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TIME TO RECONNECT

For many of us summer is the time to reconnect and relax with family, to recreate favorite childhood memories and make new ones together. For many military families, summer can also signal a time for change, including a possible posting to a new province or community. As the Director of Military Family Services, the summer months also serve as an opportunity to reflect on some of the major accomplishments that have taken place in the first half of the year on behalf of military families. I recently had the pleasure of attending a number of events across the country, from the Moving Forward Conference in Calgary, to the expansion of the METSpouse spousal employment program in Toronto and most recently to the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association’s annual conference in St. John’s for the launch a new publication for school counsellors in Canada. In my travels from coast to coast, I have seen firsthand the effects of great partnership efforts and I am encouraged by what’s ahead for the remainder of the year.

In this issue of Kudos, I am pleased to share with you some great examples of collaboration between various organizations working with their communities and creating awareness and opportunities for military families. MFS recently brought together MFRC staff to discuss the issue of spousal employment as a learning opportunity for them to benefit from each other’s experiences, along with brainstorming sessions on what would enhance their current employment programs. This national dialogue could not have taken place without meaningful contributions from multiple organizations whose work and experience in the area of spousal employment help inform our efforts to better serve the military family constituency.

As the Director of Military Family Services my most important job is to ensure relevant and accessible programs and services exist to support military families. The assistance and support we provide here at MFS could not happen without the elaborate network of partners that have contributed to our success in assisting families with the challenges they face. There is still more work to be done and yardsticks to move forward, and I have full confidence that together we will continue to address the issues faced by military families.

Colonel Dan Harris
Director
Military Family Services
Over 60 participants, including 15 Wing staff, spouses, and Moose Jaw community members, gathered on March 8th to celebrate the 2017 International Women’s Day.

With a theme of “Be Bold for Change”, participants were treated to an interactive workshop by Master Learning Facilitator and mentor in the Coaching Association of Canada, Sue Schmidt. Sue shared valuable skills and tips for embracing and overcoming change, helping our community build strong and resilient members.

Over lunch, Major Riel “Guns” Erickson inspired and entertained with stories of being a military member, spouse, fighter pilot (only the 5th woman in Canada to hold that title) and new mother. Our very own 15 Wing Commander, Colonel Denis O’Reilly, spoke openly and honestly about the challenges women face in the Canadian Armed Forces, and the supports available to them.

The Moose Jaw MFRC and PSP, along with the entire 15 Wing Community are proud to celebrate the strengths and achievements of women in the military and those that provide the unwavering ‘Strength Behind the Uniform’.
SCHOOL COUNSELLORS WORKING WITH MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILIES: NEW RESOURCE FOR CANADIAN SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), in partnership with the Canadian Military and Veteran Families Leadership Circle, proudly announces the launch of a new bilingual publication for school counsellors in Canada. Part of a series of publications related to professions working with military and Veteran families, the school counsellors’ issue is the second in the series, following Family Physicians Working with Military Families released by the College of Family Physicians of Canada in November 2016. Subsequent issues will focus on other professions that frequently interact with Canadian Armed Forces military personnel, Veterans and their families.

School Counsellors Working with Military and Veteran Families raises awareness of the important roles and unique lifestyles of military and Veteran families that enrich schools, communities, and workplaces.

The publication assists school personnel in increasing their military literacy, and enabling increased support and inclusion of children and youth of military and Veteran families in the social, academic, and athletic lives of schools across Canada.

School Counsellors Working with Military and Veteran Families answers four key questions:

1. What is the military and Veteran lifestyle?

2. What resources are available to school counsellors to assist them in their work with children and youth of military and Veteran families?

3. How can school counsellors promote mental health and advocate for students of military and Veteran families in schools? and

4. How can school counsellors support classroom teachers in their work with students of military and Veteran families?

“CCPA proudly acknowledges the work of school counsellors in supporting students adapting to change and facing risks associated with a military lifestyle,”

said Dr. Natasha Caverley, CCPA President.
“There is growing recognition and acceptance that school counsellors are uniquely situated to advocate for these children and youth who are highly mobile, educated across multiple school systems, and multicultural in experience.”

