It’s Motivational Monday and this is your weekly ACS Update, all the Soldier and Family Readiness news you can use to support the personnel in your organization. Today’s Motivational Monday quote for our ACS team is from John Mark Green who wrote, “You are not the darkness you endured. You are the light that refused to surrender.” What a beautiful reminder for all of us who experienced pandemic related challenges during this past year. I hope you’ll consider sharing the quote with your team. As a reminder, to make this rather long weekly document easier to read, new information is shared in bold font.

Community Information Services

New to Lawton Fort Sill and wondering where to turn next? Let an ACS Specialist at Fort Sill’s Army Community Service help you. We’ll help you complete an Intake, Assessment, and Prioritized Service Plan that can be resourced right here in our local community. The Specialist will then help you access all the resources necessary to complete your Prioritized Service Plan, whether that’s at ACS, on-post, in the surrounding community or through a National Resource such as Military One Source. And they’ll regularly check-in with you until all the goals on your Prioritized Service Plan are achieved. So whether you are trying to find your way around Lawton Fort Sill, want to borrow a few things from the Lending Closet, need help finding Spouse Employment, want to join in on one of the New Parent Support virtual playgroups, or need a second set of eyes on your Family’s Spend Plan, contact an ACS Specialist at 580-442-4916. We are here with Real Live Solutions for Successful Army Living!

Lawton Public Library hosts their Movers and Shakers group for children 3-6 years old each Tuesday at 10:00am and their Wiggles & Crawlers group for children 0-3 years old each Thursday at 10:00am. Both groups focus on early literacy through age appropriate story, song, dance, rhymes and fingerplays. Both groups are currently offered virtually through the Library’s Facebook Page. Learn more of the amazing activities offered at the Lawton Public Library by downloading their newsletter [https://www.lawtonok.gov/sites/default/files/document-slide/2020-12/December%20Newsletter%20Revised.pdf](https://www.lawtonok.gov/sites/default/files/document-slide/2020-12/December%20Newsletter%20Revised.pdf)

The American Red Cross is offering a virtual Stress Management and Relaxation Technique Resiliency Workshop on 19 December. Topics of this interactive session include multi-tasking, working from home, supporting children, wellness plans and much, much more. To RSVP for the workshop, or for more information, e-mail laura.arias@redcross.org.

Nye Library hosts a Story Time each Wednesday at 11:00 AM CST. This early literacy program is for pre-readers. Normally they offer a movement activity, story, craft, and game. To support social distancing they currently only offer the craft. They hope to resume normal story time operations in the future! There is a 7 family limit and they rotate families through within the hour time frame. Please be patient as they clean between participants. Mask/face covering are required in the library (except for children under 6yrs and/or for health reasons).
USO Inc. is hosting an amazing line up with MVP Holidays. The USO MVP Holiday Special, broadcasting on the USO’s Facebook and YouTube platforms later in the month, features virtual visits with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley; Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end & SuperBowl Champion Rob Gronkowski; NFL Hall of Famer & SuperBowl Champion Terry Bradshaw, UFC Hall of Famer Royce Gracie and other pro-athletes engaging with service members around the world along with special appearances by Kristen Bell, Norman Reedus and Al Roker. Tony Award winning star of stage and film Idina Menzel headlines the virtual special with a performance featuring holiday and iconic Broadway tunes. Also available this month; Movies & Mysteries, You’re Leaving…. Again, and two Mastering Linked In webinars. Find the full line up at https://www.uso.org/mvp.

Christmas in the Park, Nov 27, 2020 - Dec 31, Ackley Park, Elk City, OK. Visit Elk City’s Ackley Park this holiday season to celebrate Christmas in the Park, one of the best light displays in Oklahoma. This event features millions of lights and hundreds of festive displays every night, as well as plenty of Christmas music. On Friday and Saturday nights, bring the kids out to visit Santa’s gift shop, ride the Candy Cane Train and go round on the Centennial Carousel. Enhance your tour of the lights with a ride on the Double Decker Bus or the Trolley. In addition to all the fun at Christmas in the Park, go to the Cub Scouts to get a free cup of hot cocoa to warm you up. There will also be special appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus. https://www.visitelkcity.com/

Holiday in the Park, Lawton Oklahoma which runs dusk to dawn now until New Years Eve in Elmer Thomas Park will feature a Live Nativity December 18-20, 6:00-8:00PM. Learn more at https://www.facebook.com/holidayintheparklawtonok/

Chickasha Festival of Lights is an amazing display running now until December 31st in Shannon Springs Park. Learn more on their website https://chickashafestivaloflight.org/

The Living Christmas Tree, is presented as a gift to the community from First Baptist Church, Lawton - Fort Sill, Oklahoma by a 100 voice choir, full orchestra and drama cast. This year’s event is slated to take place on 13 December. Learn more on their Facebook Page at https://www.facebook.com/LCTLawtonFortSill/

Employment Readiness

Those seeking employment locally will want to check out Oklahoma Job Match through the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission website https://oesc.ok.gov/. The website which features an OSEC Virtual Agent to guide you through the process of filing a claim, applying for unemployment, as well as exploring available jobs in all fields and a host of training resources. Want to connect with employers seeking Veterans and Military Family Members? There’s a section for that as well.

