Navy Family Ombudsman Program Celebrates 49th Anniversary

September 14 is the anniversary of the U.S. Navy Ombudsman Program. This day is set aside to remember, recognize, and honor the hard work this group of dedicated and trained volunteers serving Navy families, year in and year out.

The Ombudsman Program has grown since its inception in 1970 and is an example of the important role of Navy spouses. It began when Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) issued the “Z-Gram,” which established a procedure for the commanding officer to communicate with spouses. Ombudsmen act as liaisons between the command and family members. They are a vital resource; assisting and ensuring that family members have the information and resources needed to meet the demanding challenges of military life.

At your convenience, please take a moment to reach out and let your ombudsmen know they are appreciated for all they do. The Commander, Navy Installations Command Ombudsman Program Team would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for ombudsmen’s dedicated and selfless volunteer service!

Congratulations to the Ombudsman of the Year Recipients

Four outstanding ombudsmen are the 2019 Mrs. Sybil Stockdale Ombudsman of the Year Award recipients. These volunteers embody the spirit of Mrs. Sybil Stockdale, who supported prisoners-of-war families during the seven-year internment of her husband Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale in Southeast Asia. This award recognizes those who serve as inspirational ombudsmen and embody the ideals of volunteer service and commitment to Navy Sailors and their families.

The following ombudsmen, nominated by their commanding officers, serve their command and families with extraordinary, selfless dedication and commitment to family readiness.

ATTENTION READERS: Make Family Connections Interactive! Share your questions, comments, good news stories, useful resources and articles you have written or found helpful. As space allows, we will include them in future newsletters OR release on social media. Submit to cnic.ffsp.fct@navy.mil.
Congratulations to:

- Patty Shelters, ombudsman for USS NEW YORK (LPD 21), selected from all sea commands under Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.
- Katelyn Smetana, ombudsman for USS KIDD (DDG 100), selected from all sea commands under Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
- Jay Hao, ombudsman for Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Africa, selected from all naval shore activities in the Navy.
- Shannon Baumgartner, ombudsman for Navy Operational Support Center Fort Carson, selected from all Reserve commands under Commander, Navy Reserve Force.

Thank you to all ombudsmen who maintain the highest standards of professionalism and create a healthy sense of community by being positive role models for command members and their families.

For more information on the Ombudsman Program, visit CNIC’s page here.

NSA Mid-South Teen Entrepreneurship ‘Makes Lemonade from Lemons’, Learn Valuable Skills

Students at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Mid-South, Tenn., Child and Youth Program’s (CYP) Teen Center took the idea of making lemonade from the old optimistic proverb, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade” and spent their summer break cultivating business skills.

“The Lemonade Stand Project” began with the idea that the students might be interested in learning entrepreneurial skills. The teens learned that being a business owner is a possibility, even at a young age and gained skills that would help make them successful entrepreneurs.

The group of students and a project coordinator met for one hour each Wednesday during the summer to discuss the following topics: “Introduction to the Lemonade Stand,” “E-Commerce vs. Brick and Mortar,” “Money and Budget,” “Marketing Your Business” and “Food Handling.” Subject matter experts provided presentations on each specific topic.

The final project phase involved setting up two actual lemonade stands in front of the Navy Exchange and Fitness Center. The young entrepreneurs promoted their stands by distributing tickets around the base redeemable for a free cup of lemonade on the day of the sale. All 16 students helped make fresh-squeezed and pink lemonade based on methods they learned in the food handling class.

The project ended with an after-action meeting, where the students discussed wins and losses, things they would do differently next time, and other products they would like to offer instead of or in addition to lemonade. According to the students and organizers, with the installation’s support the project was a huge success.
Back To School
GET REST, EAT WELL, AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK

As summer officially ends this month, families prepare for going back to school. Your child wants to catch up with friends, meet their teachers and share their summer adventures. As parents, you want your children to have a productive and engaging school year.

To get you in the school spirit, the U.S. Department of Education has released a month-to-month guide for parents to increase your child’s success this school year. You will find a series of tips to keep you informed and included in your child’s learning. To your right, you will see September’s tips from the printable guide, which you can access at any time throughout the school year.

To find the complete guide from the U.S. Department of Education’s website, go to ed.gov/parents/countdown-success.

