



# Army Strong Community Center

Connecting Soldiers, Families, & Communities



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN BRISTOL, CT

## Summer Heat Illness



Your body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating just isn't enough. Your body temperature can rise to dangerous levels and you can develop a heat illness. Most heat illnesses occur from staying out in the heat too long.

Exercising too much for your age and

physical condition are also factors. Older adults, young children and those who are sick or overweight are most at risk. Drinking fluids to prevent dehydration, replenishing salt and minerals, and limiting time in the heat can help.

**Heatstroke:** a life-threatening illness in which body temperature may rise above 106° F in minutes; symptoms include dry skin, rapid, strong pulse and dizziness.

**Heat exhaustion:** an illness that can precede heatstroke; symptoms include heavy sweating, rapid breathing and a fast, weak pulse.

**Heat cramps:** muscle pains or spasms that happen during heavy exercise.

**Heat rash** - skin irritation from excessive sweating.

For more information, visit

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html).

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OFFICE HOURS  
Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm





# ARMY RESERVE FAMILY PROGRAMS

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## Bristol Boys in WW I

### The Yankee Division and the Battle of Seicheprey

Monday, August 4, 2014 | 1:00 PM  
Bristol Public Library  
5 High Street | Bristol, CT 06010

Hosted by Bob Montgomery, Bristol Press Columnist and City Historian. The story of the Bristol Soldiers of the Yankee Division and the first encounter of American & German Troops in WW I.

For more information or to register, call the Bristol Public Library at (860) 584-7787 Ext 2023.

## Military Family Support Group

Tuesday, August 5, 2014 | 6:30PM – 8:00 PM  
Armed Forces Reserve Center  
375 Smith Street | Middletown, CT 06457

Support Group hosted by the CT National Guard Service Member and Family Support Center. For more information, call (800) 858-2677.

## US Family Health Plan Q & A Sessions

Wednesday, August 6, 2014 | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
Wednesday, August 27, 2014 | 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
Army Strong Community Center  
111 North Main Street | Bristol, CT 06010

The US Family Health Plan Q&A Sessions are for Military Retirees, Family Members of Active Duty Service Members (i.e. Deploying), and recently Reintegrated Active Duty. Come speak with a representative of US Family Health Plans, a TRICARE Prime option, to make sure you have the health coverage for you and your Family.

For more information, contact ASCC Bristol at (860) 584.6257 or (860) 584.6258.

## PTSD Discussion Group

Tuesday, August 19, 2014 | 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Army Strong Community Center  
111 North Main Street | Bristol, CT 06010

The PTSD Discussion Group is for Service Members and their Families. Readjustment counselor-led discussion group to help Service Members, Veterans and Family Members recognize and be aware of health issues that can occur with reintegration, with a focus on the warning signs of PTSD and depression.

### Family Members are invited to attend

5:00 PM—6:30 PM

### Service Members / Veterans

6:30 PM—8:00 PM

Contact ASCC Bristol at (860) 584.6257 or (860) 584.6258 to register by noon the day before the event; however, walk-ins are welcome up until 7:00 PM the night of the group.

## Bristol ½ Marathon & Relay Race

### To benefit Fisher House Connecticut

Sunday, August 17, 2014 | 8:00 AM  
Kid's Fund Run begins at 9:00 AM  
Healthtrax  
842 Clark Avenue | Bristol, CT 06010

The Bristol Half Marathon and Relay benefits Fisher House CT and the Veterans and Military Families of CT. Join Fisher House Connecticut, Bristol Firefighters Local 773, and the American Legion Post 2 for a challenging Half Marathon and Relay Race in Bristol.

For more information or to register, go to [www.BristolHalfMarathonandRelay.org](http://www.BristolHalfMarathonandRelay.org).



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## Service Providers Available at ASCC Bristol

### American Legion Department Service Officer

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday | 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### Vet Center Readjustment Counselor

Every Friday Morning | 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

### Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Service Officer

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday | 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

### Hero 2 Hired Employment Specialist

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday | 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

For more information or to register, contact ASCC  
Bristol at (860) 584.6257 or (860) 584.6258.

## The Stigma of PTSD and its Success in Treatment Blocking

By Jose E. Crego MSW, LADC

The truth is no active duty, reserve or national guardsman wants to hear you have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The general consensus is that this diagnosis affects one's ability to advance in rank, gain access to certain types of schools, etc. Ironically, it is one's behavior, not one's diagnosis that gets in the way.

I would go into what PTSD is clinically, but this is not intended to be some type of scholarly article, rather a conversation about getting help before it gets too late. So instead let's take a look at some of the things our loved ones notice that may be different; after all it's with them that we drop our guard, relax the game face, etc. The first thing noticed is that John/Jill just wants to stay home after the last deployment, if one were to ask the vet the response would be I feel safe home, I have nothing in common with those people. This is isolation, a common but often unhealthy way of dealing with a traumatic experience.

