

Sesame Room is hit with parents, kids

By Penny Randall

Staff Writer

Four-year-old Darryl Coleman Jr. ran straight to the drum set and began to play with the musical instrument just moments after the ribbon was cut on the Sesame themed room in family housing on board Naval Air Station Meridian.

"This is fun," said Darryl Jr., the son of Staff Sgt. Darryl and Jessica Coleman.

Jessica was just one of several mothers who brought their children out for the opening of the fun, interactive room that is based on the popular children's television show Sesame Street.

"We have four children ages 15 to 3 so this fun room will help entertain them," Coleman said. "It's very educational and will benefit housing residents greatly."

Along with parents and children, representatives from the base and Balfour Beatty Communities, the corporation that manages the properties in housing, came out to see this unique room during a ribbon cutting ceremony and Sesame Street themed party on Jan. 12.

"We are excited to announce the open-

ing of the Sesame Room on board NAS Meridian. This space will be a success due to the unwavering commitment we at Balfour Beatty Communities have to our military families," said Donna Riley, community manager for NAS Meridian's Balfour Beatty Communities.

"We want families to come as often as they like and enjoy the space. Thank you to our Navy partners, to the staff at Balfour Beatty, the staff at Navy Family Housing, and the staff at the Fleet and Family Support Center who all supported and helped us to reach the goal of obtaining this special room," said Riley.

Shannon Foster, wife of ABH2 Bryan Foster, brought her 3-year-old son, Garrett.

"I just love it," Shannon said. "It gives my son a chance to get out of the house and interact with other kids. It's a great place for families to come and hang out and get to know each other."

Meridian was awarded the "Room in a Box" which brings friendly, familiar characters and bright, cheerful décor intended to brighten up children's spaces in facilities that are committed to providing the best resources to military children, such as military hospitals, libraries, child

care centers, and family support centers. Meridian was one of three Navy bases to be selected.

The Sesame Room, located at 719 Gill Street, is approximately 400 square feet decorated with Sesame themed wall murals and artwork, tables and chairs, educational DVDs and books, toys and games, and other fun Sesame items that are sure to educate and bring joy to children and parents who live on board NAS Meridian. Additionally, residents will have access to a full-service kitchen, large den, and two game rooms.

The Sesame Room is available to family housing residents of NAS Meridian from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on selected Saturdays. Residents may reserve space for their private events by contacting the Balfour Beatty Management Office at (601) 679-7669.

The Sesame Rooms project is an extension of Sesame Workshop's "Talk, Listen, Connect" program, a joint effort between TLC and Sesame Street. The program is dedicated to helping military families through multiple challenges, such as deployments, homecomings, and changes that occur when a parent comes home.