September’s Parent Countdown to Student’s School Success

- **Reach out to your child’s teachers.** Attend meet-the-teacher night, orientation or other welcome events. Introduce yourself to the teacher and learning about class activities and expectations for the year. Find out how each teacher prefers to communicate. Many use e-mail as the main form of contact, but phone calls and conferences (make an appointment first) are usually welcome, too.

- **Get in the groove with healthy routines.** Establish healthy at-home routines for school days, such as consistent waking times and getting-ready patterns. Decide on a regular homework time and create a comfortable, quiet workspace. Set bedtimes that allow elementary-age kids to get 10 to 12 hours of sleep; teens should get eight and a half to nine and a half hours.

- **Time things right.** Stay on top of everyone’s school, activity and work schedules with a free online calendar or a smartphone app.

- **Pack smart.** Make sure your child’s backpack never weighs more than 10 to 20 percent of his body weight; heavy packs can strain developing muscles and joints. Encourage your child to use both straps, and tighten them so the pack hangs close to the body, about two inches above your child’s waist.

- **Commit to volunteering.** With help from parents, your child’s school can offer many more programs and services. Join your school’s parent and teacher association and ask about volunteer opportunities in the school community and your children’s classrooms.
For Fun, Exciting Playgrounds, MWR Has You Covered

MWR KNOWS WHEN IT COMES TO KIDS, MIND-BLOWING PLAYGROUNDS ARE THEIR TOP PRIORITY.

That is why the Office of Secretary of Defense has supported and funded multiple projects establishing green spaces and playgrounds for various MWR locations across the globe. Out with the old and in with the new astonishing interactive playgrounds, encouraging children of all ages to get outside and play.

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, new research suggests that children 5-12 years of age only spend an average of seven-minutes outside every day! Let MWR help you encourage outdoor play for your child. Did you know that playgrounds offer many benefits to children, especially when it comes to their development?

- Playgrounds get children into action so they can grow physically. When a child plays on the equipment, they are building their muscle groups and their fine motor skills. Children are getting into an exercise habit while having fun; this encourages children to stay active throughout their lives.

- Playgrounds encourage children to build social skills. On the playground, children are meeting other kids; they are learning to get along, agreeing on rules and resolving conflict. Children are able to overcome shyness when swinging on a swing with a friend. They can also learn the fundamentals about sharing while they wait their turn to slide down the slide.

- Playgrounds help children build sensory activity. Unlike other children activities, when children play on a playground, they can explore with all their senses. Children can have fun with movement on the swings or can experience the texture of a rope climber. They can discover the bright colors of an activity panel and use musical instruments to generate a beautiful melody.

- Playgrounds provide the perfect off-screen entertainment. Children spending too much time in front of a computer or TV screen experience poor weight management and have problems with cognitive development, psychological health and sleep.

Make today the day that you go outside and explore your local MWR parks and green spaces at an installation near you. Enjoy the sunshine and the fresh air. Most importantly, enjoy the many ways to recreate! Visit Navy MWR’s website to see latest MWR news and see what is happening near you.
Hope Boxes Deliver Motivational Messages

**NSA PENSACOLA SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS BRING HOPE WHERE IT’S NEEDED**

“You’re a Lifesaver,” “Reasons to Live,” and “Relax, Refresh, and Renew” are just a few messages contained in the blue plastic boxes that can be found around Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Fla.

The boxes, called “Hope Boxes” are a prevention strategy being deployed by the air station’s Suicide Prevention Program and the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC). The goal of the Hope Boxes are to promote resiliency, self-care and to improve access to help as part of Suicide Prevention Month and all year.

“When placed in heavy-traffic areas such as locker rooms and waiting rooms, Hope Boxes provide an inconspicuous means of reaching a person who might otherwise miss the lifesaving message of hope and help available,” said NAS Pensacola FFSC Counseling Program Supervisor, Lauren Anzaldo. “The boxes contain a cache of inspiring and informative materials, from a small bottle of bubbles to resource cards with phone numbers and tips.”

Individuals who experience suicidal ideation or who take steps to end their lives often struggle with multiple stressors, including relationship issues, financial problems and career setbacks. Sailors going through such stressors can benefit from the care and support of others.

