



Army Strong Community Center

Connecting Soldiers, Families, & Communities

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN BRISTOL, CT



OCTOBER 2013

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Army Strong Community
Center (ASCC) is an
Army Reserve Family Program

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time for the community to come together and build awareness and a movement towards safe and healthy relationships for all individuals and families. Domestic violence touches every person in our community and society as a whole; and violates a person's dignity, safety, and basic human rights. Stand up as a champion for survivors and join the movement for a safer and healthier community.

Support

If you are in an abusive relationship, it is important to get support. Someone who batters is usually very good at getting their partner isolated away from their family and friends. As a result, victims often begin to feel ashamed and alone and believe that no one would understand. Many survivors have even described feeling as if they didn't even know who they were anymore. This makes it even more difficult to survive the abuse, to sort through the feelings and to make decisions that will be best for you and your children.

If you find that you don't have anyone to talk to, consider calling the National Domestic Violence Hotline or a domestic violence program in your area. Hotline operators are specially trained in domestic violence and are available 24 hours a day to provide resources, help with options to stay safe or just to listen.

Support groups are another option to consider. Besides offering shelter, many domestic violence programs also offer support groups. These groups offer a safe place to talk about your feelings and experiences in an atmosphere free of judgment. It's also an opportunity to meet and talk with other people who have had similar experiences.

If you are in immediate danger, please call 911. For help and assistance call the U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224. Hotline advocates are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to provide confidential crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referrals to agencies in all fifty states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For more information, contact the Army Strong Community Center. ★

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Out of the Darkness Walk

Saturday, October 5, 2013 | Check-In 8:30 AM;
 Walk 10:00 AM
 Rockwell Park
 128 Jacobs Street
 Bristol, CT 06010

A community walk to prevent suicide organized by the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention. The Bristol walk will have some service providers, vendors, and activities for those wanting to participate but not able to walk.

For more information, to register or to find a walk near you, visit www.afsp.org/walk. You may also send an email to outofthedarknessbristol@yahoo.com for more information. ★

City of Bristol Paper Shredding Event

Saturday, October 5, 2013 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 (or until the truck is full)
 Parking Lot across from the City Yard on Vincent P. Kelly Road (enter from Middle Street exit from Lake Avenue)
 Bristol, CT 06010

Questions can be directed to www.tunxisrecycling.org. ★

City of Bristol Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Saturday, October 5, 2013 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 City Yard – 95 Vincent P. Kelly Road
 (enter from Middle Street exit from Lake Avenue)
 Bristol, CT 06010

Who can attend? Bristol, Berlin, Burlington, Meriden, New Britain, Plainville, Plymouth, Prospect, Southington and Wolcott residents (I.D. required, no businesses).

For information on who can attend and what you can bring, visit the [City of Bristol](http://CityofBristol) website. ★

Welcome Home Celebration Parade For Iraq Veterans

Sunday, October 13, 2013 | 9:30 AM Step Off Time

Parade begins at West Street and Liberty Street, then proceeds down Main Street to the War Memorial at Rogers Park. At the end of the parade, Veterans and guests are welcome to participate in all activities inside of War Memorial. There will be different organizations available to assist Veterans or anyone in the community.

For more information call (203) 616-5532 or email almeida06810@gmail.com. ★

Veteran's Forum: After the Military Job Opportunities

Tuesday, October 15, 2013 | 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
 Bristol Main Library | Meeting Room #2
 5 High Street
 Bristol, CT 06010

Having trouble converted military experience into civilian terms? Having trouble finding work? Hear from representatives of the Employer Support of Guard and Reserve, H2H.jobs, CT Department of Labor Veterans Workforce Development and Capital Workforce Partners Step Up for Vets.

Register by October 10th by contacting the ASCC at (860) 584-6258 or (860) 584-6257. ★

Hiring Our Heroes—Job Fair Hartford, CT

Tuesday, October 22, 2013 | 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 The Lyceum
 227 Lawrence Street
 Hartford, CT 06106

There will also be an employment workshop aimed at helping veterans and transitioning service members leverage military experience to achieve civilian career goals will begin at 9:00 a.m. Registration for the Employment Workshop is currently open at hohworks.eventbrite.com. ★

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-TALK (8255)
(press 1 for Veterans Suicide Hotline)
or go to

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Additional Services at ASCC

The Army Strong Community Center staff is pleased to announce the addition of service providers with office hours at the ASCC Bristol.

