Armed Services YMCA Honors Medics and Corpsmen for 6th Year

On March 14, the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) honored military men and women who administer lifesaving medical treatment to our troops on the front lines at the 6th Annual Angels of the Battlefield Gala. ASYMCA is a national nonprofit organization and the leading provider of social and support services to members of the U.S. military and their families.

The keynote speaker for the event was Lieutenant General Richard Mills, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development, representing General James Amos, Commandant, USMC.

ASYMCA worked with the military services to select corpsmen, pararescuemen, and medics from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, and Air Force Reserve, who represented their respective services and received awards on behalf of their fellow servicemen for their dedication and commitment to service.

Retired Major General Don Infante, chairman of the National Board of Directors of the ASYMCA noted: “The ASY began its storied history in 1861 and Dr. Jonathan Letterman reinvigorated the Army medical Corps just one year later, in 1862. Over the course of the past 151 years, the ASYMCA has supported our men and women in uniform and their resilient family’s by providing educational and social programs. And over the course of the last 150 years, medics and corpsmen have been the epitome of selflessness – giving their all - day-in and day-out - to help their brethren in need.

Like the ASYMCA, the Angels of the Battlefield’s efforts reach far beyond those they’ve directly touched, when you consider the families and loved ones they’ve impacted with every wound healed and every life saved.

And the ASY and medics, corpsmen and pararescuemen have something else in common -- those who rely on their services leave these interactions with an appreciation for our absolute commitment to their needs.

Our nation’s medics, corpsman and pararescuemen have evolved to meet the changing needs of their brothers-in-arms since Dr. Letterman’s first Ambulance Corps. Today, those we call “Doc,” are often the reason why so many of our men and women in uniform, who have repeatedly put themselves in harm’s way for our benefit, have made it home to their families.”

Individuals representing and accepting the Angel Award on behalf of their individual Service, included:

- Sergeant Terry Derr, USA
- Chief Petty Officer Amilcar Rodriguez, USN (serving Fleet Marine Force)
- Petty Officer Second Class Owen Pitrone,
- Staff Sergeant Jack Williams, USAF
- Staff Sergeant Gino Kahaunaele, USAF (Pararescue Force)
- Petty Officer First Class Brian Richardson, USCG
- Staff Sergeant Nicolas Crouse, USANG
- Sergeant Major Pamela Duggan, USAR
- Technical Sergeant Chante’ Richardson, USAFR.

The more than 350 attendees at the annual event included high-ranking officials from the Department of Defense and high-profile members of the media. Our thanks to the 16 corporate and individual donors who made this evening a success.

See Centerfold, pages 8 and 9, for more Angels photos
Report of the Chairman of the Board

For over 150 years, without interruption, the Armed Services YMCA has been committed to serving our military service members and their families – with a focus on the junior enlisted who most need our help. The tagline of “Making Military Life Easier” may be new wording for the ASY, but truer words were never spoken. In fact, “making military life easier” is a phrase that could have been uttered at any point during the past 150 years. These are tough times for our military families and the ASYMCA is proud to be a part of making a difference in their lives.

In 2011, our 33 ASY branches and affiliates served more than 450,000 troops and family members. Our budget of over $24M was fully committed. Through collaboration and partnerships with churches, schools and other community groups and organizations, the ASYMCA was able to extend its program opportunities deep into the heart of every military post where we are located. We are helped every step along the way by the over 10,000 volunteers who provided over 120,000 hours of service to assist us in meeting our goals. The value of volunteer service has been recognized since the Civil War and continues to be a constant source of resilient and reliable support to ASYMCA programs and services.

As we look ahead, let us be ever mindful of the adaptability throughout the years of ASYMCA programming. We will continue working in partnership with the DOD to complement and supplement existing programs so as to best meet the needs of our junior enlisted personnel and their families. And, we will do so, making the most of every donated dollar. We are proud of our 6th consecutive four star rating from Charity Navigator, which puts us in the top 3% of all rated charities.

Please take a moment to review the history of the ASYMCA within these pages. From the battlefields of the Civil War, to the trenches of World War I, the various theaters of World War II, and every military operation since, the Armed Services YMCA has been there... for the troops and for the families left behind.

