size, activity level and interest.

- **Invite guest speakers** to your group.
- **Learn a new craft** or a new recipe.
- **Meet socially** at the movies, for coffee or at the gym.
- **Attend command picnics** and parties.
- **Dinner out:** Dine out and follow-up with a play, movie or sporting event.
- **Go bowling:** Go for one night or form a team on a league.
- **Be a tourist** and see the local sights.
- **Auto Maintenance:** Learn simple car maintenance tips from the base hobby shop or other trained mechanics.

- **Come as you are:** Call everyone over for an impromptu get-together.
- **Have a fun evening** with good food.
- **Hold an auction:** Everyone brings a white elephant (a usable, inexpensive item). Participants "bid" on items by placing a dime in a basket that circulates around the room. Set a timer for a random amount of time, and when it goes off, the last person to put a dime in the basket gets the item.
- **Learn a craft:** Have members of your group share their craft with the rest of the group.
- **Security Night:** Have a police officer talk about car, home and personal safety.
- **Wedding Albums:** Share your life with the group – each member tells a story about his or her wedding.
- **Celebrity Party:** Come as your favorite celebrity.
- **Learn**: MWR and some community centers may offer classes in golf, sailing and scuba diving – the list is endless. Home improvement stores have classes on techniques from wallpapering to repairing drywall. Take a class as a group or with a few people – it can be lots of fun.
- **Rent movies:** Pop popcorn and sit on the floor. Have a few members bring their favorite movie.
- **Wine and cheese:** Have each guest bring their favorites to share.
- **Play cards and games:** Pinochle, Spades and Monopoly are favorites.
- **My sailor's favorite recipe:** A twist to the standard potluck dinner.
- **Build-a-Sub Night:** Each person brings an ingredient to share. Works well with salads, too!
- **New Recipe Night:** This is the time for everyone to try out those great sounding recipes they've been reluctant to fix because they didn't want to eat it for a week! Everyone prepares a new recipe for the meal.
- **Wok Works:** Each person brings an ingredient that is pre-sliced and ready to add to the stir-fry.
- **Garden or Plant Exchange:** Everyone brings a plant or cutting to exchange.
- **Whose Hand is This?** Send a Polaroid photograph of each spouse's hand to the command. Each service member selects their spouse. This can be done command-wide. For large commands, be sure to divide pictures into divisions before sending to the command, so that they don't have to track everyone down.
- **Spouse Jigsaw Puzzles:** Take a picture of each spouse and cut it into a jigsaw puzzle (or have it made professionally). This can also be a group picture for everyone to work on together.
- **Collect Sunday Comics:** Ask a few spouses to save the comics from Sunday's paper and send them weekly to the command's library. It's amazing how many deployed service members will look forward to receiving this package.
- **Care Packages:** Have each spouse bake a dozen cookies or other sweets and send them to the command to be shared by all. Single sailors will enjoy the gesture as well.
- **Collage:** Gather pictures from the families of as many crew members as possible. Organize them into a collage for display in a prominent place with the deployed command for all to see.
- **Videotape a Family Readiness Group function:** Set some of the highlights to music and send the videotape to the command.

- **Decorative Pillowcases:** Have computer-image photographs of spouses imprinted on pillowcases or decorate the pillowcases using permanent markers or inks.
- **Handprint Hankies:** Have the children draw pictures or put their handprints on handkerchiefs or a sheet poster. Sew them together and send for display on the mess decks.
- **Healthy Outings:** Hiking, biking, walking and other outside activities are a great way to keep busy and be healthy and active. A group of friends make it more fun. Again, be inclusive and beware of cliques.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Having parties and social events for children can be a great way to bring military children together for friendship and a sense of belonging.

- **Children's Sunday Sundae Parties:** Have each family bring their favorite toppings. Let the Family Readiness Group furnish the ice cream, if funds allow. Creativity soars, as there is "something about ice cream …"
- **Picnic in the Park:** Have parent/child potato sack and three-legged races. Each family brings a salad to share, something to grill and drinks for themselves.
- **Meet at the Beach:** Having many adults makes watching the children at the beach a little easier.
- **Meet at the Pool:** Use on-base pools. Bring the kids or have a parent's day out.
- **Costume Party:** Don't reserve this idea just for Halloween.
- **Craft Day:** Make a simple craft with the children. One idea is laminated place mats, for holiday or everyday use. There are probably talented people in your group, and there are many craft books available in the library.
- **Garlands:** Have the kids decorate their own holiday or everyday construction paper garland. Hook the links together to form a garland to decorate the mess decks, wardroom, ready room or work space.
- **Wands and Crowns:** Children can make wands out of cardboard boxes, aluminum foil, straws and ribbons. Crowns can be made out of construction paper.