Soldiers', Sailors', and Marines' Fund

The Bristol representatives of the Soldiers', Sailors', and Marines' Fund will be available Monday – Friday, 9 am – noon (subject to change) to take applications for the Fund. The Fund is a financial assistance program available to eligible Veterans and spouses. You may contact the Bristol coordinator, Brother Leonard Webster, O.S.F., at (860) 584-6255 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

Mrs. Lorraine Baltimore, Employment Transition Coordinator for CT Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR), will resume office hours at the ASCC Bristol every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.

For more information, contact the Army Strong Community Center. ★

Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund

The Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund (SSMF) is a financial-need based assistance program unique to Connecticut. SSMF is an agency of the State of Connecticut established in 1919 to assist needy wartime veterans and their families. SSMF is administered by The American Legion, Connecticut Department.

In 1919, the State Treasurer, at the request of the State Legislature, invested \$2.5 million in war bonds. For nearly 95 years, the SSMF has been using the interest from this investment to provide food, clothing, and housing expense, among other types of assistance to needy servicemen. The program has been enhanced many times over its lifetime to also include support for certain members of the veteran's family. SSMF representatives are located throughout the State, just about in every municipality.

There are certain eligibility requirements, which in part include, but are not limited to, residence in the State of Connecticut, honorable discharge, minimum of 90 days of active duty during a statutory wartime period, and financial need must be demonstrated.

For a complete list of eligibility requirements and a list of types of assistance provided go to <http://www.ct.gov/ssmf/site/default.asp> or contact the Bristol SSMF representatives at (860) 584-6255. ★

Ride to Recovery Rides into Connecticut

Ride to Recovery (R2R) is a program produced by the Fitness Challenge that raises money to support cycling programs at military and VA locations around the country. The mission of R2R is "to improve the health and wellness of injured veterans by providing a life changing experience that can impact their lives forever" (Ride 2 Recovery website, <https://ride2recovery.com/page.php?ID=2>).

Their Minuteman Challenge is a bike ride from Boston to Philadelphia, which ran from September 7 – 15, 2013. The route brought riders for 2 days to various locations in Connecticut - Providence, RI to Hartford, CT and then Hartford, CT to Danbury, CT. The riders made their way directly through Bristol, stopping at ESPN for a rest stop and then riding down Memorial Boulevard. One of Bristol's own, CW3 Jed Carter, rode in the Challenge and during the ESPN rest stop visited with Bristol Mayor, Art Ward. For more information about R2R and other programs and services they provide please visit <https://ride2recovery.com>.





Family Fun Day

On Saturday, September 14, 2013, the ASCC participated in the Family Fun Day, sponsored by the Terryville Public Library. Family Fun Day is a free community event in its second year. The mission is to provide a variety of resources for parents / families, all aimed at teaching children through play, whether it's through physical fitness, arts and crafts, or word play, to name a few. In addition to speaking with and providing resources to approximately 25 military families, when children visited the ASCC booth they were able to "write" and decorate a letter that will be sent to Service Members currently deployed. The children had a great time telling about themselves and using their creativity to decorate the letters. The ASCC hopes the Service Members have as much fun reading them! ★



National Cyber Security Awareness Month

National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) is celebrated every October and was created as a collaborative effort between government and industry to ensure every American has the resources they need to stay safer and more secure online.

Since its inception a decade ago under leadership from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance, NCSAM has grown exponentially, reaching consumers, small and medium-size businesses, corporations, educational institutions, and young people across the nation.

Our Shared Responsibility

We lead Internet-connected, digital lives. From our desks and homes to on the go, we work, learn and play online. Even when we are not directly connected to the Internet, our critical infrastructure—the vast, worldwide connection of computers, data, and websites supporting our everyday lives through financial transactions, transportation systems, healthcare records, emergency response systems, personal communications, and more—impacts everyone.

Cybersecurity is the mechanism that maximizes our ability to grow commerce, communications, community and content in a connected world. The Internet is a shared resource and securing it is Our Shared Responsibility.

No individual, business, or government entity is solely responsible for securing the Internet. Everyone has a role in securing their part of cyberspace, including the devices and networks they use. Individual actions have a collective impact and when we use the Internet safely, we make it more secure for everyone. If each of us does our part—implementing stronger security practices, raising community awareness, educating young people, training employees—together we will be a digital society safer and more resistant from attacks and more resilient if one occurs.