With your continued help and support, we will continue to be there... whenever and however needed... making Military Life Easier through Youth Development; Healthy Living; and Social Responsibility. We thank you for your support and belief in us!

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YMCA Military Outreach Initiative

In 2011, The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) continued to administer the Military Outreach Initiative with the Department of Defense (DoD). This program provides eligible military families and active duty personnel with access to youth development, family strengthening, and health and well-being programs through memberships at community YMCAs and some private fitness companies nationwide. Membership fees are underwritten by the DoD and administered through the Armed Services YMCA. The network of over 1,449 YMCAs has provided overwhelming support for this initiative and over 58,000 military families and some 87,000 children were served in 2011.

The ASYMCA-DoD Outreach Initiative grew from a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which requires the Secretary of Defense to develop a plan to support military family readiness and to ensure military family readiness programs and activities are available to all military families, including those of the National Guard and Military Reservists.

Those military families and singles eligible to participate in the continuing initiative include:

- All interested families of joint deployed National Guard and Reserves
- Active Duty Independent Duty station personnel (single or family members)
- Relocated spouses and family members of deployed Active Duty personnel
- Community Based Warrior in Transition Unit (single or family membership)

The Military Outreach Initiative will continue to run through September 30, 2012 and the contract has a provision for an additional 1 Option Years through 2013.

Hails & Farewells

The ASYMCA HQ Staff welcomes Colandara Sealey and Hilda Layne. Both ladies are military spouses supporting the DoD contract. Colandra is relieving Jennie Mixon as Joint Family Resource Center Representative. Hilda relieves Sophie Berg as Accounts Payable Clerk.

Maintenance of the DoD contract is critical and all four of these individuals have done a remarkable job keeping the books in good order and the process ticking along without missing a beat!

The Armed Services YMCA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, focusing on providing social services to military members and their families, particularly below the rank of E-6. This subscription is provided to donors and other organizations that may be interested in the welfare of America’s troops. To correct or remove your name from the mailing list, contact the Armed Services YMCA, 7405 Alban Station Sourt, Suite B215, Springfield, VA 22150; phone, 703-455-3986, or fax, 703-455-2182. Call or email the staff of the Armed Services YMCA for additional information, or visit our website at www.asymca.org.

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Making Military Life Easier through Youth Development; Healthy Living; and Social Responsibility . . . a message from the President & CEO . . . .

Sow an act, and you reap a habit: Sow a habit, and you reap a character: Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.
The Armed Services YMCA has been making military life easier for our junior enlisted Service personnel and their families for more than 150 years. We are extremely proud of our rich heritage and equally excited about the future.

Sow and act, and you reap a habit. That was successfully accomplished when some 5,000 volunteers supported the effort of the YMCA’s U.S. Christian Commission during the Civil War.

Sow a habit, and you reap a character. That character grew stronger and stronger over the years as the Armed Services YMCA directed programs and services to millions of military service personnel and their families; ultimately making military life easier through two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam and every conflict since.

Sow a character, and you reap a destiny. This is where we all need to unite and pledge to continue to make this organization the best it can be. And, as we look ahead, let us be mindful of the adaptability of ASYMCA programming throughout the years. We will continue to serve the needs with innovative programs for our young families that help them stress less and connect more.

It is a humbling experience to serve as CEO of the Armed Services YMCA. And, with your help, we will remain committed to “Making Military Life Easier through Youth Development; Healthy Living; and Social Responsibility”.

Healthy Kids’ Day Welcomes New Staff Member

On April 28, 2012, more than half-a-million parents and kids across the country made a commitment to “Take on Summer”. With 1,900 Ys hosting free Healthy Kids Day, it’s never been a better time to get up, get out and grow.

As part of the Y’s commitment to strengthen community by addressing critical gaps in health and education, Healthy Kids Day® encourages kids and parents to commit to keeping the body and mind active.

