

# Radford High School Transition Center assists students

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**Story and photo by Don Robbins**

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Students at Radford High School said they appreciate having an effective transition center program at a school with a highly mobile military population, faced with having to move as their parents change duty stations. Radford is located near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and serves many families from the base.

The Radford High School Transition Center program serves the needs of all new students, military and civilian, who enroll at Radford High School and assists them throughout the school year. It also provides preparation and a safety net by offering new students the resources, information and support to ensure academic achievement.

Radford High School senior Madeline Skrocki's father serves in the Air Force. She said that Hawaii is the ninth different place she's lived in her life. Although she had already become accustomed to making quick transitions after all that travel, until now she had never previously experienced the benefits of a program like the one at the Radford transition center.

Skrocki's explained that the transition center is a four-part program partially taught by student "facilitators" to encourage peer-to-peer interaction.

The parts of the program include looking at Radford High's rules and activities, coping with stress, exploring the cultural diversity/uniqueness of Hawaii, and developing a student's academic plan. Experienced student facilitators also volunteer to serve as "lunch buddies," sitting and talking with new students during break times to ease their concerns about school. The program also includes a new-student orientation in the summer before school even begins.

"I loved it, and I decided to join as a facilitator to help new students. I was happy to finally give back and aid new students," Skrocki said. There are three aspects that make Radford's transition center unique, said Skrocki.

First, it provides personal development for student facilitators. Second, facilitating is not a class or credit, it is a volunteer effort by students who give up their school break times to help newcomers. The student-to-student interaction, including tours of the campus, is a third vital component of the program, Skrocki added.

"Why is this important to Radford? It's to fulfill a need. We're roughly 60 percent military. Over the summer, as people PCS, 30 percent of our student population changes out annually, and that's not including the senior class," Skrocki said.



From left, Radford High School students Madeline Skrocki, Cierra Hollington, Quentin Harris, Jeffrian Omar and Kaitlynn Gant are members of military families and facilitators for the Radford High School Transition Center.

She plans to attend a four-year university on an Air Force ROTC scholarship and eventually have a career in political science and international relations.

David Tom, school liaison officer for Navy Region Hawaii, cited the challenges that military students face, always having to move to a new location and school with their parents as part of the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) process.

“School is such a vital part of their lives,” said Tom, a retired member of the Air Force.

“This Radford High School Transition Center is such a unique and great experience for all students coming into the school. They are making new friends, and learning the ropes of what goes at the school campus. It will help them to succeed better academically, socially, personally and emotionally. There are just so many benefits,” Tom added.

Cierra Hollington, a Navy family member and Radford High senior, entered the school as a sophomore and said she benefitted from the transition center program.

“I’ve been to several other schools and none of the schools had a program like this. Before, I had to adjust by myself, and having a program like this was very helpful,” she said.

Later, she decided to become a student facilitator herself to give back to others. Hollington plans to attend college to study elementary education and business in an effort to someday open her own daycare center.

Other members of the Radford transition center’s student facilitator team who sat down recently to describe the program are Navy family member Quentin Harris and Army family members Jeffrian Omar and Kaitlynn Gant.

Harris plans to obtain an ROTC scholarship and become a mechanical engineer. Omar is looking forward to a career in social services, while Gant’s career goal is to become a nutritionist. There are a total of 17 student facilitators in the transition center program, which includes supervision from part-time teachers.

The program has been recognized through the military and the Department of Defense, and earned recognition by former First Lady Laura Bush in May 2007. It began at Radford in 2003 and was designed by a team of Radford administration, staff and students in partnership with local military supporters under the umbrella of the Joint Venture Education Forum.

The transition center continues to evolve to meet the needs of students and community, explained Cindy Mochida Schrock, career and technical education coordinator at Radford High School. In the Hawaiian language, the center’s motto is “Malama I Na Haumana,” or “Caring for the Students.”