According to a recent Feeding America Study, last year 620,000 military families relied on assistance from food pantries and charities like the Armed Services YMCA to meet their basic needs...

Read more and learn about how you can help! (page 2)
Reflections of Our President & CEO

Feeding Our Troops and Military Families

Over the past 12 years of war, Military families have become very adept at coping well with the stressors of military life. While military families have the same life experiences common to civilian families, they also experience stressors and challenges specific to the military lifestyle including frequent separations, spouse employment challenges, family reintegration issues following extended deployments, adequate childcare and low pay.

The monthly base salary paid to our junior enlisted troops (E-1 to E-5) is largely dependent on pay grade and time in service, but ranges from $18,000 for a new recruit to about $30,000 for an E-5 with 4 years of service. Many of these families include 1-2 children. According to a recent Feeding America study, last year an estimated 620,000 households with at least one active duty service member relied on charities that provide access to food pantries, like the ASYMCA, in order to meet their basic needs.

Each branch of the ASYMCA provides access to free food and clothing on some level. Whether it is access to food pantries such as those in Anchorage AK, Ft. Campbell KY, El Paso TX, Honolulu HI and Lawton OK; or family emergency assistance programs in Hampton Roads VA, Camp Pendleton CA and San Diego CA; or branches that provide holiday meals like those at our Fort Leonard Wood MO, Killeen TX, Ft. Bragg NC, Altus OK and Twentynine Palms CA branches. Every ASYMCA branch caters special events and tailored programs like Father and Daughter dances, Mother and Son adventures, homecoming and deployment ceremonies, and after school programs all year round.

Your donations are helping to Make Military Life Easier for our junior enlisted troops and families while supporting their healthy development as military families in our communities. For the eighth consecutive year, the ASYMCA has earned Charity Navigator’s highest “Four Star” rating, so you can rest well knowing that your donations are responsibly managed both fiscally and ethically. Eighty-eight cents of every dollar received is put directly back into programming, like the food pantries and clothing loan closets. We genuinely appreciate your loyal support. Thank you.

We work endlessly at the ASYMCA, tailoring our programming and funding to help meet the needs and challenges of these incredible families. Now more than ever we rely on the generosity and kindness of our donors and corporate sponsors to fund programming that provide these necessities that support our junior enlisted troops and their families.

Mike Landers, President & CEO
Armed Services YMCA and Jack Daniels Celebrate Four Years of Sending Troops Home for the Holidays through Operation Ride Home Program

Each year as the holiday season begins, many Americans make plans to spend time with their loved ones. Not everyone is fortunate enough to travel home for Christmas. Jack Daniels and The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) are working to bring home as many of our troops as possible to spend the holidays with their families through the Operation Ride Home Program.

Operation Ride Home funds domestic travel for junior enlisted service members and their eligible family members to travel home for Christmas. The program is jumpstarted by a $100,000 donation from Jack Daniels, and relies on the generous support of the public to continue funding this special holiday gift.

“Our service members and their families sacrifice so much so that we can enjoy our lives as Americans, including spending the holidays at home with the people we love,” said Mike Landers, ASYMCA President and CEO. “We can’t think of a more deserving group of people to receive this gift.”

Due to the generosity of Jack Daniels, their distributors and partners, and the kindness of the public, since the program’s inception in 2011, Operation Ride Home has sent 2,777 service members and their families home for the holidays.

Over the four year life of the program, those military families have shared their stories about what it meant to have the support of Operation Ride Home. They have shared stories of engagements and winter weddings, surprising parents and grandparents, and meeting new bundles of joy who joined their families while they were away. All possible and even planned around the travel arranged through Operation Ride Home.

Travel is provided in the form of airline vouchers, or gas cards and hotel accommodations for those who are within driving distance. There are limitations on cost per person to allow travel for as many as possible. More details are available on the ASYMCA Operation Ride Home site, or by contacting the supporting ASYMCA branch.

This year, Operation Ride Home is accepting airline miles, in addition to monetary donations, giving donors another way to help service members get home for Christmas. Donating airline miles is easy and eligible for tax deductions. Donations can be made online through the official Jack Daniels Operation Ride Home site. www.jdoperationridehome.com or www.asymca.org/donate.

"THANK YOU TO THE MOON! Thank you so much to ASYMCA and Jack Daniels for making this holiday unforgettable for our families. Your generosity is appreciated and will be remembered for years to come. Happy Holidays." -The Humphrey Family
Welcome to the Armed Services YMCA Family!!