At the Fort Bragg/Pope AAF ASYMCA, Healthy Kids’ Day has become a tradition. In addition to learning about children’s health, attendees could enjoy the climbing wall, bouncy castle, train rides, Tae Kwon Do & K-9 demonstrations, fingerprinting, sports and games, arts & crafts, face painting, Home Depot Make It & Take It project, the Bubble Lady, free books, cereal, shirts, cookies . . . and Jack, the Snake Man.

On his first visit to the Fort Bragg branch, ASYMCA’s COO, Tom Landwermeyer, learned first-hand all that goes into planning such an event. From set-up to take down, he assisted in all phases of the process. His reward? A good old fashioned hug from a lil’ ole 120 pound pithy python named ?

Now there’s a welcome he’ll never forget!
The Armed Services YMCA is proud to announce two new additions to its National Board of Directors: Sharon Duke; and Matt Stover.

**Sharon Duke**  
Sharon Duke is Director of Government Programs at United Concordia Companies, Inc. where she serves as a key strategist, writer and evaluator for both United Concordia and its parent company, Highmark. 

Prior to joining UCCI, Ms. Duke spent eight years at the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General where she managed various aspects of health care as it affects active duty service members and their families. Sharon's experience with the military community and her professional affiliations with military outreach organizations will be of great value to the ASYMCA. 

Ms. Duke holds degrees in management from Webster University and business administration from St. Leo University. She lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**Matt Stover**  
J. Matthew Stover was a star kicker in the NFL while serving as Player Union Representative for 18 years and Vice-President for 4 years. Matt is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University, Wharton School of Business and the Kellogg School of Management. He is President of the Matt Stover Foundation and the Stover Family Foundation, as well as co-owner of Creditcards.com. 

Mr. Stover’s experience in numerous charities and philanthropic endeavors will serve him well in furthering the ASYMCA’s mission. Matt was the 4th alltime NFL leading scorer and we expect him to continue his winning ways with the ASY. 

Matt and his wife Debbie live in Hunt Valley, Maryland and have three children, Jeanna, Jacob and Joe. 

Since its inception over 150 years ago, from Walt Whitman on to today, the Armed Services YMCA has been blessed with great volunteer leaders. We welcome these newest additions and feel sure they will seize the opportunity and continue the tradition of Making Military Life Easier.

A VOLUNTEER is a person who is a light to others, giving witness in a mixed-up age, doing well and willingly the tasks at hand—namely, being aware of another’s needs and doing something about it. 

A VOLUNTEER is a person who remembers to do the thing to make other people happy, who takes the loneliness out of the alone by talking to them, who is concerned when others are unconcerned, who has the courage to be a prophet and to say the things that have to be said for the good of all. 

A VOLUNTEER is a person whose charity is fidelity, who is faithful in an unfaithful world, grateful in an ungrateful world, giving when all about are grasping, listening when others need to tell about their fears and problems.

The Armed Services YMCA of the USA Announces the addition of two new members to the National Board

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**Giving Back at the El Paso Armed Services YMCA**

The El Paso branch recently had a unique opportunity, to hire someone who was a student of the El Paso ASYMCA Child Development Center. 

One of our newest employees, Pamela Gutierrez was once enrolled in our child development center. “Pamela came to the center in 1998 when she was 4 years old. She was always a very respectful and obedient child, she never gave me or other teachers any problems”, said Ms Cora, her first teacher at the Y. 

Pamela grew up at the Y; she was enrolled here until the age of 13. 

Ms Ana Coleman, who is now the CDC Director, was Pamela’s teacher when she moved to the pre-school class room and remembers what a beautiful child she was. Ana remembers that even after Pamela left the center, she would often come by just to visit and say hello. In one of her recent visits Pamela decided to leave an application just in case a vacancy became available. 

Now Pamela is giving back to the center gave so much to her. Now she plays with her classroom children in the playground and classroom where she once played and learned her ABC’s. 

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Pamela Gutierrez

Sharon Duke

Matt Stover

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A VOLUNTEER is a person whose charity is fidelity, who is faithful in an unfaithful world, grateful in an ungrateful world, giving when all about are grasping, listening when others need to tell about their fears and problems.
History of the Award Program
The YMCA National Armed Services Committee initiated a Blue Ribbon Recognition Program in 1964 as an incentive for Armed Services YMCA branches to develop creative and innovation programs for military personnel. The emphasis is still the same: recognizing those efforts that can make the Armed Services YMCA an important part of many junior enlisted families.