Some may also notice that the vet is very irritable; the slightest thing sets him or her off. There is a lot of brain stuff that is going on for this to happen but in a nut shell; no one turned off the "I have to be on constant alert to stay alive" switch. Scientifically speaking there is permanent change to the limbic system of our brain from being constantly on guard, leaving the irritability just under the skin. This is called hyper vigilance. There is also a desire in the vet to make the "bad thoughts" and nightmares go away, so alcohol and drugs do a good job at this till they themselves get in the way of day to day life. There are a few others things that go on but these are the most commonly noticed by loved ones and those closest to the combat vet, often times before he or she is ever aware of it.

The bad news is no one can wipe away the bad memories or change the outcome of a situation. However, there is good news, if someone is willing to take the steps necessary to seek help, the negative consequences of one's actions due not understanding what is going on in your head do not have to happen. This work leads to a better home life and productive military and/or civilian career. Don't let the stigma with PTSD, anxiety, depression or any other mental illness get in the way of your treatment. There are many places you can go that treat your records with privacy. One of these places is your local Vet Center, get the help you and your family need today, it's as easy as talking to someone.

## ASCC Bristol Suggestion Box

The ASCC Bristol Staff welcomes your suggestions about the types of services and programs you would find beneficial. We want to be able to provide articles in the newsletter that you would find helpful and host speaker forums on topics that are relevant to you and your Family.

To submit a suggestion, email Donna Dognin at [donna.m.dognin.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:donna.m.dognin.ctr@mail.mil) or Sandy Hoffman at [sandra.l.hoffman12.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:sandra.l.hoffman12.ctr@mail.mil).



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## Did you know . . . US Family Health Plan?

**Submitted by Darrell Hutchinson, Sr., Health Benefits Consultant, US Family Health Plan**

The US Family Health Plan is a specially legislated TRICARE option within the military health system. US Family Health Plan offers TRICARE Prime, a managed care program that provides comprehensive coverage.

US Family Health Plan's roots are in the Military Health System; *we are not a commercial insurance company*. In this portion of the TRICARE North region (Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) the US Family Health Plan is administered by Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers, which has a respected history for over 25 years.

The plan features member Primary Care Physician choice with no deductibles and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions. As of January 2014 a vision plan at no additional cost for all is included in members' benefits.

For dependents of active duty personnel and retirees with Medicare Part B, there are **no enrollment fees and no co-payments** (except for prescriptions).

You're eligible for the plan if you are in any of the following categories:

- Husbands, wives and eligible family members (children must be unmarried and up to age 21, or till the 23rd birthday if a full-time student) of active duty uniformed services members, including activated (30 days or more consecutive) Guard and Reserve service members.
- Uniformed Service Retirees, their husbands and wives, and qualified unmarried children including National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) retirees and their eligible family members.
- Un-remarried husbands and wives and qualified unmarried children of deceased retired service members.
- Eligible family members of deceased or retired National Ocean Service members

For more information or to learn where and when TRICARE briefings are scheduled near you, visit [www.usfhp.net](http://www.usfhp.net) or call (800) 241-4848.





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## Back-to-School Safety Tips

You can help protect your children from the most frequent kinds of school-related injuries by following these practical, proven tips. When parents talk about school safety these days, they're usually referring to the surge in violence at schools. But research shows that school-age children are actually nine times more likely to sustain an unintentional injury — whether on the playground or in school — than to be the victim of violence while at school. In fact, an estimated 2.2 million children ages 14 and under are injured in school-related accidents each year, according to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. Accidents can be prevented if parents are on the lookout for potential hazards. To help you keep your kids free from harm, here are some safety tips from SAFE KIDS, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- 1. Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop.** Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- 2. Walk the route with your child beforehand.** Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around.
- 3. Teach your child never to talk to strangers** or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your children don't know well or don't trust.
- 4. Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend, or neighbor.**
- 5. Teach your kids — whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school — to obey all traffic signals,** signs and traffic officers. Remind them to be extra careful in bad weather.
- 6. When driving kids, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible.** Don't leave until they are in the schoolyard or building.
- 7. If your child bikes to school, make sure he wears a helmet** that meets one of the safety standards (U.S. CPSC, Snell, ANSI, ASTM, or Canadian). Research indicates that a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.
- 8. If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure she wears sturdy shoes, a helmet, kneepads and elbow pads.** Children under age 12 should not ride motorized scooters, according to recent recommendations from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- 9. Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early,** stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars and avoid the driver's blind spot.
- 10. Remind your children to stay seated at all times** and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding. When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- 11. Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes** or pick up objects, as the driver may not see them before starting to move.
- 12. Be sure that your child knows his or her home phone number** and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult and how to call 911 for emergencies.

For more information, visit [www.rd.com/advice/parenting/back-to-school-safety-tips/2](http://www.rd.com/advice/parenting/back-to-school-safety-tips/2).



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## Tips for a Waste-Less School Year

Choose and use a wide assortment of products made from recycled products, such as pencils made from old blue jeans; binders made from old shipping boxes; and many types of recycled paper products. You can also reuse items like refillable pens, rechargeable batteries, and scrap paper for notes. Using recycled-content and reusing supplies prevents waste and saves you money.