Each and every one of us needs to do our part to make sure that our online lives are kept safe and secure. That's what National Cyber Security Awareness Month—observed in October—is all about!

Stop. Think. Connect.

Think about how many times you have gone online in the past week. What did you do while online? Check your email? Track your finances? Share pictures and videos? The Internet today has become an invaluable resource in both our professional and personal lives. However, as technology advances, so do the techniques cybercriminals use to gain access to our computer networks. If each of us becomes more aware of Cybersecurity risks and implements a few simple steps, we can all make a big difference. Below find resources to help you get started.

Social Networks

Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn and other social networks have become an integral part of online lives. Social networks are a great way to stay connected with others, but you should be wary about how much personal information you post.

Follow these tips to safely enjoy social networking:

- * Privacy and security settings exist for a reason
- * Once posted, always posted
- * Your online reputation can be a good thing
- * Keep personal info personal
- * Know and manage your friends
- * Be honest if you're uncomfortable
- * Know what action to take

STOP. THINK. CONNECT. Tips:

- * Keep a clean machine
- * Own your online presence
- * Make passwords long and strong
- * Unique account, unique password
- * When in doubt, throw it out
- * Post only about others as you would have them post about you

The Stop.Think.Connect. Toolkit provides resources for all segments of the community.

Download the [Toolkit materials](#) that are right for you at <http://www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect-toolkit>. ★



VA, Affordable Act, and You

The Affordable Care Act, also known as the health care law, was created to expand access to coverage, control health care costs and improve health care quality and care coordination. The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs.

Three things you should know:

1. VA wants all Veterans to receive health care that improves their health and well-being.
2. If you are enrolled in VA health care, you don't need to take additional steps to meet the health care law coverage standards. The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs.
3. If you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time.

Veterans Enrolled in VA Health Care

The good news is that Veterans enrolled in VA health care programs have health coverage that meets the new health care law's standard. You do not have to take any additional steps to have health coverage.

Veterans Not Enrolled in VA Health Care

Veterans not currently enrolled in VA health care program can apply for enrollment at any time.

Family Members

VA offers health care benefits for certain family members of Veterans through programs such as the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) and the Spina Bifida program. Your family members who are not enrolled in a VA health care program should use the [Marketplace](#) to get coverage.

Additional Health Care Law Information

We understand you may have questions about the health care law and how it might affect you and your family. We compiled [basic information about the health care law](#) to help you make informed decisions about your health care.

For more information regarding the health care law and your VA health care, call (877) 222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. or Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., eastern or visit <http://www.va.gov/health/aca/>. ★

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), which is a campaign to raise awareness about disability employment issues, and celebrate the different contributions made by America's workers with disabilities. The 2013 theme is *Because We Are Equal to the Task*.

There is a section on the US Department of Labor's website, under the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), that offers information specific to Veterans. When America's ill, wounded, and injured Veterans return home, they need and deserve our respect and support to help them lead full, productive lives so they can continue to contribute to society.

The ODEP supports a number of initiatives to help returning Service Members with disabilities learn about the training and employment opportunities available. There are also educational resources available to help employers hire and support wounded warriors.

The Disability Status Report from the Cornell University website indicates that 1 in 10 working age persons (21-64) have a disability and nearly one in five (18.4%) of civilian veterans ages 21-64 have a VA service connected disability.

For more information, visit

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Veterans.htm>. ★

Troops to Teachers

The purpose of Troops to Teachers is to assist eligible military and reserve personnel transition to a new career as public school teachers in schools serving students from low-income families. A network of state offices provide counseling, referral and placement assistance. Often this includes evaluating participants' educational and work background and providing information about state teacher licensure requirements, schools of education and alternative pathways to licensure. Participants may also be eligible for financial assistance to help pay for the cost of teacher licensure.

For more information, visit www.proudtoserveagain.com or contact a Troops to Teachers Adviser at info@troopstoteachers.net or by calling (800) 438-6851. ★

Saving for Retirement at Each Stage of Life

By James Lander, *Military Saves Director*

No matter how old you are, saving for retirement should be a top priority. While knowing how much you will need to live a comfortable retirement and saving to reach that goal is the key, here are some quick tips for saving for retirement during each stage of life.