In a recent Lifelink newsletter article, Rear Admiral Philip E. Sobeck, director of the 21st Century Sailor Office wrote, “Annual case reviews [of suicide deaths] consistently reveal missed opportunities after the fact.”

The Hope Boxes are another way for caring and supportive people to pass on hope and encouragement to someone feeling hopeless, lonely or suicidal – even if the caring people never meet or interact directly with the person they reach. The boxes use the “pay it forward” concept.

“A note inside the box suggests throwing in some lyrics, a photo, a note, anything that helped you when you felt lost,” said Anzaldo. “It’s written in the box to take something, add something, but please pass it along.”

The boxes were developed at NAS Pensacola’s FFSC in partnership with the base’s Suicide Prevention Coordinator and the Chapel. The idea came from a similar initiative in the civilian community.

Hope Boxes do not replace the importance of in-person, one-on-one interaction. Instead, they supplement existing strategies by providing another outlet for delivering hope to a person when he or she needs it most.

For more information on suicide prevention resources and ideas, visit [www.suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil).
Suicide Risk and Sexual Assault

IMPORTANT PREVENTION INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Reactions vary greatly when individuals hear a loved one has been sexual assaulted. It is important to be aware of your reaction and manage that reaction to best support a loved one’s recovery process. It is also critical that we continue to de-stigmatize these responses so that survivors feel empowered to seek help. Survivors may experience changes in their mental health and may even have thoughts of harming themselves. The Department of Defense’s Health Related Behaviors Survey found that approximately a quarter of service members who have a history of sexual assault also reported having suicidal thoughts over their lifetime and 11.6 percent reported having suicidal thoughts in the past year (Barlas, 2013).

Friends and family members play an important role in suicide prevention by providing support and protection from self-harm in the lives of survivors. If your loved one discloses to you that they have been sexually assaulted, it is important to be non-judgmental and get them linked to resources for help. There are resources available for supporting survivors of sexual assault. Your local Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) office can connect survivors and people in their support system to military and local civilian mental health counselors, chaplains and emergency response personnel for help.

The DoD Safe Helpline can connect you to your local SAPR program and has live, one-on-one specialized support and information for sexual assault incidents. Services are available to the DoD civilian and military community 24/7 via telephone at 1-877-995-5247, text to 55-247 or 001-202-470-5546 and online at safehelpline.org.

Suicide prevention resources are available at www.suicide.navy.mil and through the Military Crisis Line website at www.militarycrisisline.net. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, please call 1-800-273-8255, text to 838255 or connect online at www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat.

Fleet And Family Support Counselors Train To Improve Help to Navy Families

CAP CLINICIANS GATHER IN FLORIDA FOR BIANNUAL TRAINING

Approximately 170 Counseling, Advocacy and Prevention (CAP) clinicians participated in the CAP Training 2019 held onboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Fla., from August 13-16. Held twice a year, the CAP Training is an opportunity for providers to gather and grow and for the program to guide clinical practice.

“The goal of this training is to give our clinicians the latest and best practices,” said Family Advocacy Program Analyst, Elizabeth “Gizzy” Gray, at Commander Navy Installations Command’s (CNIC) Fleet and Family Support Program. “In the ‘long run’, this training improves our clinicians and that in turn improves family resiliency and helps maintains mission readiness.”

The diverse group of clinical counselors in attendance represented 54 different installations and held licenses from 35 different states. There was a strong focus on partnerships with military and civilian communities. The topics highlighted new skills and knowledge in the counseling field aimed at helping Navy families receive the best support and trauma care at the Fleet and Family Support Center’s CAP program.

For more information on CNIC’s Counseling, Advocacy and Prevention Program visit: https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/counseling-advocacy-and-prevention.html

Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members Rings in its Fourth Year

For centuries, the Navy has used bells during ceremonies, to sound the alarm and to signal the presence of important persons. This year, on September 26, the bells will not signal anyone’s presence, but instead will toll in their absence.

Sailors at Navy installations across the country will participate in the Fourth Annual Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members, a ceremony to honor those who died while on active duty. The ceremonies are held in association with Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day, which is observed the last Sunday in September. On this day, the military community honors and remembers the sacrifice of our honored dead and the loved ones they left behind.