Before starting a new school year, sort through your materials. Many supplies can be reused or recycled. Notebooks, folders, and binders can be reused. Recycle unwanted papers and reuse your old folders and binders. Share your used books with friends, relatives, or younger schoolchildren.

Waste from packaging accounts for more than 30 percent of all the waste generated each year. Use school supplies wrapped with minimal packaging; use compact or concentrated products; or buy products that come in bulk sizes. Save packaging, colored paper, egg cartons and other items for arts and crafts projects. Look for other ways you can reduce the amount of packaging you throw away!

Many schools reuse text books to save money and reduce waste. Covering your textbooks with cut-up grocery or shopping bags helps reduce waste and keeps your books in good condition. Be creative—use markers or colored pencils to give your covers unique and fun designs. Paper grocery bags are also great for wrapping packages.

Use nontoxic products, inks and art supplies, such as batteries with less mercury, vegetable-based inks, and water-based paints.

Use and maintain durable products. Sturdy backpacks and notebooks can be reused for many years, which helps reduce the amount of broken items tossed away each year. Put long-lasting, high-quality tires on your car and bicycle. Be sure to keep your tires properly inflated.

If you bring your lunch to school, package it in reusable containers instead of disposable ones, and carry them in a reusable plastic or cloth bag, or lunch box. Bring drinks in a thermos instead of disposable bottles or cartons.

If you buy lunch, take and use only what you need: One napkin, one ketchup packet, one salt packet, one pepper packet, one set of flatware. And, remember to recycle your cans and bottles.

If you drive to school, try carpooling or take public transportation. Get your parents' permission to try walking, biking, or skating. You can prevent wasted fuel, reduce air pollution, and decrease traffic in your community.

Borrow or rent your decorations and supplies for parties, dances, and proms. If you buy these supplies, try adopting a theme that can be used from year-to-year, so that you can reuse your decorations and supplies.

Pass it on. Share the message with your friends and schoolmates. Waste less by reducing, reusing, and recycling. Volunteer for, or start, an environmental club or recycling project in your school.

Work with your teachers and friends to find ways to encourage everyone in your community to make waste reduction a part of their everyday lives. You can also look for unique ways to make your school more waste-free, such as starting a school composting project.

For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/osw/wycd/funfacts/school.htm](http://www.epa.gov/osw/wycd/funfacts/school.htm).





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## Building a Relationship with Your Child's School

Even if you relocate often or are temporarily deployed, there are ways you can build a relationship with the school and your child's teachers and help your child perform as well as he or she can. Your relationship with the school will benefit the school and demonstrate to your child and the school staff the importance you attach to education. The following tips can help you build a strong relationship with your child's school.

**Meet the staff.** Make a special effort to meet your child's teacher. If your child is younger, consider accompanying him or her to school on the first day to say hello. If your child is starting at a new school, arrange a meeting with the teacher to discuss programs, texts and the curriculum.

**Be aware of school policies.** Keep on top of events by reading the parent group newsletter, the school bulletin board, the school handbook and flyers that your child brings home. If you are away from home and the school has a website, log on regularly for updates and information. Be sure to understand the school's calendar and policies on what to do in bad weather, if your child is sick or forgets lunch.

**Attend events.** Try to attend back-to-school nights, open houses, school fairs and other programs to stay connected. They are excellent opportunities to chat with your child's teachers and meet other school staff members.

**Volunteer at school.** As your schedule permits, try to volunteer at your child's school. By participating, you can help improve the quality of school life. There are ways to help even if you cannot be at school during the day. You might help other parents organize a weekend fundraiser for new playground equipment or discuss solutions to a high school gang problem. You could offer to coach a sports team on weekends, chaperone the school dance or share your deployment experience as a guest speaker in

your child's classroom once you return home. You can even help your child's classroom teacher by doing volunteer work at home, such as coordinating class parties or assembling student projects.

**Join the parent-teacher group.** Try to attend meetings of the school's parent-teacher organization. These groups provide information about educational planning; keep parents informed about testing and changes in district policies; and raise funds for the schools. If your child's school doesn't have a parent-teacher group, contact the national PTA or the national PTO network and other interested parents to find out how to start one.

**Attend school board meetings.** By attending important school board meetings, you can voice concerns - and praise - to the school board, the organization that oversees the school district.

For more information, visit [www.militaryonesource.mil/k-12-and-college-education](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/k-12-and-college-education).

## Key to Managing Your Retirement Pay

### Maintaining Your myPay Account

The key to effective day-to-day management of your retirement pay is creating and maintaining a myPay account. myPay is the most important tool for managing your pay. The email address you enter into myPay will also become the primary way of staying in touch with you and keeping you current. For retirees and annuitants, there is nothing more important than creating, using and maintaining the security of your myPay account.

For more information, visit [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil) or call (800) 321-1080, Option 1.