2014 has come with many exciting new opportunities for the ASYMCA organization. The support we provide would not be possible without the compassion and talent of great employees and volunteers. It is with genuine pleasure that we would like to welcome new members to or our executive staff, branches and board of directors.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Cherie Bortnick  
Ft. Bragg ASYMCA

Buddy Whit  
Alaska ASYMCA

Laurie Moore  
Honolulu ASYMCA

NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

DAVID PAGE

Mr. Page currently serves as the Field Marketing Manager, Tequilas and Bourbons, for Brown-Forman in Louisville, Kentucky. He has served as a member of the Kentucky National Guard, acting as a Public Affairs Officer from 2003-2007, and as Commander of the 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachmen in Tikrit, Iraq during 2005-2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is currently a member of the VFW, Post 4075 in Frankfort, KY.

Page earned a B.A. in Liberal Arts from the University of Louisville, a Master’s degree in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa, and an Integrated Master’s Degree of Business Administration from the University of Louisville.

KATE BOYCE REEDER

Katharine Randolph Boyce Reeder (“Kate”), a principal of KRBR Consulting, engages in public policy representation, primarily on behalf of Native American clients.

Until 2014, Kate practiced law for over 30 years at Patton Boggs LLP in Washington, DC, as the second and longest-serving female partners. She built an extensive public policy practice representing foreign and Native American tribal governments, as well as corporations and trade associations. Kate received the Outstanding Young Women of America award and is widely recognized as one of the country’s prominent lobbyists.

ANTHONY WEDO

Mr. Wedo currently serves as President, CEO and Director at Ovation® Brands, the leading buffet restaurant company in the US with $900 million in revenue, 350 restaurants and over 18,000 employees.

Mr. Wedo serves on a variety of non-profit and other boards including The Pete duPont Freedom Award, and the University of Delaware, Horn Center for Entrepreneurial Studies. Mr. Wedo holds a B.S. Degree in Business from Penn State University, an M.B.A degree from Cornell University and an International M.B.A. from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario Canada. He is also a retired officer in the US Navy Reserve.
Armed Services YMCA Board Members and Updates
ASYMCA Board of Directors

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Welcome Stephanie Franke, National Board Coordinator and Office Manager

Connect with us!

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In 2013, the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) received an “Exceptional” rating from Charity Navigator for the eighth straight year. The designation recognizes ASYMCA for consistently executing its mission to enrich the lives of junior enlisted personnel and their families in a fiscally responsible way.

The Armed Services YMCA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, focusing on providing social services to young enlisted military members and their families, especially E-5 and below. Feel free to contact us at the Armed Services YMCA, 7405 Alban Station Court, Suite B215, Springfield, VA 22150; phone, 703-455-3986, or fax, 703-455-2182. Or visit our website at asymca.org

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Operation Kid Comfort/Military Family Month Coordinator
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Jonsie Stone
Director of Financial Development
ext. 115, jstone@asymca.org
YMCA Military Outreach Initiative with the ASY

In partnership with the Armed Services YMCA and the Department of Defense, the Y continues to offer memberships and respite child care services to eligible military families and personnel to give them extra support during this difficult period. It’s our way of giving back to those who dedicate themselves to serving our country. Visit asymca.org to learn more and to see if you qualify. The Department of Defense has extended this successful program till March 2015.

Our Impact:
- Almost 1500 YMCAs participating nationwide
- More than 121,000 military children served with youth development, family strengthening and well-being programs to date.
Operation Hero: Making Back to School Life Easier for Military Children and Parents

Children of service members face many challenges growing up as a part of the military community. Adjusting to frequent moves and new schools is often times a regular part of life for many military children. Some children transition seamlessly, while others have a more difficult time.

The Armed Services YMCA’s (ASYMCA) Operation Hero is an onsite after-school program, which focuses on character development and skill building within military children who have been identified by school personnel and parents exhibiting low self-esteem, or difficulty adjusting both academically and socially in the school environment.

“One of the main objectives of Operation Hero is to make sure that military children in our community have all the tools they need to be healthy and successful,” said Mike Landers, ASYMCA President and CEO. “We understand that constant, new adjustments are difficult, and we want to help make those transitions easier for the most vulnerable members of those families.”

Operation Hero employs certified educators to tutor and mentor children who participate. Curriculum is designed to help them handle the challenges of military life, provide tools to help them succeed in school, and help develop a positive self-image while improving social and communication skills.

The program integrates all of the people in a child’s life who observe their behavior and interact with them on a regular basis. Parents, coaches and teachers who notice their child or student is struggling to perform well academically or adjust socially have support to guide the child they care about back onto a steady path.

“Sometimes recognizing that a student or child is struggling isn’t as easy as looking at a report card,” said Andrea Tebbe, Operation Hero Program Director at ASYMCA Ft. Bragg. “Integrating the adults or caretakers in a child’s life who they interact with regularly helps to identify certain issues or areas where they may need the most help.”