Raytheon provides a grant to financially reward the branches providing these special programs, under the Raytheon Program Achievement Awards. The 2011 Raytheon Awards are presented in three categories: 1) Best New Program; 2) Best Use of Volunteers; and 3) Most Improved Program. These three programs are being honored at tonight's dinner.

In addition, monetary awards are presented to YMCAs not affiliated with the Armed Services YMCA for programs supporting the military. These community YMCA awards demonstrate America’s resolve to support its service members.

Best New Program
Home School Physical Education Program
Killeen ASYMCA
Killeen, TX

Due to the Central Texas Community being a predominantly military area, there is a lack of consistency in the lives of military families. This causes issues within the families that are continuously fluctuating from community to community. As a result, many families choose homeschooling over public schools in order to provide their children with some sort of balance to the often hectic lifestyle that military families and children know all too well.

There are currently 40 school age children in the program and we believe that it is imperative to provide these children with the same opportunities that public schools provide through physical education. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control state that nearly one in four children are currently classified as obese. As alarming as these numbers are the benefits from physical education far outweigh just controlling body weight. Through physical education, kids learn invaluable social skills and healthy lifestyle choices that will affect them and their families for years to come.

On a typical day, the Armed Services YMCA’s home school physical education program focuses on teaching the basic fundamentals of sport and athletic activities, along with emphasizing the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. The children involved learn how to correctly lift weights, perform cardio exercises, and learn the rules and concepts of basic sports and the correct foods and exercises that they will be able to carry along with them throughout their lives.

The ASYMCA Staff meet regularly with Parents and Guardians to evaluate the progress of the program and improve the quality of service it provides. Eighty-five percent of parents express satisfaction with the program and children demonstrate improvement in their fitness, eating habits, personal responsibility, and social skills with increased participation by families living off-post.

Best Use of Volunteers
“MedEvac and Family Support”
San Diego Armed Services YMCA
San Diego, CA

The ASYMCA MedEvac and Family Support Program provides returning service members with the gift of presence. These volunteers show care and respect for the returning service member and their family and understand their responsibility to reduce stress and to help meet urgent basic needs. Volunteers are specially trained to assess the non-medical immediate needs of patients along with the concerns of family members. Volunteers all sign our ASYMCA Code of Ethics and agree to model our core values.

The San Diego Armed Services YMCA partners with various community organizations to provide additional resources to MedEvac patients, such as backpacks, complimentary lodging, adaptive clothing and cards and quilts are provided by individual donors and quilting guilds.

In an effort to protect patient privacy we do not actively
promote this program to the general public. All community partners follow strict guidelines of patient privacy. This program and other ASYMCA programs for Wounded, Injured and Ill at Naval Medical Center are highlighted in our Monthly Newsletter and on our website.

The San Diego Armed Services Y MedEvac and Family Support Program is comprised of fourteen highly trained ASY Volunteers. All MedEvac Volunteers are trained to greet injured Sailors, Soldiers and Marines (MedEvacs) when they first arrive at Naval Medical Center San Diego. The volunteer arrives with a coffee cart. This cart serves as an ice breaker and creates conversation between volunteer and stressed family members. The cart also contains resources and comfort items for the volunteers to offer during their session with the service member and their families. The ASY Volunteer is also trained to assess the immediate needs of the service member and their family. Every MedEvac is greeted with respect, compassion and "a touch of home".

Most Innovative Improvement
“Military Volunteer Program”
San Diego Armed Services YMCA
San Diego, CA

The San Diego Armed Services YMCA’s Military Volunteer Program offers opportunities for local military and their families within the San Diego community to volunteer. The program partners with a variety of local organizations and engages volunteers in events that not only help the community, but leave volunteers with the feeling that they have made a difference.

The San Diego community is very supportive of the military community and this outreach allows military personnel and families to show its support to the community. The volunteer programs include Homework Helpers to tutor children, visitations at the Sunrise Senior Living Center, and at Father Joe’s Village volunteers serve meals to the homeless, many of them veterans. Volunteers have also distributed food items to food banks throughout San Diego. Other volunteers have helped to make San Diego a cleaner, safer, and healthier place to live.