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTIES

Holidays are a special time for families, but especially for children. There are many books on planning children's parties available in stores and at the library. When you plan the parties, remember that a little activity goes a long way! Children are often overwhelmed with too much stimulation and are often content simply being with other children. Some ideas may include:

- **Make valentines**
- **Have an egg hunt**
- **Rent, or better yet, make costumes** for each appropriate holiday
- **Celebrate the Fourth of July.** Find a local parade.
- **Sponsor Carnival Games:** If Carnival Game Parties are used, divide the children into groups and rotate them through the games. This creates a more organized atmosphere.

- o A piece of felt (relating to the holiday theme) stapled to a sheet of plywood makes a great target for ping-pong balls with Velcro loop glued on. The eyes, nose and mouth are prize-winning target areas.
- o "Fish" for small prizes. Paint a giant cardboard box to resemble a pond and surround it with holiday decorations. Children take turns dunking a stick with a clothespin on a fishing line into a hole cut in the box. A person hiding inside clips to it a small spider ring or some other "treat" and gently tugs on the string. The child reels in the prize. This game works well and runs quickly if a person seated next to the game asks loudly, "How old are you?" Then the prize is age appropriate.
- o Make sure all children leave with goodies.

- **Costume Contest:** Have special prizes for the prettiest, scariest and funniest. Costume parties can be held any time of the year.
- **Trick or Treat at the Mall:** Less mess, less organization. For smaller groups this may sound too easy to be true, but it is fun. Select a meeting place and time in advance.
- **December Holiday Party:** Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwaanza: This is by far the most involved, yet most appreciated of all parties. Be sure to start early in the year – September is not too early. First on the agenda is finding a location, because they go fast. Reserve your location and Santa suit rentals as far in advance as possible. Check with local toy wholesalers for novelty prizes. Order early and in sufficient quantities. It is better to overestimate and save leftovers than to run short. Some ideas for holiday parties are:

  - o Gift from Santa: Have parents bring a wrapped gift for each of their children. Be sure each gift is labeled with a name or sex and age.
  - o Tickets to a Show: Take the children to see a local ballet's production of The Nutcracker Suite or other holiday program. Group discounts may be available.
  - o Make Holiday Ornaments: A good no-bake dough recipe is:

    - 1 cup flour
    - 1/2 cup salt
    - 2 tsp. cream of tartar
    - 1 cup water
    - 2 tbsp. oil
    - 1/2 tsp. food coloring

      - Combine flour, salt, and cream of tartar.
      - Gradually stir in water, oil and food coloring
      - Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until a ball forms.
      - Remove from heat and knead until smooth.
      - Store dough in airtight containers until ready for use.
      - After ornaments are made, allow them to air-dry overnight.

HALFWAY CELEBRATIONS

Halfway Celebration is a symbol of having made it through the first half of the deployment and it is a time to reenergize those skills developed in the first half of deployment to get through the second half. Start planning for Halfway Celebration and homecoming early in the deployment.

If the group wishes to have a theme for the deployment, determine what it will be at your first or second meeting. A group may meet informally only five more times before the end of the deployment. Some successful themes include: "Follow the Yellow Brick Road", "Right Here Waiting for You", "Back in the U.S.A." or anything that might represent the group, such as the time of year, a popular song or a movie. Maintain the theme throughout all the deployment projects.

Planning a successful Halfway Celebration is much like planning any party. Form a committee to do the research and legwork for the group.

- **What?** Observe Halfway Celebration any way the group sees appropriate. Potluck dinners, dinners out and comedy shows are popular choices.
- **Where?** Good places to suggest are local hotels or clubs (for catered affairs), dinner theaters, or restaurants (for simple "meals only" affairs). Consider onbase facilities that may charge a nominal fee.
- **When?** There is no "exact" halfway point, so choose a date somewhere in the range and go with it.
- **Who?** Again, it is up to your group. Some include mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers. Most include only the spouse or significant other of the deployed service member.
- **Cost:** Finding places to have your Halfway Celebration can be challenging and fun. You will want a location that appeals to the majority of the group. Offer a variety of activities or places to go. Some places may be out of reach financially for some members of your group, so sensitivity to this fact is important. One option would be to subsidize the cost through fundraising activities, so all can participate.

Advertise: Get the word out early to everyone invited, so that they have time to save and book a babysitter (especially for large affairs). Make sure everyone knows the details as far in advance as possible.

Reservations: Be sure to allow plenty of time between the RSVP and the date of the affair. At least two weeks is a must. To cut down on no-shows, charge a small registration fee that can be refunded at the door or used to cover a portion of the cost of the evening. If the plan is to have the party at a popular restaurant or night club, be sure to make reservations two months or so in advance and ask about their policy on reservations and cancellations. Calling too late means the room or date that you have promised to your group may not be available. Safety is always a concern for spouses. When making plans, take into consideration the location, parking, outside lighting and other safety factors. Carpooling can add fun to the event.