Military Spouse Education & Career Opportunities (MySECO) is hosting some fabulous virtual events in December including:

- 10 December, 2pm CST, Career Coach Live on creating and maintaining a positive image
• 15 December, 12pm CST, MSEP LinkedIn Live with ESS/Proximity Learning
• 17 December, 2pm CST, MSEP Partner Connect with Skillstorm

The Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program at Fort Sill is also an excellent resource for MilSpouse job-seekers. Check out their weekly virtual offerings on their Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/FortSillSFLTAP/

The USO Pathfinder Program on Fort Sill, also serves MilSpouses as well as transitioning service members. You’ll find information and announcements from the USO Pathfinder Program on their social media page https://www.facebook.com/USOOklahoma/

Transition is nearly a constant with Military Life. Military Spouses, whether transitioning into, through, or out of Military Life are encouraged to enroll in DoD’s MySTeP. Created by military spouses, MySTeP is a self-directed, online learning tool that guides military spouses through the available resources, benefits, programs and tools for your entire military journey https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/8656

Exceptional Family Member Program

The DoD Exceptional Family Member Program launched has an on-line tool, EFMP & Me, that provides 24/7 support to military families with special needs. Through tailored checklists, EFMP & Me users can navigate services, connect with resources and advocate for themselves or a family member with special needs. Visit EFMP & Me https://efmpandme.militaryonesource.mil

EFMP Social Connections, Tuesday 17 November at 2:30pm. Exceptional Families are invited to come together for support, resources, great conversations and connections. Call 442-4916 or ask to join the EFMP group at www.Facebook.com/FortSillACS to register for this event.

Family Advocacy Program

The New Parent Support Program telehealth services are a hit! Join our Home Visitors for weekly activities geared just for pre-school milkids and their favorite big person including:
• Virtual Exploring the Park, December 15th, at 9:30am
• Baby Massage group every Wednesday at 11:00am
• Parent Table Talk, December 17th during nap time, 1:30 pm

Military relationships need to be as resilient as the people in them. Look to Military OneSource for proven resources to help you strengthen your bond and navigate common relationship challenges. https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support

NPSP is also asking you to Join their Home Visitors for a meetup to help celebrate our beloved Veterans from the comfort and safety of your home. We will be keeping our Veterans safe while showing them how much we love and honor them. This event includes a drive-thru craft kit pickup on Monday, Decem-
December 7th for you and your child to make beautiful holiday decorations for our beloved Veterans. Our Home Visitors will be safely passing out kits while you stay in your cars. Drop off details for completed crafts are to be determined so please follow our event on the Fort Sill Army Community Service FaceBook Page for more details. Registration is required to attend. Follow the Caravan Club, A Veterans Holiday Event on the Fort Sill Army Community Service FaceBook page for registration information.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has a searchable database of all recalls that have occurred due to safety concerns. Go to the website and type in the word “toy” for a full list of all toy recalls, or a specific toy you are considering for your child. https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls

Financial Readiness

Muscular Personal Financial Counselors can help Commanders, Service Members, and Family Members on everything from budgeting to investments to consumer protection issues. Fort Sill ACS is lucky enough to have 3 Personal Financial Counselors within our Financial Readiness Program. Learn more by downloading the program guide at https://finred.usalearning.gov/assets/downloads/FINRED-PFC-G.pdf or give us a call at 580-442-4916.

Mark your calendars now for the Fort Sill Financial Readiness Team’s virtual Credit Repair Workshop on 16 December, 10-11:30am CST. Credit is a part of who you are financially. Improving your credit score will not only help you qualify for loans when you need them, it will also keep your security clearance in good standing. Join the FRP team to learn what you can do, as a consumer, to improve your credit score. RSVP for the workshop by calling (580) 670-1932 or by e-mail at pfc2.sill.usa@zeiders.com

Many people have told us that one of the blessings in disguise of COVID-19 stay at home recommendations has been the amount of money they are saving. If you are experiencing that small blessing as well, the FRP team wants to encourage you to plug those savings into your emergency fund. Need more info? MilSpouse Money Mission has some great videos called “coffee shop tips” that might be able to point you in the right direction. Need a plan personalized to your family? Our Personal Financial Counselors at ACS are here to help at 580-442-4916.

Join the TSP Training and Liaison Specialists for engaging presentations and live Q&A sessions on TSP topics that matter the most to you. Free live webinars, held multiple times a week, are Ideal for all federal employees, uniform service members, agency/service representatives, military educators, and other parties that are interested in learning about the TSP. December webinars, available on tsp.gov/webinars (webinar password TSPweb), are as follows:

- 8 December, To Retirement & Beyond (Parts I & II)
- 9 December, TSP In-Service Withdrawals
- 9 December, TSP Investment Funds
- 10 December, New to TSP or Need a Refresher? Ask Away!
• 14 December, 2020: What has Changed at TSP?
• 15 December, TSP Contributions
• 16 December, TSP Post-Service Withdrawals
• 17 December, TSP Death Benefits

Fort Sill’s Financial Readiness Team is your one-stop-shop for financial training within your organization. Whether you are looking to inform your organization about TSPs, the Blended Retirement System, vehicle or home-buying, or debt reduction the FRP Team has you covered with 3 Personal Financial Counselors and the ability to tailor a virtual training to your organization’s specific needs. See the attached training request form for more information or contact FRP Manager, Ken Lewis, at 442-4916, kenneth.a.lewis4.civ@mail.mil to schedule your unit’s training session.