The ASYMCA Military Volunteer Program is unique in that it encourages all service members from all branches to take part in the program. This innovative program has brought together entire commands, marines and sailors, Commanding Officers and junior enlisted per-
Our Dedicated Sponsors who made it all possible.

**Former Radio personality, Jim Robbins, emcees the 6th Annual Angels of the Battlefield Gala**

**Mike Landers with The Honorable Chet Edwards, former Congressman from Texas**

**Vocal artist, Barry Michael, share his “heros & Angels” Recording with the audience**
of the Battlefield Gala

ASYMCA President and CEO Mike Landers

ASYMCA Board Chairman MG Don Infante, USA (Ret)

Keynote Speaker, LtGen Richard Mills, USMC

Altus ASYMCA holds First Annual Chocolate Festival Gala

Hundreds of people filled the ballroom of the Best Western in Altus as the Altus Armed Services YMCA hosted their First Annual Chocolate Festival. The gala event featured dozens of merchant hosted booths providing a feast of chocolate of every kind! Fudge, fruits dipped in the sweet flowing liquid chocolate fountain, bourbon balls, cookies, cheesecakes and more were among the treats served as beautiful strains of music of board members playing the piano and drums filled the ballroom. Vineyards from across the area provided samples of wine to complement the chocolates. Silent auction items surrounded the dance floor as a delicious time was enjoyed by all.

Linda Wood, Altus Armed Services YMCA Board Chair said, “We all really appreciate the businesses who contributed to this amazing evening, as our Armed Services YMCA outreach is totally funded by donations from our generous community.”

Altus Armed Services YMCA Executive Director Joan Wilcoxen summed it up, “What a wonderful showing of support for our military families this evening was.” Those who participated with the ASYMCA in its mission of “Making Military Life Easier and Serving those who Serve America” included over a dozen merchants and over three hundred people who attended.

Camp Pendleton ASYMCA offers a variety of stress relief programs

The Armed Services YMCA branch at Camp Pendleton has developed an extensive array of programs and services that help improve our Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and their family’s quality of life while reducing the stresses the families suffer due to the arduous military lifestyle of deployments and relocations. Programs designed to help with the stresses include preschool for mother and child, after school tutoring and mentoring program for kindergarten and elementary students, emergency food and gas assistance for junior enlisted families, and a support group for prenatal and postpartum women who have screened for potential maternal depression.

For the young Marines who have completed boot camp, the ASYMCA provides a free recreation center, weekly cookouts, Thanksgiving Day Home Hospitality, and transportation to the main area of the base for additional recreation and retail facilities on weekends.

With many deploying in excess of three combat tours, the families face unusually high levels of strain. To reduce their stress, Operation Kid Comfort provides a unique handmade quilt for children of deployed service members. In our first year, we provided quilts to 310 children.

Other events designed to decrease stress and help make military life easier include the Annual Father-Daughter dance, ball gown give away and bike give away. To help junior enlisted families during the holidays, a series of events provide food, gifts, and other treats in the Secret SANTA program.

In 2011, the Camp Pendleton branch served over 58,500 Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and their families, the highest number ever.
The month of April has been designated as National Volunteer Appreciation Month, a time set aside to honor those who give of their time and energy to serve a greater cause. The Fort Campbell Armed Services YMCA would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to all our wonderful volunteers for all the hard work they put into the many programs and activities that serve so many in our Fort Campbell community. Without the time, energy and love given by so many of our volunteers our programs and their impact would cease to exist. What more noble of an act is there than volunteering!

The volunteers serve daily in our playgroups. Their passion and love for our mission shows in everything they do. From helping a child with a craft or reading a story to the group, they do a wonderful job. One of our volunteers has made lunch for our weekly Bible study for the past 5 years. The Backdoor Boutique could not function without the many dedicated volunteers who work countless hours sorting, hanging and arranging donations on the shelves for military families. One Backdoor Boutique volunteer dedicated over 1,000 hours to the Armed Services YMCA in 2011. Volunteers also assist with all our special events, such as our monthly family dinners, monthly breakfasts, summer camps, holiday parties and many other family events.