If You Are A Saver In Your 20's

- Save at Your Workplace – Starting early is one of the best ways to save for retirement. You have many years to weather short-term market fluctuations and to gain the maximum benefit from the power of compounding. Don't have a workplace savings account? The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a great option for federal government employees because they earn a matching contribution from the federal government.

If You Are A Saver In Your 30's

- Plan for how much you will need to save with the Retirement Calculator.
- As you advance in rank and your pay grade increases, consider gradually increasing the percentage you contribute toward your retirement.
- Consider expanding your retirement portfolio to include at work or outside of work savings options.

If You Are A Saver In Your 40's

- Create a spending plan to manage expenses and calculate how much you will need to save for retirement. Saving for retirement should be a priority.
- Pay off as much debt as possible.
- Consider increasing retirement contributions.
- Address any life changes that could impact your retirement plan.

If You Are A Saver In Your 50's or above

- Continue to work and save – at age 50, you can make "catch-up contributions" — an extra amount, beyond the normal limits, which you can make to tax-deferred retirement plans.
- Review your accounts to learn when and how you can withdraw money from your accounts, and make sure you are on target with your savings to last your through retirement.
- Estimate how much you will receive from Social Security and determine the age you should apply for Social Security benefits. Waiting a few years can add up to greater payouts from Social Security. Decide when you should start receiving social security benefits.
- Find ways to reduce your spending so that you can live within your means during retirement.

Need help finding ways to save?

Take the Military Saves pledge to make a commitment to yourself to save and receive emails and/or text messages to keep you motivated.

For more information, visit
www.militarysaves.org.

Military Saves, a component of America Saves and a partner in the Department of Defense's Financial Readiness Campaign, is a research-based social marketing campaign to motivate, support, and encourage military families to save money and build wealth.★



Contact Fort Family

Toll-Free: (866) 345-8248

Email: help@fortfamily.org



Moving Forward—Overcoming Life's Challenges

Moving Forward was created by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Mental Health Services in partnership with the Department of Defense National Center for Telehealth and Technology as part of a coordinated public health initiative to help Veterans and Service Members who are having difficulties.

Moving Forward is a free, on-line educational and life coaching program that teaches Problem Solving skills to help you to better handle life's challenges. It is designed to be especially helpful for Veterans, Military Service Members and their families. However, Moving Forward teaches skills that can be useful to anyone with stressful problems.

Does stress affect your performance? Learn how time pressure can make it hard to complete a simple task.

Is your brain overloaded? This game demonstrates how brain overload can limit your ability to remember important details.

How stressed are you? This 10 question quiz will evaluate your stress level based on your responses.

Simple steps to solve your problems. Learn about the four steps to successful problem solving.

Relaxation Exercises. Relaxation exercises can help you prepare to start overcoming life's challenges.

Visit <http://www.startmovingforward.org/>. ★

FREE Tutoring for Military Families

Thanks to the Department of Defense, K-12 students in military families have FREE access to expert tutors, anytime day or night with Tutor.com for Military Families. That means that kids can have LIVE one-on-one tutoring for almost any subject, including algebra, physics, chemistry, English, history, and more – all the way up to AP level, all school year long.

So don't let back to school time get you down, and don't let algebra stress you out! Sign up for your free Tutor.com account at www.tutor.com/military to get started with an expert tutor right away! ★

Connecting with Family Programs and Services

The Army Reserve Family Program (ARFP) is dedicated to education, training, awareness, outreach, information, referral and follow-up. The ARFP website www.arfp.org is your one-stop shop to get connected with Army Reserve family support information and resources.

Army Strong Community Centers

Provide resources and support to ALL branches of the Military, Veterans, Retirees and their Families in the community closest to where they live.

Fort Family Outreach and Support

Provide Family Crisis Assistance, available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Child and Youth and School Services (CYSS)

Provide support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities.

School Support Services

Work with educators to increase their understanding of the military lifestyle, deployment cycle, and school transition issues and their potential impact on the social, emotional, and academic well-being of Army Reserve children and youth.

Survivor Outreach Services (SOS)

Provide services and support to survivors.

Family Strong Magazine

Distributed free of charge to members of the United States Army Reserve.

For more information, visit www.arfp.org. ★

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families.

For more information, visit redcross.org or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross). ★