HOMECOMING

Planning for homecoming is a big job. Family Readiness Groups spend most of their money, time and effort preparing for that special day. A homecoming committee should be established at the first or second meeting. This will allow enough time for the group to decide on activities, banners, music, etc. Don't get too elaborate. Remember, the most important sight for service members is their families standing on the pier to welcome them home!

Outchop Dinner: Outchop is a Navy term signifying the command has ended operational status, has turned over mission responsibilities to their relief command and is heading home. It is a significant event onboard the ship. Homecoming at last! Family Readiness Groups can choose to celebrate this as well. Going out to dinner or having a potluck is a good way to celebrate the ship's outchop. This may be an option for Family Readiness Groups who choose not to do a reception the night before the command returns.

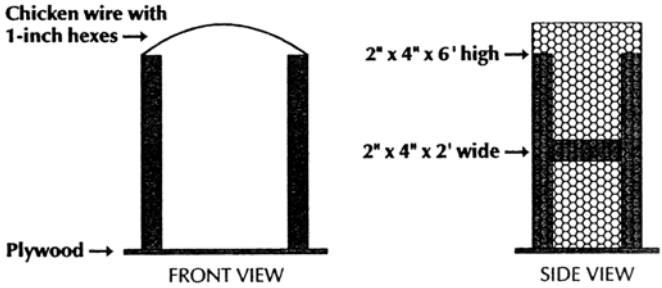
Reception Night: Many Family Readiness Groups choose to have a reception the night before homecoming. The reception is for all command family members and out-of-town guests. It allows crew families to meet each other the night before and share the excitement of the command's return from sea.

- **Publicity:** Welcome your command home through a variety of avenues – sheet posters, newspaper ads, billboards, marquees and radio stations. Early in the deployment, check with the advertisers you intend to use to find out how much advance notice they need to publicize your homecoming.
- **Flags:** Sell or give away American flags to have on the pier or in the hangar.
- **Music:** Use bands, DJs or tape recordings. The host command will coordinate securing a Navy band, if one is available. If a band is unavailable, ask the point of contact to check into obtaining a local high school band. The host command may be able to set up a sound system for prerecorded music, which you provide or military music, which they provide.
- **Arches:** Arches are placed at the bottom of the brow or at the exit door of the hangar. There are two primary ways to construct an arch. The first is from wood, chicken wire, and newspaper; the second is from PVC piping. Arches can last through many deployments if handled with care and properly stored.

    - **Arch Type 1: Materials**
        - 4 cans each red and blue spray paint
        - 5 cans white spray paint
        - 8 1/2-inch washers
        - 4 bolts and nuts to fit
        - 1 - 4'x 8' sheet of 5/8-inch plywood
        - 4 - 2"x 4"x 8' boards (a two-by-four)
        - 1 lb. of 4D nails
        - 1 roll chicken wire (24 feet long, 1-inch hexes)
        - Stacks of newspapers (no ads) cut into quarters, folded like fans

- **Tools required:**
  - Hammer
  - T-square or level
  - Staple gun and staples

- **Construction:** construct the arch according to the diagram below:



  - After constructing the frame, weave the newspapers through holes of the chicken wire by going in one hole and out the next. The wire will hold them in place. Once the wire is covered with fans, staple it to the outside of the frame and spray paint.

- **Arch Type II: Construction**
  - The basic frame is made with 3/4–inch PVC piping. This is sold by the foot in the plumbing section of most building supply stores. Approximately 24 feet is needed.
  - You will also need "elbows" for shape. The simplest way to decide how many of each type is needed is by drawing a picture of your arch to match bends and corners while in the store.
  - To secure the sleeves (the pipe) to the elbows (corners or bends), you will need a can of PVC glue sold with the piping; it comes with a dipstick. The base can be built on or sunk into buckets of sand.

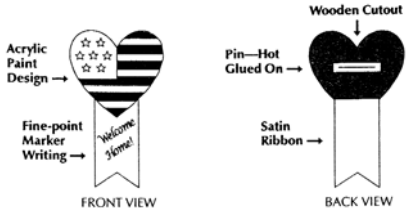
  - After constructing the frame, decorate it with wax paper and spray paint. Wrap lengths of wax paper approximately 14 inches long around the pipe and twist at the end to secure. After each piece is secured, push it towards the top of the section you are covering. The elbows and joints will be left uncovered. Continue to cover all the lengths of pipe until you have completely covered the arch.

- **Welcome Home Banner:** Ask local awning and tent companies or boat yards for a donation of canvas. Latex enamel paints are best because the colors are varied and they don't run like oil base paints. The cost is minimal, and clean up is easier.
  - Before picking up a paintbrush, design the banner entirely on graph paper. To ease transfer of the design, graph the entire face of the canvas in one- or two-inch squares and copy the design from the paper.