“Military Family Services is honoured to be working with the CCPA in the development of this publication and in building awareness amongst school counsellors”,
says Colonel Dan Harris, Director of Military Family Services.

“School counsellors have an incredible ability to have a real impact on facilitating transitions for military children. The more we can educate and provide information about the uniqueness of military life to civilian professionals and service providers, the more we support military families.”

A strong advocate for mental health and wellness, CCPA seeks to support individuals of all ages, their loved ones, learning institutions, workplaces, and communities with military and Veteran families. For information or support related to the military or Veteran lifestyle, please contact the 24/7 Military Family Information Line at 1-800-866-4546, or 24/7 Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service Line at 1-800-268-7708.

Visit the CCPA website at [www.ccpa-accp.ca](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca), where you can search for a Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) in your region. Members of the public can also find authoritative information and related resources about the profession of counselling and psychotherapy by visiting CCPA’s public website, [www.talkingcanhelp.ca](http://www.talkingcanhelp.ca).

Left to Right:
Col (retd) Russell Mann, Special Advisor, The Vanier Institute of the Family; Dr Lorna Martin, President Emerita, CCPA; Nora Spinks, CEO, The Vanier Institute of the Family; Col Harris, Director Military Family Services; Dr Kim Hollihan, Deputy CEO, CCPA
Coming together as a massed choir for the first time, the Canadian Military Wives Choirs (CMWC) will perform at the Invictus Games Toronto 2017 Opening Ceremony at the Air Canada Centre on Saturday September 23, 2017.

A coordinated effort involving hundreds of hours of volunteer work and fundraising, approximately 200 military wives and serving female Canadian Armed Forces members from 10 CMWC choir chapters from across Canada will link hearts and voices at the Invictus Games Opening Ceremony. The choir will be performing with British Soprano Laura Wright.

The Canadian Military Wives Choirs movement began in Canada in the fall of 2013 in Ottawa and was based on the tremendous success of the Military Wives Choirs movement in the United Kingdom. Since then, the group has grown from just 14 ladies arriving at the inaugural rehearsal to nearly 250 members coast to coast across Canada at 10 Canadian Armed Forces Bases, often rehearsing at Base/Wing MFRCs and at local chapels.

“The CMWC is proud to support Canada’s recovering service personnel and to add their voice to help highlight the issues that affect them and their families,”

says Brenda Dunne, Association President.

“We are very excited to form as one combined choir for the first time and to be able to perform together at Invictus Games will be a wonderful experience for all.”

More information about CMWC Choirs can be found on their website at www.canadianmilitarywiveschoirs.com.
Yorkville University knows well the benefit of a diverse student population made up of people who have worked hard in their careers, have had varied experiences and think critically—attributes exemplified by Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel and their families.

“The way our programs are structured we are able to accommodate a highly skilled group of people who don’t have the same pathways to traditional universities,”

explained Jana Comeau, Yorkville University’s Dean of the Bachelor of Business Administration in New Brunswick.

“We see military personnel as highly skilled and being able to bring a perspective into the classroom that is different from current students and the more perspective you bring into the classroom the deeper the learning for everybody.”

As a means of honouring CAF members and their families and encouraging them to study with the school, Yorkville offers a bursary in the amount of 25 per cent of tuition to all currently serving and recently retired members. Additionally, families of CAF members and recently retired members are offered a bursary of 15 per cent of tuition.

Yorkville University is a Canadian University with operations in New Brunswick, Ontario and British Columbia. Its Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology, Master of Education in Adult Education, Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Bachelor of Business Administration degrees are offered entirely online, which means military members and their families can study on their own time to complete their degree without the worry that an all too common geographical transfer would interrupt them.