The people who volunteer their time to great causes are special people. We are so grateful for all of the great people who help us make military life easier for those we serve.

**Ft. Campbell Appreciates the Special People who Volunteer**

**TwentyninePalms displays 9/11 Flag and partners with Heart to Heart**

On Friday March 9, 2012, the Armed Services YMCA was invited to the Indian Wells Tennis Gardens in Indian Wells, CA, along with 50 Active Duty Marines and Sailors from the various Units and Detachments aboard the Marine Corps Base in TwentyninePalms, to display the National 9/11 Flag during the Exhibition Open Tennis Match.

The National 9/11 Flag is the flag that was flying over the World Trade Center when it perished during the terrorists attacks on the United States on September 11, 2011. The National 9/11 Flag has been flown by many organizations throughout the United States, with the help from the New York Says Thank You Foundation. The National 9/11 Flag is currently being stitched back to its original state with flags that were to be destroyed. A piece of the Lincoln Flag has also been stitched onto the National 9/11 Flag.

The Armed Services YMCA Twentynine Palms, again partnered with the Heart to Heart Organization to provide an afternoon of relaxation and camaraderie for 191 women at a luncheon honoring our military spouses and our female Marines and Sailors.

The luncheon is an annual event held at the Doral Desert Princess Resort, Cathedral City. When the ladies arrived, the Heart to Heart volunteers rolled out the red carpet and the VIP treatment began with escorts in tuxedos leading the ladies to their table where a hostess greeted them with a huge welcome.

The ladies were treated to a delicious lunch, an inspirational message by key note speaker and former San Diego News Anchor Carol LeBeau, and a Kohl’s Fashion Show featuring three models who were military spouses. Two models were active duty Marines and two models were active duty Sailors from the Marine base in Twentynine Palms.
Ft. Bragg/Pope AAF ASYMCA enters 2012 on very positive notes

Our Holiday Heart Program closed out 2011 on a very positive note. The Military Affairs Council, AUSA, Picerne Military Housing, Duke Physical Therapy, Stan Pinkus and his family, Woman’s Day Magazine, Mattel Toys, Alaska Structures and many others, assisted us in providing Christmas to more than 900 children. At the last minute, the US Veterans Corps donated $25,000 worth of toys for the children of families suffering financial hardships, which helped us serve an additional 100 children still on the waiting list. Another highlight was our Operation Hero children being chosen to make ornaments to decorate the Christmas tree at the North Carolina Governor’s Mansion.

With the assistance of The Fisher House/Newman’s Own Family Support Initiative, we have served hundreds of families of deployed service members through Super Saturday care, financial hardship relief and field trips. The Fisher House/Newman’s Own Initiative has enabled the ASYMCA to be recognized as an organization that promotes caring and quality programs.

Our Mother/Daughter Tea & Fashion Show was expanded this year to include both a Saturday and Sunday seating in order to accommodate the growing demand at Fort Bragg. The event sold out both days, making it a “must do” for moms and daughters in the future.

The Inaugural Subway & Armed Services Poker Run just concluded and everyone had a super time. Many thanks go to Eric Nelson, owner of the 5 Subway restaurants supporting the run. Not only did Eric organize the event, he supplied food, drinks and door prizes for all participants.

The USAA Foundation has also become a valued partner with our branch. In December, the foundation donated an initial $5,000, which purchased 75 car seats. We just received a second installment of $10,000 from the foundation to assist us in helping many more families keep their infants safe.

We are now getting ready for Healthy Kids Day, ASYMCA Family Fishing Derby, Kids’ Olympics and our Summer Adventure Camp.

Killeen ASY is Committed to the Healthy Development of All Children

The Killeen Armed Services YMCA is committed to encouraging positive behavior, healthy peer relationships, and helping children to learn and develop new skills. We work with families to develop goals that support the needs of the children attending our programs. A parent advisory board reviews our progress and makes further recommendations based on their review.