- When satisfied with the design, find a large area to paint in, such as a basement, empty parking lot or driveway. If inside, ensure the space is well ventilated. If outside, be sure to anchor the corners and edges of the canvas to avoid wind damage. Start painting in the center of the sign and work out to the edges so there is plenty of work space for everyone.
- After suitable drying time (usually two days in sunny, 70-degree weather), attach grommets at 18-inch intervals on all four sides. Do not attempt to fold the sign until you are absolutely sure it is dry. Cut slits at regular intervals to allow wind to pass through while hanging.

- **Burma Shave Signs:** These are signs with a progressive message. Some are elaborate cutouts in the shape of the command mascot; some are as simple as words on squares. These 1/4-inch plywood signs nailed to 2- by 4-inch wooden posts will last through many homecomings. Once again, latex exterior enamel paints are a good choice. Some rules to remember are:
  - Use short phrases or one or two words per sign, so reading is easier to the passerby.
  - Space signs at least three feet, but no more than five feet apart at the most used exit from the base.

- **Picket Signs:** Staple sheets of poster board to 1- by 12-inch wood slats for handles. This is a good activity for groups. Either decorate alike or personalize.
- **Pennants:** Cut felt or cloth into long triangles. Hem the straight edges to allow 1/4-inch dowels in the hems. If time or ability is taxed with hemming, simply hot glue the straight edge of the cloth to the dowel. Pennants can be personalized or standardized for distribution on the pier or in the hangar. Designs can be added with craft paints, letter cutouts or markers.
- **Pillowcase Banner:** Start this project as soon as the command leaves for deployment. Each family cuts open a pillowcase and draws a cute saying or love note on it. Sew the pillowcases together. Display on the mess decks or other prominent location after the command returns. Crew members can cut their pillowcases off or invite family members onboard to a duty night dinner for the occasion.
- **Logos:** Have a logo design contest. Try to limit colors and design graphics, since prices rise quickly when many colors or intricate designs are used. Handmade pins of the logo can add a personal touch to the homecoming. See the following example:



- **Banners:** Banners on sheets, canvas, poster board, or butcher paper can be decorated with paints and markers. Use your imagination! Check with the host command for details on placement.
- **New Parents:** Be sure to have a special area sectioned off for the new additions to the command's family. Generally, new parents are permitted off the ship first.
- **Leis:** There are many different ways to make bow leis. The simplest and least expensive ones are made from plastic bags. Red, white and blue bags can be ordered locally from businesses advertising in the Yellow Pages under plastic, sheeting, or business supplies. The host command can help you decide on the length you need and the plastics distributor can help you order the quantity of bags you need.
    - Cut the bags into strips 18 inches wide by 36 inches long. Fold the strips in half to make an 18-inch square and tie around a ?-inch clothesline cut to a length of approximately 100 feet. The lei will look lifeless and limp at first, but it can be puffed up by gently separating the layers of plastic.
    - Leis are fun to construct. Have a picnic or potluck and make a day of it. Unlike painting projects, children enjoy making the lei, since it is difficult for them to make a mistake.
    - Set up a time with the host command or sister command to get the lei to your command via a tug boat. Identify volunteers to get the lei from storage to the host command.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- If DJs or radio stations are asked to come aboard a Naval Base, they must have permission of the Public Affairs Officer. Coordinate this with the host command's point of contact.
- Vendors are not permitted to sell their wares on the pier, tarmac or aircraft hangars.
- Have a backup plan in case it rains or the command comes in a day early or late.
- Too many activities may cause children to be overwhelmed. Remind parents piers and hangars are dangerous places and parents need to keep a close watch of their children amid all the excitement. Is the ship bringing back tigers? Tigers are children, siblings and parents of service members. No spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends are permitted on Tiger Cruises.
- Advise out-of-town guests on pier safety. There are holes, hoses, valves and other hazards that could cause someone to fall. Grease and oil could stain clothing. High heels are not advisable on board ships, since they lead to slips and falls on ladders or the brow.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Are FRGs mandatory?
A: No, FRGs are not mandatory Commanding Officers may opt to maintain existing support groups as non-federal entities which means they should be treated as any other organization in the community and therefore the OPNAVINST and subsequent NAVADMIN do not apply.

Q: Do existing Family Support Groups have the change their names to Family Readiness Groups?
A: No, existing Family Support Groups may keep their current name.

Q: Does everyone in the FRG have to complete the Volunteer Agreement Form?
A: The Commanding Officer makes the decision of who will be official volunteers and who will be gratuitous volunteers. It is recommended that the FRG officers are official volunteers, but the CO ultimately makes that decision. Everyone involved needs to be designated as either an official volunteer or a gratuitous volunteer.

Q: Can our FRG hold a bake sale in front of the commissary, NEX, etc.?
A: Yes, with the commanding officer's permission, fundraising can extend to other organizations composed primarily of DoD employees or their dependents. This would extend fundraising activities to the NEX/Commissary) they would ned to seek and obtain the permission of the base CO or whoever the commander was that owned the complex where they wanted to fundraise. Permission must be obtained in advance of any fundraising efforts.