To find out more about Yorkville University and its programs visit: http://bit.ly/1nTGLoC.
The third annual Military and Veteran Families Leadership Circle hosted 60 leaders from 38 organizations on Monday, 23 January 2017 engaging with members to create resources to develop military literacy among professional associations and community organizations that will have a positive impact on the military and Veteran family experience. Co-chaired by the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs Canada, and the Vanier Institute of the Family, the Leadership Circle further serves to enhance community capacity to serve the military family constituency in Canada.

This year, participants were grouped together by area of expertise and interest, including Education, Employment, Health Care, Mental Health, Research and Transitions & Outreach. This facilitated discussion and allowed participants to look at opportunities for developing resources and research to further support military families.

“The military lifestyle is unique and full of adventure. The effectiveness of our military members is underpinned by their strong, resilient, and proud military families who remain that way due to the crucial support provided by the types of organizations represented here,” said Deputy Commander Military Personnel Command, Major General Wayne Eyre who co-hosted the day’s event, along with founding partners the Vanier Institute of the Family and Veterans Affairs Canada.
COMMUNITY

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM

The summer camp season is quickly approaching and Military Family Services (MFS) is pleased to announce that the Support Our Troops (SOT) Summer Camp Program has officially launched for the 2017 season.

Over 2,000 children have benefitted from the SOT Summer Camp program since its inception in 2008. Through the gracious support of corporate and individual donors, the program continues to expand and create additional opportunities for Canadian Armed Forces members and their families.

The SOT Summer Camp Program is a unique program that offers military families the financial support to provide their children with a one week summer camp experience. Summer camp can be a rewarding experience for children and offers an opportunity to build life skills, long-lasting friendships, and enduring memories. Children of military members often face unique circumstances including the prolonged absence of a parent, ill or injured parents, or even the loss of a parent. The SOT Summer Camp Program is a wonderful way for parents to give back to their children and provide much needed respite for their families.

Eligible members include:

- Dependants of deceased Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members;
- Dependants of ill/injured members of the CAF, being supported through the JPSU/IPSCs;
- Dependants of CAF members who are currently deployed, on a prolonged course/training program, or scheduled for deployment, or serving away from their families; and
- Special needs dependants and/or siblings of special needs dependants of CAF members.

Families with eligible children may be reimbursed up to $700 for a week-long residential camp, up to $400 for a week-long day camp, or $1,100 for a week-long residential or day camp for a special needs child.

RECOGNIZING INNOVATION

The barriers to access for mental health care can pile up fast. Time, geography, cost, and stigma still hold many people back from seeking treatment. Nova Scotia’s Strongest Families Institute builds evidence-based distance education programs to make it easier for children and families to access support when and where they need it.

The not-for-profit organization runs bilingual programs for children and teens between the ages of 3 and 17 to help them overcome struggles such as anxiety and behavioural difficulties, using a mix of video, manuals and regular telephone-support coaching sessions. To date, the Strongest Families Institute team has provided support to military families with this wonderful program across 14 different communities.

Recently Strongest Families founders Dr. Patrick McGrath and Dr. Patricia Pottie have been awarded the Governor General’s Innovation Award for their great work. On behalf of Military Families Services we would like to extend our congratulations on their recent award.

Credit: MCpl Vincent Carbonneau, Rideau Hall, © OSGG, 2017.
MENTAL HEALTH WEBINAR SERIES FOR MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES

Two partners in the Canadian Military and Veteran Families Leadership Circle, the Trenton Military Family Resource Centre and the Canadian Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (CAMFT) have teamed up to develop a mental health webinar series called “Understanding military families: Building Strength and Resiliency.”