The Killeen ASY partners with Headquarters, Army Child, Youth & School Services, Central Texas College, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Killeen, Copperas Cove, Belton, Lampasas, and Florence Independent School Districts to provide high quality childcare to all children attending our programs.

Our Afterschool program has had success by listening to the parents, and by measuring the success and satisfaction of different approaches. We listen to the parent’s positive as well as negative testimonials and comments to help us improve program quality. We strive to employ in our daily programming the core values of Caring, Respect, Honesty, and Responsibility in our pursuit of our mission to build Strong Kids, Strong Families, and Strong Communities.

Program satisfaction and continuous improvement are essential to the growth and development of Killeen Armed Services YMCA’s childcare programs.
Lawton ASYMCA Opens New Airport Military Welcome Center

April 23rd the Lawton Fort Sill ASYMCA in collaboration with the local MOAA Auxiliary cut the ribbon on two years of planning and fundraising when they officially opened the Military Welcome Center at the Lawton Fort Sill Regional Airport.

The group raised over $40,000 to convert the old airport video arcade room to a luxurious lounge complete with overstuffed leather chairs; a large screen TV; free wifi; internet; computers; cell phones; and snacks and drinks along with plenty of loving hugs from the more than one hundred MOAA Auxiliary volunteers.

The Military Welcome Center is opened and manned by volunteers seven days a week and covers every flight in and out of the airport. The ASYMCA Military Welcome Center is just another way we help in Making Military Life Easier.

Camp Lejeune ASYMCA’s Backdoor Boutique continues to grow

Lejeune’s Backdoor Boutique continues to thrive, tripling donations and shoppers in 2011 from the previous year. We attribute this to increased social networking, advertising and partnerships with other base and civilian agencies throughout the community. This exposure has brought inquisitive Marines and family members in to see what the ASYMCA is all about.

Our Inaugural Poker Run held last year is coming back by popular demand. The 4th Annual Car, Truck and Bike Show featured 41 vehicles and more than 400 spectators in attendance. Thank you to Wal-Mart, Pepsi and Coca Cola for partnering with us on this event. The 2nd Healthy Kids Day was also a huge success.

With grant money from The Fisher House/Newman’s Own Family Support Initiative, the Lejeune ASYMCA has been able to serve hundreds of families through our Super Saturday Day Care and field trips for children of deployed parents. The day care allowed parents a few hours of rest and relaxation to help relieve the stress of being the sole caregiver while their spouse is away. We have also been able to provide commissary vouchers and much more for families experiencing financial hardships. One family of 8 lost everything they owned in a fire and we were able to assist with groceries, clothing and kitchen items.

Lejeune children’s classes continue to grow each session. Crafty Campers, Little Caterpillars and Mini Movers help children with fine motor skills doing a variety of activities from making sunglasses and handprint flowers to interactive play through music. Just before Christmas we offered a new program called “Paint the Day Away” where 57 aspiring artists came throughout the day and were treated to hot chocolate and candy canes as they painted.

Summer Scientists will begin soon and we are putting all of our effort into sponsoring our first Summer Adventure Camp – a full day program that will eliminate the stress on working parents to find appropriate care for their children.
The San Diego Armed Services YMCA wrapped up the 2011 year by celebrating our largest holiday program to date. On December 14th and 15th, the San Diego ASYMCA headquarters office could not have been more festive during our 25th Annual SuperParent Holiday Program sponsored by the Spiva Family Foundation. Personal shopper volunteers along with a few San Diego Padres helped military parents “shop” for gifts for their children during this two-day event. An incredible 5,904 gifts were distributed to 1,283 families during our 2011 SuperParent Program.

Just a few weeks after this event, the San Diego ASY was thrilled to bring 26 San Diego military families to the Armed Forces Bowl in Dallas, Texas as ASY Family Ambassadors. 2012 started off with just as much excitement. Sam the Cooking Guy gave a cooking demo and made a delicious meal for wounded, injured and ill service members at Naval Medical Center San Diego. Avant Garde provided tasty side dishes to complete the meal and everyone was entertained and well fed.

This year’s 6th Annual Father & Daughter Dance, “Enchantment Under the Sea” was also a big hit. The San Diego ASYMCA would like to thank TriWest Healthcare Alliance for their generous sponsorship of this event.