Q: Our FRG has always held bake sales in town. Can we continue this practice?
A: No, places like Wal-Mart where the patrons encountered are not primarily DoD employees or their dependents cannot be authorized places to fundraise.

SAMPLE BY-LAWS

Although the by-laws may often seem cumbersome, actually, a very simple format, as illustrated below, will facilitate the continuity within the group. This sample can be changed to fit the group. For further reference refer to a copy of Robert's Rules of Orders, available at most libraries.

Article I - Name

The name of this group shall be the _____ Family Readiness Group.

a. The fiscal year of this group shall be from (month) to (month).
b. This group is a command sponsored organization.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this group shall be to plan, coordinate, and conduct social, informational, care-taking, and morale-building activities to enhance family readiness and enable the Total Navy Family to meet mission and military family lifestyle challenges. (Add local purpose here)_____ and/or to promote friendship and mutual support among the members.

Article III - Membership and Dues

Section 1. The membership shall (consist of or be limited to):
a. Regular members: (list)
b. Associate members: (list)
c. Honorary (or advisory)

Section 2. Membership shall consist of interested spouses without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, or disability.

Section 3. Dues (if desired)
a. Dues of this group shall be _____ per (month) or (year)
b. Payment of dues shall (or shall not be a required condition of membership).

Article IV - Slate of Officers

a. The elected officers of this group shall be a _____ (President/Chairperson), a _____ (Vice President/Vice or Co-chairperson), a Secretary (can be split between Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary), and Treasurer. They shall govern and operate the group per these by-laws. The term of office shall be for _____ (1 year/6 months) and no officers may succeed themselves. All elected officers must be up-to-date, dues-paying (if required) members of this group.

b. The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of this group, the advisors (if any), the Chairman of all standing committees, and other members as the Executive Board may invite.

Article V - Nomination and Election of Officers

a. All officers shall be nominated by a committee headed by a Chairperson, appointed by the _____ (President/ Chairperson), plus three to five members.
b. The slate should be presented to the commanding officer for approval and then to the Executive Board.
c. At the next regularly scheduled meeting, the slate should be presented to the group members to be voted on by secret ballot. All members present will be eligible to vote.
d. Nominations from the floor will not be allowed at the voting meeting since the ability to inform the commanding officer of new nominations will not be feasible.
e. The newly elected officers will assume their duties at an installation ceremony which will be arranged by the outgoing Executive Board.

Article VI - Duties of Officers

a. The _____ (President/Chairperson) shall preside at all regular meetings of the group and necessary to carry out the business of the group. The President shall be an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.
b. The Vice President/Vice Chairperson or Coordinator shall assist the President and in their absence shall assume the duties of the President. (Often, the Vice President may be Secretary of the Nominating Committee, the Parliamentarian, or Chairman of Special Committees formed as needed.
c. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the group and the Executive Board. They shall have the minutes ready for duplication upon request by the next regularly scheduled meeting. They are the custodian of all the permanent records of the group. The Secretary shall handle all the correspondence of the group as directed by the President or Chairperson and the Executive Board.
d. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds pertaining to the calendar year in time for tax preparation (if applicable) .
e. Two signatures will be required to sign checks or to withdraw cash. Both the _____ Treasurer and the _____ (President) shall be authorized to sign checks on the group bank accounts. Any expenses incurred by the routine operations of the group or its activities may be reimbursed by the authorization of either the Treasurer or President. Any expenses for other than routine operations must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board members present at any duly constituted meeting.

Article VII - Meetings

a. The regular meetings of (Name of Group) shall be held at the _____ of every month at a place designated at the previous meetings and approved by the Executive Board.

b. Should a meeting have to be called prior to the regular meeting or a decision made, the President or two officers shall give their approval.
c. All members should be notified of general meetings.

Article VIII - Amending the By-laws

The by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the participating members during a regularly scheduled meeting, provided the elected officers are present, and notice of the proposed amendment is given 30 days prior to the meeting.

Article IX - Termination

Upon dissolution of the group, after paying or making provision for payment of all debts, the remaining money shall be distributed to charitable organizations chosen by the final members of the group.

Sample of Standing Rules

The Standing Rules may be changed by a simple majority vote. Standing Rules should include any rules which the group feels will need to be changed or altered frequently. This will eliminate the need for rewriting these by-laws each time a minor change is desired. Such rules might be:

a. The amount of dues.
b. The amount of money to be kept in the "general morale" sub account.
c. The number of meetings to be held each month.

SAMPLE INSTALLATION PROGRAM

As I say each officer's name, please rise and remain standing.

PRESIDENT _____

Your group has signified by electing you President that it has faith in your leadership. You are already aware of the many duties of your office. It is your main duty to guide your group into its proper field of activity and usefulness. Repeat after me. I, _____, fully aware of the confidence entrusted in me, promise to fulfill the duties of my office to the best of my ability.