Operation Hero programs begin during the second quarter of the fall semester, giving parents, teachers and caregivers time to observe any behavior that concerns them, and inquire about the program at their location.

ASYMCA’s Operation Hero reaches more than 3,000 military children each school year. If you are a parent or teacher of a child in need of mentoring, please contact your ASYMCA location for enrollment information. For more information go to http://www.asymca.org/programs
Ft. Bragg Baby Bundles Program Saves the Day

Everyday costs of raising a family are increasing, not to mention saving for college, and unexpected expenses like medical bills and emergencies. The Ft. Bragg ASYMCA Baby Bundles program provides a little extra assistance for junior enlisted service members and their new additions in the Ft. Bragg military community. Families in need are given first priority, and are encouraged to contact the ASYMCA before their baby’s due date.

Each eligible family receives a layette that includes a blanket, socks, sleeper, onesie, baby wipes, baby book, a voucher for diapers and a nursing bra. Other items, like car seats, are also available to those with a determined need.

“Baby Bundles targets families who are really in need,” said Andrea Tebbe, Ft. Bragg ASYMCA Program Director. “We understand that getting started with all the things new parents need is expensive and sometimes tedious. We’re happy to be able to provide this support and welcome new members to our military family.”

Spc. Montgomery James and his wife, Alexandria, experienced the support the Baby Bundles program provides first hand. On the morning the James Family was ready to bring their new addition, daughter Aria Nicole, home for the first time they discovered their car seat wasn’t the right fit. Looking for help, they reached out to the Ft. Bragg ASYMCA.

“Our car seat was new in the box. They [the medical staff] told us Saturday morning that we could finally take her home, so I packed our bags and took them to the car. I got the seat from the trunk, opened the box and put it into the car only to find out it sat at too much of an angle and the baby’s head would not be supported,” Spc. James shared. “After three days in the hospital, and running back and forth between there and home to take care of my other children, I did not have enough money for yet another car seat.”

Feeling stranded, Spc. James logged on to the ASYMCA Facebook page, and reached out via email for last minute help.

“I sent an email from the Facebook page to the ASYMCA National Headquarters. I got an email back within the hour and was told help was on the way. Not 20 minutes later, I received a call from the Ft. Bragg ASYMCA asking me to meet them at their office to help square me away. Upon arrival they gave us a brand new car seat that worked perfectly for the homecoming of our baby girl!”

The James family is one of the many who have benefited from the support of the Ft. Bragg ASYMCA Baby Bundles program. Each year, more than 1700 service members and their families receive baby bundles courtesy of the Ft. Bragg ASYMCA.
Armed Services YMCA Alaska Annual Combat Fishing Tournament

The Annual Armed Forces Combat Fishing Tournament was created by Bob Candopoulos, owner of Saltwater Safari, and Keith Manternach, owner of Specialty Truck and Auto, to give thanks to the brave young men and women of the United States Armed Services who have sacrificed so much to serve our nation with honor and courage. Partnering with the Armed Services YMCA of Alaska, and with the support of generous Alaskans, approximately 1,600 service members have gone “combat fishing” since the tournament’s inception.

• Since its inception in 2007, over 1,600 fisherman from all branches of military service have participated in the tournament.
• Over the last eight years, over 190 charter boats and crew have been donated to the Combat Fishing Tournament.
• This year the collective catch accounted for over 2,000 pounds of filleted fish—with the actual catch being approximately twice that of the filleted weight.
• The largest fish caught at this year’s event was a halibut weighing 86.6 pounds. This fish was caught aboard the Alaskan Summer, and is the fourth year in a row that the largest fish was caught aboard this boat.
Argh Mateys! Altus Hosts 9th Annual Pirates Ball

All the Pirate Queens packed up their little pirates and joined us at the 9th Annual Pirates Ball! A Mother & Son event just in time for Mother’s Day! What a fabulous fun evening it was, with games, surprises, food, and photos with Captain Jack Sparrow—fun to last a lifetime! Thanks to the Asian Pacific Islander Committee of Airmen for partnering with the Altus ASYMCA, everyone had a family evening of fun with games, pirate food, cake and pie contest, spa certificates for all the mothers, and an evening of memories! The Wing Commander, Colonel Bill Spangenthal and the Command Chief, CMSgt Bryan Creager stopped by to wish all the mothers a Happy Mother’s Day!
Killeen Breaks Ground on New Harker Heights Facility

October 4, 2014 was the most exceptional of exceptional days. Having the support of our supporters to watch the ceremonial breaking of the ground, was exactly what we need as we begin construction of facility. This facility is located at 100 Mountain Lion Road Harker Heights (Purser Park). We will have a massive pool, climbing wall, basketball court, gym space, a room dedicated for therapy for Wound Warriors, and a kitchen designed to help people learn to cook healthy meals.