Non-Medical Counseling

Life can be challenging at times. Military life is no exception. That’s why Military Family Life Counseling services are free, anonymous, and available from the safety and comfort of your own home through either secure telephone or video call. Fort Sill has 8 adult and 16 child and youth MFLCs. To connect with an adult MFLC call us at 580-442-4916. To get connected with a child and youth MFLC call either ACS or Fort Sill’s Child and Youth Services School Liaison Office, Angelica Fleming at 580-442-2130 Learn more about this DoD funded program at https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling

Our Fort Sill assigned MFLCs are backed up 24/7 by Masters Level Counselors available through the Military One Source Non-Medical Counseling service which can be accessed at any time by calling 1-800-342-9647. So if you are feeling a little down reach out!

Relationship Help Made for the MilLife is right at your fingertips! Every relationship could use help from time to time. And military life adds its own unique set of challenges. Whether you’re a military couple looking to reinvigorate your bond, rebuild connections or retool your relationship skills whoever your "we" may be, we’re here to help and support you. Military OneSource can connect you to free expert guidance, support, tools and resources made with the military in mind, including:

- One-on-one relationship coaching, skill building or counseling.
- Love Every Day, a text-based tool for encouraging communication.
- Virtual resources, such as webinars and other e-learning.
- Relationship articles for every stage of the MilLife.

Join the thousands of people who have found more rewarding, more resilient relationships with information, guidance and expert help through Military OneSource. https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support

Relocation Readiness

If you’re new to the area and looking for the inside scoop on all that the state has to offer there’s no better place to start than the Travel OK website https://www.travelok.com/ Whether you are looking for shop-
ping, restaurants, fun things to do or places to stay the website, which is divided by region, not only offers insider recommendations you can save yourself a buck or two by checking out the deals and coupons section! Oh, did I mention the downloadable maps and brochures. Or the fact that they’ve got an app. Check it out!

The Fort Sill Lending Closet, full of regular household items available for loan, is now open through a “low-contact” process. If you are scheduled to PCS this winter please contact ACS immediately after you schedule your move with transportation. We’ll discuss your family needs, your timeframe to borrow the common household items we have in the lending closet, and then get the sanitized items packaged for a scheduled, curb side pick-up. Call us at 580-442-4916. Please note that all ACS services, including the Lending Closet, are available by appointment only. Call ahead to help us help you!

Soldier and Family Readiness

The Military Families Learning Network invites military family service providers and Cooperative Extension professionals to online professional development opportunities where they can exchange experiences, resources, and research to enhance professional impact and professional growth. MFLN will host several upcoming webinars for professionals providing services to Military Families. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are provided for most of MFLNs professional development webinars. Registration links are available on their website. Of particular note this month are:

- 8 Dec., 2020 Personal Finance Year in Review
- 16 Dec., Implementing Lifestyle & Performance Medicine
- 17 Dec., Plugged-In & Left Out: Creating Meaningful & Engaging Virtual Connections with Individuals with Disabilities

Sample SFRG SOPs are available on MilSuite. The SOPs were created with guidance from Army Directive 2019-17 (Changes the Family Readiness Group to the Soldier and Family Readiness Group Program); which establishes policy changes to fundraising, reporting, and informal funds activities for the Soldier and Family Readiness Group (SFRG) Program. Visit https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857725 to download the samples. Additionally, Fort Sill’s SJA offers a localized SFRG sample for Commanders. Commanders and SFRG Representatives are encouraged to contact their Brigade Legal Officer.

Family Care Plan Checklists and Forms are also available on MilSuite. A Family Care Plan prepares the Soldier and the family in advance for the Soldier’s deployment and reassures a deployed Soldier that everything is taken care of at home, minimizing family-related stress and enabling the Soldier to concentrate more fully on his/her mission." Visit https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857726

Survivor Outreach Services

Fort Sill’s Virtual Run for the Fallen will occur anytime between 21 November and 7 December at each participants location of choice. A limited edition T-shirt and stickers will be included in the price. For more information visit https://sill.armymwr.com/calendar/event/run-fallen-virtual-run/4751791/53863
Several organizations are currently making plans for National Wreaths Across America Day on 19 December. Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,100 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad including the Fort Sill National Cemetery. Learn more about how your unit or organization can volunteer for this amazing national event at [www.wreathsacrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org).

Thank you so much for your help in sharing the resources contained within this ACS Update with those who may benefit from it. I truly believe that Personal and Family Readiness are foundational to Resilience. Please take a minute to tell us how we’re doing and what else we might assist you with by filling out an [ICE comment card](https://www.ice.gov). That’s it for this week.

Optimism is a Force Multiplier! #AskACS
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