VICE-PRESIDENT _____

You have been elected to the second highest office. You are to serve the group in the absence of the President and you will cooperate with the President in all things. Repeat after me. I, _____, promise to carry on my interest in the group and I shall cooperate with the President in every way possible.

SECRETARY _____

Your duties are to keep a roll of all members, record all proceedings, and take proper care of all correspondence. Your records are an official history of the group. Repeat after me. I, _____, have acquainted myself with the duties of my office and promise to serve to the best of my ability.

TREASURER _____

Your duties are to collect dues, pay bills, and handle all financial matters of the group. You are to keep a written record of all financial transactions. Repeat after me. I, _____, am fully aware of the responsibility of my office and promise to uphold its integrity.

SELECTED COMMITTEE DEFINITIONS & RESPONSIBLITIES

- **Membership Committee**

The primary responsibility of this committee is to communicate with all who are eligible for membership, to explain to them the group's purpose and its goals, and to invite them to join. This committee works closely with Hospitality.

- **Hospitality Committee**

Personal calls to newcomers with helpful information are the responsibility of this committee. At meetings, this committee should be sure that newcomers are introduced to the group and that personal introductions are made.

- **Morale/Welfare Committee**

This committee should keep alert to ways of helping spouses who have special needs and work closely with the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer to provide the services that are appropriate for the group to handle. In the case of births, weddings, illnesses, or deaths, this committee could also send appropriate cards or notes to families.

- **Ways and Means Committee**

Newsletters, refreshments and projects, which the group would like to undertake all require money. This committee will plan, organize, get command and/or Legal Office approval, and oversee those projects undertaken to raise money.

- **Service Project Committee**

Each group should use its imagination in determining how it can best be of service to others. This committee will plan, organize, and oversee group service projects.

- **Publicity Committee**

The Publicity Committee shall be responsible for timely announcements of meetings and social events.

- **Other Committee Position Ideas**

Other committee positions include: Newsletter Editor, chairman of a major fundraiser, representative to another command activity, Historian/Archives, Program Chairman, and Parliamentarian.

RESOURCE LIST

- Naval Services FamilyLine, Guidelines for Launching Clubs and Family Readiness Groups, available from Naval Services FamilyLine, 1-877-673-7773, or by email at nsfamline@aol.com.

- Fleet and Family Support Program, Family Readiness Group Training and the Family Support Group How to Handbook are resources produced by the Fleet and Family Service Center (FFSC) of Hampton Roads, Virginia. These may be available through your local FFSC or by calling Hampton Roads FFSC at 1-800-FSC-LINE.

- It is recommended that official volunteers are required to have training for the positions they will fill. FRG officers may attend Family Readiness Group Training which can be conducted by the local FFSC, using the materials noted above. FFSCs also offer Sponsor Training classes, which are recommended training for Welcome Committee members or any persons assisting with the Command Sponsor Program.

- Training for FRG members on handling of Privacy Act Protected Information and Joint Ethics Regulations is also recommended. Privacy Act Training is available at http://privacy.navy.mil/training/index.asp. Orientation and annual ethics briefings are available online at http://www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/ethics_training/ or from the Regional or Installation Legal Service Office.

SUPPORT SERVICES

FLEET & FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

The Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) are designed to offer a variety of personal support services to single and married service members and families to:

- Enhance skills for self-sufficiency.
- Improve personal and family readiness, thereby increasing Navy readiness.
- Assist with adaptation to military life.

FFSC staff members and volunteers, both military and civilian, work to coordinate people-oriented training, support, and assistance programs in every area of Navy and Marine Corps family life. Included in its wide range of services are:

- **Information and Referral –** Answers to questions about the Navy and Marine Corps, such as how to access military benefits, and when necessary, referral to services available in the community outside of the FFSC.
- **Personal, Family and Marriage Counseling –** Provided by licensed, credentialed professionals.
- **Deployment Support –** Predeployment briefings, family and member support during deployment as well as return and reunion at the end of the deployment, and assisting with training of Ombudsmen and Key Volunteers.
- **Personal Financial Management –** FFSCs support Navy Command Financial Specialists in training/counseling and offer basic training in financial skills, as well as providing liaison with Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Red Cross, and other resources within the community.
- **Crisis Response –** The FFSC often becomes the coordination point for management of community-wide, command-wide or personal crises. Support can include counseling of those affected, transportation, support for incoming families, coordination of volunteer efforts, and more.
- **Relocation Assistance –** Military lifestyle includes frequent moves and FFSCs provide support in finding housing, spouse employment, settling in, childcare, and where appropriate, cultural and language orientation.
- **Transition Assistance –** Military members and their families have access to resources at FFSCs and TAMP centers that can make the move into civilian life go more smoothly. Information about employment trends in specific career fields, cost of living in specific areas and general information about how to succeed as a civilian is available.
- **Spouse Employment Assistance –** FFSCs offer resources to help military family members write effective resumes and interview successfully, as well as information about local employment opportunities and trends.
- **Volunteer Program –** FFSCs coordinate volunteers within the command and the community for service members and their families who wish to get involved. Volunteer program managers work closely with Spouse Employment Managers as well to help spouses learn more about their community and facilitate networking.