ASYMCA President and CEO, Mike Landers, was on hand to celebrate and help break ground with ASYMCA Killeen Executive Director, Anthony Mino. ASYMCA Killeen staff, military leaders and service members from Ft. Hood as well as other members from the community also attended to show their support.

The Killeen Armed Services YMCA needs your help to raise $1,000,000 to complete funding for the new family center and provide a start up fund for scholarships to ensure everyone can participate in the new ASYMCA!
New School of Infantry Rec Center at Camp Pendelton

These are photos of the new School of Infantry Recreation Center that will double the ability to serve Marine students at Camp Pendleton. The center will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. Future expansion of the program to two or three weekday evenings will be developed over time. The new facility will provide a kitchen, rest rooms, video gaming room, computer room with 20 computers, television, and extensive patio with televisions, pool tables, and grills.

Learning Fire Safety at ASY of Missouri

On Monday, October 6th, 2014 the Armed Services YMCA of Fort Leonard Wood held their annual Fire Safety Day. Local firefighters are out in full effect this week and we wanted our little participants to have an opportunity to "hang out" with them and learn a thing or two. Sparky, the fire dog made an appearance after the firemen spoke about fire alarms and other safety issues. The children were able to climb into the truck and have their pictures taken as well as have lunch with the crew. To top it all off, each child received a fire hat and goody bag with various fun safety reminders!
Meet Me Under the Sea Father Daughter Ball

ASYMCA of Hampton Roads hosted their 2nd Annual Father Daughter Ball on Thursday, June 12th at the Westin Virginia Beach Town Center. The ballroom was transformed by branch staff and volunteers to an underwater kingdom, Meet Me Under the Sea. Guests were treated to a true underworld experience as they “swam” with sea creatures and sunken pirate ships; Mermaid Amanda and King Neptune accompanied by his lovely wife mingled with all. The Virginia Aquarium shared their Touch Tank to the joy of many of the daughters.

There was tremendous community business support as evidenced by the six corporate sponsors (compared to one in 2013) as well as 26 donated prizes for raffle. Navy Federal Credit Union donated three $100 gift cards which enabled lucky contest winners to purchase new dresses for the evening. Ambiance Day Spa and Studio East completed the makeovers donating hair and make-up services. The Westin graciously donated the ballroom space for the entire day allowing the transformation to take place. They have been a wonderful destination partner for this event hosting the inaugural event in 2013. The Father Daughter Ball was a huge hit with service members, selling out days in advance.

Screaming Eagle Resident Summer Camp at Ft. Campbell

June was full of activities at our Family Center that concentrated on summer, connecting socially and staying cool. The Family Center offered Summer Sundaes in the afternoons throughout the month. We also had a movie and popcorn afternoon and our toddlers enjoyed several mornings of water play. In addition, the ASYMCA Fort Campbell kicked off a new playgroup geared for school age children that focused on science and exploring. Because of its success, we will be hosting an Exploration Mini Camp to keep the minds strong over summer vacation.
ASYMCA Shows Military Appreciation
By Wendy Brown, Fort Bliss Bugle Staff

The Armed Services YMCA of El Paso includes a hotel with 52 low-cost rooms that help provide income to a variety of programs that help military children, but the rooms need to be renovated at a cost of about $5,000 per room.

In an effort to raise money for the renovations and other needs, Jose Melendez, director of the ASYMCA El Paso, held a luncheon Sept. 25 at the Comington Street facility to thank donors and ask for additional help.

Veronica Dayoub, military community supporter and wife of Richard Dayoub, president and chief executive officer of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, was the event’s keynote speaker.

“It is of the utmost importance that we make this lodging facility an attractive place to stay to continue providing much needed services to military families,” Dayoub told an audience of about 70 during the luncheon.

The income that the hotel’s rooms provide helps support programs such as the Junior Enlisted Family Center, the facility’s child development center and back-to-school and Christmas events for military children, Dayoub said.

The Junior Enlisted Family Center, for example, has a thrift store that helps about 250 Soldiers a week and a food pantry that helps between 60 and 80 Soldiers a month, Dayoub said. In all, the center distributes about $3,000 a month to families.

Kelly Folie, a military spouse and mother of five, told the audience the center has helped her family considerably, and she helped spread the word to other Fort Bliss families.

“We’ve had some hard times and some good times, and we’re very grateful for Nina and all her services,” Folie said, speaking of the center’s director, Nina Carey. “It’s great for us to have help with a family that big.”
MILITARY FAMILY MONTH
November 2014

Navy: Alisa Hoase, Age 7
Marines: Mekella Santiago, Age 11
Air Force: Natalie McCarthy, Age 11

Army Strong
Army: Annabelle Workman, Age 10

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Army Reserves: Aunika Sharrock, Age 10

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