With strong community support, the San Diego Armed Services YMCA has reached some impressive milestones in the past year including the completion of over 4,000 Operation Kid Comfort quilts.

Our Military Volunteer Program (MVP) has also grown over the past few years. The program began in 1998 with 125 participants volunteering approximately 750 hours, and in 2011 we ended the year with over 2,000 military volunteers working 8,595 hours within the community. MVP continues to make a significant contribution within the San Diego community as well as within our organization.

Middle school students participated in Watertown Family YMCA’s Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) and Middle School Achievement Program (MAP). These programs are funded in large part through Army Youth Programs in Your Neighborhood (AYPYN) a Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation program that focuses on increasing and/or enhancing afterschool programs for army connected youth who live in off post communities.

Youth participate in club activities including cooking, music, arts, and robotics. The programs also focus on social/emotional well-being, academic support and healthy lifestyle programs.

In recent participant surveys one young person noted that the afterschool program helped him while his Dad was deployed by “filling the void”. He went on to say that the most fun thing in baking club is that “kids do all baking and do everything by themselves with guidance from staff”. When asked what the program meant to him, he summed it up by stating “capital F, capital U, capital N”.

These programs are a great example of how the ASYMCA, Fort Drum and Watertown Family YMCA collaboration helps military youth who live in communities outside of post.
Kid Comfort flourishes at Armed Services YMCA of Missouri

Operation Kid Comfort is flourishing on Fort Leonard Wood. Our group of 35 dedicated volunteers comes from Missouri, Kansas and Indiana. They provide our military children with quilts to "comfort" them during the difficult time while their parent is deployed.

To date, the Fort Leonard Wood ASYMCA has presented 208 quilts. Each quilt is custom matched to the child’s favorite colors and interests. While most of our quilts are locally delivered, we have mailed quilts to Texas, Virginia, Oregon, California, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Alabama and Hawaii. We provide quilts for all branches of service, as well.

In 2010, our volunteers logged 325 volunteer hours; in 2011, 234 hours. So far, in 2012, they have donated 60 hours to Operation Kid Comfort.

We appreciate all their time and dedication to making this program a success. We couldn’t do it without them! Thank you to our volunteers.

ASYMCA of Alaska salutes military, pays it forward and plays hooky

In February the ASYMCA of Alaska and local communities took pride in saluting our military, recognizing 12 exceptional junior enlisted service members for their excellence in service. The Service Personnel of the Year, or “SPOYs” as they are affectionately called, are selected from all branches of military, active, guard, and reserve duty status.

This year’s celebration was one to remember with guest speaker General Norton Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force. Having outgrown every hotel facility in Alaska, this year’s event was moved to the larger Egan Civic and Convention Center in downtown Anchorage. It was a grand celebration.

Anchorage shows their support for our military in many ways, but one outlet has pretty much become a regular event, taking place almost quarterly. Operation Linen Giveaway features new household items ranging from silverware to rugs to small appliances and bed linens, all donated by businesses from the Anchorage community to go to junior enlisted and their families. The event grows each time, as word gets around, with Giveaways now averaging more than $70,000 worth of donated goods. Additionally, we’ve had clothing giveaways, distributing thousands of shirts, sweatshirts and diapers to families in our military community, thanks to our partnership with Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the K.I.D.S. program.

Turnout was great for the sixth annual Armed Services Combat Fishing Tournament Auction held in March. Auction goers bid fervently for a chance to fish with our nation’s heroes in the Armed Services Combat Fishing Tournament in May. Each year we treat 300 junior enlisted service members to a day of deep sea fishing in the Combat Fishing Tournament, plus a banquet in recognition and appreciation of their service. Auction proceeds benefit active duty, guard, and reserve service members from all branches of the military stationed in Alaska.

Like Ripples in a Pond
By Laurie Eytel
We thank you for all the great things you do.
Large and small, they all have meaning to the families you help and to us.
One act can make all the difference.
Like ripples in a pond kindness spreads outward, reaching and touching others and can change a life forever.
The smiling faces we see say it all…Thank you…you are our stars!