- **Life Skills Education and Support –** Offers training and support in parenting, family dynamics, anger management and resources that can help with other issues in the family experience.
- **Exceptional Family Member Program –** Navy and Marine Corps families are required to register for this program if they have an Exceptional Family Member (EFM). FFSCs can answer questions about the program and who qualifies and facilitate the registration process.
- **Outreach and Command Representative Program –** The Command Representative Program provides a direct link and personal familiarity between Commands and FFSC personnel.
- **Family Advocacy –** The Family Advocacy Program is designed to address the prevention, identification, reporting, intervention, treatment and follow-up of child and spouse mistreatment.

Navy and Marine Corps FFSCs also offer services and information to military retirees. Call the Retired Activities Officer for more specific information about what is offered. Navy and Marine Corps Fleet and Family Support Centers are listed in base directories, through the base operator, or call 1-800-FSC-LINE to get the number for the FFSC closest to you.

NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE

Naval Services FamilyLine is a volunteer, non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for every sea service family. Established in 1965 by and for Navy wives, FamilyLine has now expanded to include single and married service members and their families, both active and reserve.

Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers provide assistance, information and/or referral in all matters pertaining to the military or its lifestyle. These volunteers research, compile, write, and edit publications and coordinate educational seminars. FamilyLine has established Field Representatives at bases around the world to serve as local points of contact.

COMPASS is a spouse-to-spouse mentoring program sponsored by Naval Services FamilyLine and in locations worldwide. Using a standardized curriculum, and taught by trained volunteer spouse mentors, COMPASS introduces participants to many aspects of the Navy lifestyle; Navy mission, history, customs and traditions, rights and benefits, pay, deployments, moving, healthy communications (taught by a Chaplain), and investing in self and the local community. For more information, email COMPASS Project Director at nsfamline@aol.com.

FamilyLine writes, publishes and provides free of charge, a variety of informational literature on topics of interest to military families. For a complete listing of all of FamilyLine's publications, please refer to our list of Publications & References in this book. To request our FREE PRINTED MATERIALS, or for more information, please call or write:

Naval Services FamilyLine
1014 "N" Street, S.E., Suite 120
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374
Phone: 202-433-2333
Toll Free: 1-877-673-7773
DSN: 288-2333
Fax: 202-433-4622
E-mail: nsfamline@aol.com
www.lifelines.navy.mil/Familyline
Office Hours: Monday – Friday
10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m. EST/EDT
(Please leave a message if calling after hours.)

NAVY WIVES' CLUB OF AMERICA (NWCA)

The Navy Wives' Clubs of America, Inc. was first chartered in 1936, with a federal charter being granted in 1984. NWCA is a national organization composed of an elected Board of National Officers, five regional presidents, and over 70 local clubs, comprised mainly of spouses of enlisted members in the Sea Services (Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard) at military installations throughout the United States and overseas.

Its purpose is to provide welfare and educational projects for Sea Service families, promote and encourage friendships among spouses, and welcome new service spouses aboard. Nationally, the group is noted for its Scholarship Foundation.

Active membership is open to all spouses of enlisted members of the Sea Services (Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard) who are active duty, reserve, retired, or the widow/widower of a service member. Associate membership may be granted those who are not eligible for active status.

Local clubs sponsor and assist in a variety of educational courses and seminars that include Sea Service life, benefits, medical/dental care, and many others. They assist local commands with base projects, and are there when called upon. Educational and welfare programs, as well as social activities, are promoted locally, but are often initiated nationally.

On a national basis, NWCA annually awards a scholarship to a spouse of an enlisted member of the Sea Services. The scholarship is to enable the spouse to continue their education in college, business or vocational training. They also support the NWCA Scholarship Foundation that provides scholarships for college, business or vocational training to children of enlisted members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Should you or your group want more information about NWCA and its programs, please write to: Navy Wives Club of America
P.O. Box 6971
Washington, D.C. 20032

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Legal Assistance Program helps active duty and retired service members and their family members resolve personal legal problems. Legal assistance attorneys are Navy and Marine Corps judge advocates that are members of the civilian bar in at least one jurisdiction. Legal assistance offices are located at Navy Legal Service Offices (NLSOs), detachments and at Marine Corps law centers all over the world. Staff Judge Advocates also provide limited legal assistance at installations without full service.

Although assistance was officially authorized in 1984, the program is not directly funded; accordingly, services are provided as available. At certain times and locations, services may not be available, and they will vary at each base or installation depending on the number and expertise of the legal assistance attorneys assigned. Should you need to use their services, call your legal assistance office to determine what services are offered and whether the office takes appointments, walk-ins or both. Frequently, they can provide a list of civilian lawyers upon request.

