

FSGA-HAAF CYS Services in The Frontline 3-24-11 community news!

COMMUNITY & LEISURE

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April celebrates Month of the Military Child



Bob Mathews, FMWR

The Month of the Military Child begins April 1. The observance acknowledges the sacrifices and contributions children of the military put forth in our nation today.

Bob Mathews
Family and MWR

The youngster at the Child Development Center was asked if he knew what it meant to be a Military Child.

"I know that I am a military child because my Daddy is a hero," he said.

At Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield – and in all of the U.S. Armed Forces – April will be celebrated as "The Month of the Military Child," to acknowledge their sacrifices and recognize that they are "The Strength of Our Future."

Child, Youth and School Services staff at Stewart and Hunter believe the kids – just like their Moms and Dads serving America – are heroes, too. A variety of activities have been planned to make them feel extra special.

"We appreciate these kids every day," said Leah Cabey, CYSS facility director at the CDC in building 403 on Fort Stewart.

"But this (April) is one month out of the year for us to gather as a community, lift them up and say, 'Hey, we are proud of you. We appreciate you. And we're going to celebrate you being military children.' We want to acknowledge the sacrifices these kids endure," Cabey said.

She pointed out that the extensive Month of the Military Child planning at Stewart-Hunter is focused on military children of all ages and that the children themselves participated in the planning.

"From six weeks to 18 years old, we are covering all of our military children to ensure that each and every child knows that we appreciate them, support them and are definitely behind them," Cabey said.

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"Whether [children of the military] are in the Child Development Center, the schools here on post, the schools off-post, home schools – we are covering all of them [all], so every child knows that we appreciate them, support them and are definitely behind them."

The month-long observance begins April 1. Calendars for the CDCs, School Age Services and Youth Centers, the George P. Hays Library and F&MWR recreational facilities are crowded with activities in honor of military children.

Among events scheduled for older teens are a Wildlife Jamboree, a Georgia Sea Turtle Trip to Jekyll Island, teen lock-ins, a community talent show, paintball and a Spring Fling dance.

For the little ones, planned activities include an Easter egg hunt, a "Super Fun Show," planting of a Character Garden, kite flying, a picnic, Wheels Day and a carnival.

Schedules for the Month of the Military Child are available at the various centers involved.

Amarys A. Martinez, director of the CDCs at Hunter, pointed out that "April is especially for the children

because they make a lot of sacrifices. They are very strong."

Martinez said military children become strong because they have to move from place to place, requiring them to make new friends and are separated from their mothers or fathers by deployments. Being given the opportunity to visit different countries adds to their knowledge and depth of experience.

"We want to let the community know that we need to work together to help these children grow and develop in healthy ways, with strong minds, because they are the future for our nation," Martinez said.

Cabey and Martinez, working with their colleagues and staffs, are coordinating Month of the Military Child events and activities at Stewart and Hunter CDCs.

"What we are doing at our local level is to have some fun things for our military children to come out, run around, laugh, hear music and just have a good time," Cabey said. "The children love sounds, they love laughter, they love motion, they love movement, and we're going to join in with them."



Bob Mathews, FMWR

Teachers, parents, and children march in last year's celebration for the Month of the Military Child. Children are recognized for their sacrifices.

Hunter opens new child development center



Nancy Gould, Hunter Army Airfield

The Perimeter Road CDC ribbon cutting participants included: (front row, left-to-right) three-year-old Carly Barnett; three-year-old Jermel Wheeler and three-year-old Jaimyra Harden, who attend the new facility; (back row, left-to-right) Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips, 3rd Infantry Division deputy commanding general; Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Adkins, Hunter Army Airfield; Amarys Martinez, Child Development Center director; Sgt. Margaret Taylor, 603rd Headquarters Service Co.; Lt. Col. Jose Aguilar, Hunter garrison commander; Spc. Sara Harden, 224th Military Intelligence Bn.; Dagmar Peguero Olinger, Stewart-Hunter Child Youth and School Services director; Marguerite Hughes, spouse of Col. Christopher Hughes, deputy commander support, Third Infantry Division and Ginger Cucolo, spouse of Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, commanding general, 3rd Infantry Division. Doors opened to the new \$4.3 million child development center, located on Perimeter Rd. at Hunter Army Airfield, March 15. The new full-service day care facility will serve as the future site for all Pre-K programs at Hunter.