The primary focus and mission of the Navy Gold Star Program is to provide committed, personal service and commitment to Gold Star families. Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members is one way the Navy recognizes the sacrifices of our fallen and their families.

You can learn more about the ceremonies nearest you by contacting your closest Navy Gold Star Coordinator at 888-509-8759, facebook.com/navygoldstar or navygoldstar.com.
Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day

Since 1936, the last Sunday in September has been observed as Gold Star Mother’s Day, recognizing and honoring those who have lost children who served in the United States Armed Forces. This year, when the president signs the proclamation declaring September 29, 2019 as Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day, the nation has an opportunity to let the families who have suffered the loss of a loved one in active service to the nation know that America does not forget them.

Families were officially recognized along with Gold Star Mothers starting in 2009. A presidential proclamation renamed the observance Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day. Members of America’s service members do not stand alone beside their children. Standing with each are other parents, spouses, children and siblings who provide love and support.

The Navy is committed to helping foster resiliency for families of fallen service members regardless of how they died. The Navy Gold Star Program honors Gold Star families throughout the year by hosting events that pay tribute to their lost loved ones, providing resources and opportunities to connect with one another.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program, visit www.facebook.com/navygoldstar or www.navygoldstar.com or call 1-888-509-8759 to reach the Navy Gold Star Coordinator nearest you.

LIVE WELL
Resiliency Webinars for Sailors and Families

JOIN US LIVE! WEBINARS ARE OPEN TO ALL SAILORS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Disaster Preparedness
September 4, 2 p.m. EDT
Did you know that we are only halfway through hurricane season? Hurricanes are not the only disaster that you can prepare for; it helps to be as ready as possible for any catastrophe. In this webinar, you will learn ways to prepare for a family crisis, disaster or other emergencies. This webinar will give you the strategies to be resilient and strong during an emergency.

Navigating Stress for Navy Families
September 11, 6 p.m. EDT
Every family experiences stress and it can intensify during common life problems. What are some ways to manage it? Come to this webinar to learn ways that families can be resilient during difficult times.

How to Cope on Days Ending in Why?
September 17, 6 p.m. EDT
If you are like most of us, you encounter problems on a daily basis. Coping skills are strategies aimed at helping you face those everyday problems. This webinar is aimed at helping you develop healthier habits and to incorporate these habits into your routine.

Suicide Prevention for Family Members
September 24, 6 p.m. EDT
World Suicide Prevention Day is celebrated in September. This year’s theme is “working together to prevent suicide.” We can prevent suicide by knowing the warning signs and ways to help. As a community and a family, we can be there for every Sailor, every day.

Register Today!
For a full list of topics or more information, visit: Fleet and Family Support Program’s Live Well Resiliency Webinars Website.

Do you have a suggestion for a Live Well topic? Send us an email: livewellresilientweb@navy.mil.
Let’s Prepare Together

TIPS ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR FAMILIES

Some disasters strike without any warning and family members may not all be in the same place. This is frightening for families, especially when sources of communication might be hindered by outages and limited resources. It is important to make an emergency family plan now so that your family will know where to go and how to communicate in an emergency. Kids can be a big help, too. Call a family meeting and use these helpful tips for a family emergency plan:

✓ Make sure that your family’s information is current in Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) so your command can account for you and provide support during a disaster (https://navyfamily.navy.mil).

✓ Pick a person for each family member to call or email. It might be easier to reach someone who is out of town.

✓ Except in extreme emergency, text your family and contact person to let them know you are okay. It may be easier in outages to send a text if you have a phone.

✓ Create a fire escape plan that has two ways out of every room and practice it twice a year.

✓ Choose a meeting spot near your home and then practice getting there.

✓ Choose a spot outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot get home. Practice getting there from school, your friend’s houses and after school activities.

✓ Keep your family’s contact info and meeting spot location in your backpack, wallet or written inside your school notebook. Put it in your cell phone if you have one.

Preparation is your biggest resource in unpredictable situations. For more information on disaster preparedness, attend the Live Well Resiliency Webinar on September 4 at 2 p.m. EDT or visit ready.gov. To find resources and emergencies you may be at risk for in your area, click your state on the map, here.