Generally, your spouse's command will handle legal issues related to the command. If it cannot, or it is deployed, then it is good to know where to turn. Do not take chances. It is better to be safe than sorry.

CHILD CARE

In view of the increasing number of employed spouses, Navy Child Development Centers (CDCs) have become important to families. Knowing that their children are cared for in safe and well-run centers, military personnel have the peace of mind they need to perform their jobs more effectively.

Child Development Centers are very popular and many have waiting lists with the length of the waiting list at most facilities growing. Attempting to meet the needs of military families seeking child care at all our bases is a challenge, but there is an ongoing process of encouraging each center to provide the best child development programs available. Care may be provided on a regularly scheduled and part-time basis, and sometimes on a drop-in basis. It is important that each parent learns how to evaluate a CDC and the programs it offers by regularly visiting the center.

Family Home Care (FHC) has been authorized at many bases. FHC is care for children in government quarters. FHC is a viable alternative to center-based care and an excellent way to provide care for mildly ill, newborns and special needs children. The FHC program operates as an adjunct of the CDC and is monitored at least monthly by an FHC monitor.

For information about the Navy's Child Development Program, check with the CDC at your installation. CO/XO spouses, along with the Ombudsman, can help the employed spouses in their command by informing them about what is available in their area.

USO (UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION)

The mission of the USO is to provide an organization through which people of the United States may serve the religious, spiritual, social, welfare and educational needs of the Armed Forces and their families outside of military installations when off-duty or on leave. The USO's more than 160 off-station facilities are located in the continental United States (CONUS) and in many overseas U.S. military areas. Your local USO may offer discount or free tickets to attractions, tours and other entertainment.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Military and civilian agencies in the local area provide many additional support services. These include the Navy League of the United States, Armed Services YMCA, Better Business Bureau, Neighborhood Watch groups and Crisis Intervention Programs. You may obtain a complete listing of these support organizations and a description of their roles from the Fleet and Family Support Center in your area.

PUBLICATIONS & REFERENCES

NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE PUBLICATIONS

Sea Legs

A handbook for Navy spouses. Both the seasoned Navy spouse as well as the newcomer will find useful information on matters such as family support services, rights, privileges or benefits, moving, health and medical care, personal finances, social customs and courtesies and deployments. History, mission and structure of the Navy, a naval terms glossary and a list of resource addresses are also included. Revisions are coordinated with Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers and published by the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Social Customs and Traditions

A concise booklet to acquaint spouses with some of the social customs, protocol, traditions and organizations that are a part of the sea services community. Written and published by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers.

Guideline for the Spouses of Commanding Officers and Executive Officers – Guideline Series

An invaluable booklet for prospective and current CO/XO spouses. Covers everything from Ombudsmen and deployments to support resources and emergency guidelines. Written and published by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers.

Guidelines for the Spouses of Command Master Chiefs/Chief of the Boat (COB) – Guideline Series

An excellent resource for prospective and current CMC/COB spouses. Filled with information and helpful hints. Written and published by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers.

Guideline for the Spouses of Chief Petty Officers – Guideline Series

Written by chief spouses for chief spouses, this exciting new publication guides spouses through one of the most exciting transitions in the U.S. military.

Guidelines for Spouses of Individual Augmentees (IAs) – *FamilyLine's newest publication helps guide spouses through this challenging time with lots of ideas and information*

Overseasmanship

An informative guide for helping spouses and families prepare for an overseas tour. This book is also helpful to the unmarried service member. Written by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers and published in two parts for viewing on-line by the Bureau of Naval Personnel under the "pubs" heading. www.lifelines.navy.mil/Familyline

Naval Services FamilyLine Portfolio

This portfolio is a wonderful resource for new spouses. It is also excellent for distribution at Navy spouse seminars. It is FREE and includes ***Social Customs and Traditions of the Navy, Sea Legs***, "Welcome Aboard" brochure, and various informational brochures about Navy Wives' Clubs of America, National Military Family Association, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and other subjects concerning service family benefits. They are available in individual or bulk orders from Naval Services FamilyLine.

Acknowledgement

Guidelines for Launching Clubs and Family Readiness Groups have been written and edited by Naval Services FamilyLine in response to requests from Navy spouses around the world. This book replaces a previous publication: Guidelines for Launching Clubs & Command Family Associations.

Naval Services FamilyLine also thanks the Fleet & Family Support Center of Norfolk/Hampton Roads for allowing use of passages of their publication, Family Support Group How-To Handbook. We also would like to acknowledge the writer of The Army FRG Leader's Handbook for allowing use of selected passages.

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Office Hours: Monday – Friday
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(Please leave a message if calling after hours.)

NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE

YOUR INFORMATION RESOURCE