This webinar series funded by a grant awarded by the Bell True Patriot Love Fund will have Registered Marriage and Family Therapists from the CAMFT present mental health workshops to the local military and veteran community and to be webcast to military families across Canada and internationally. The first workshop in the series on April 22nd and webcast from the Trenton Military Resource Centre highlighted registered marriage and family therapist William Corrigan who presented: “Getting Through a Crisis without Making It Worse: Building Distress Tolerance”. In this workshop, participants learned skills to cope and gain control over distressing thoughts to regain perspective and get on with the tasks of daily living from a place of strength and control.

The latest webinar presentation in the series is “Fostering Confidence: Solutions for Overcoming Fear & Anxiety” was held on May 27th. Presenter Shyamala Kiru taught participants parenting skills to increase confidence and reduce negative feelings for kids coping with anxiety.

These workshops are free for the military family community and can be attended in-person or virtually; however, registration is required.

Stay tuned for more workshops hosted by the Trenton MFRC that will share the skills and knowledge of marriage and family therapy professionals to assist military family members build mental health and wellness. Upcoming series dates will be announced at: https://trentonmfrc.ca/news-events/event/family-focus-speaker-series/
CALIAN EXPANDS MILITARY FAMILY DOCTOR NETWORK TO COMOX AND MAINLAND BC

On February 8, 2017, Calian Group Ltd., in collaboration with Military Family Services, announced the expansion of its Military Family Doctor Network to Comox and Mainland, B.C. The network was established in January 2016 to help improve access to family physicians for spouses and dependents of active serving Canadian Armed Forces members.

“At Calian, we saw an opportunity to improve the situation leveraging our Primacy network of medical clinics and were honoured to be able to do our small part to support these families,” said Scott Murray, VP of Health Services at Calian.

The Military Family Doctor Network helps military families gain access to a family doctor practicing at Calian’s Primacy Clinics located in Loblaw grocery stores across Canada (including Real Canadian Superstore®, Zehrs®, Loblaws® and No Frills®). The network leverages more than 400 family physicians practicing at over 140 Primacy clinics as well as other non-Primacy participating physicians and clinics in areas of high need.

The Military Family Doctor Network began as a pilot in Winnipeg in July 2015 and launched nationally in January 2016. It now operates in 10 regions nation-wide and serves over 400 patients in more than 180 military families.

“The Canadian Armed Forces is incredibly thankful for the support and interest demonstrated by Calian in rallying behind our serving members and their families,” said Major-General Wayne Eyre, Deputy Commander Military Personnel Command.

“This partnership is having a very positive effect and making a real difference for families who are having difficulty finding a family physician as they relocate from one community to another.”

“Supporting the families of our military members is something we are extremely proud to do,” said Kevin Ford, President and CEO of Calian.

“A significant number of our employees and independent contractors are former military or spouses of active and former military. We owe a great deal of our success to the many men and women of military background that we have been fortunate to work with over the years. This program is simply a logical extension of our 25-year relationship with the Department of National Defence.”

Find out more by visiting www.calian.com/militaryfamily.
MFS EMPLOYMENT PARTNER SHOWCASE

Nearly 30 MFRC Employment Coordinators and other MFRC staff (Information and Referral Coordinators) involved in military family employment programming and initiatives gathered in Ottawa on January 25–27, 2017. This meeting served as an opportunity for MFS and MFRCs to share information, resources and best practices surrounding employment and entrepreneurship. It also provided an occasion for MFRC staff to learn about programs and services currently being offered by national employment partners during the “Employment Partner Showcase”.

Representatives from Prince’s Operation Entrepreneur, Canada Company, Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counseling (CERIC), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Prospect Human Services attended this portion of the meeting and spoke to the services and programs they have to offer MFRC staff and or the military family population. Engaging questions followed the presentations and many MFRC staff took the opportunity to talk directly with partners during the small reception afterwards.

Military Family Services would like to thank all participating employment partners for their presence at this event. Their support and partnership has benefitted the national spousal employment program greatly. At MFS we know that no single organization, community or provide has the ability to deliver complete employment support to military spouses and their families. The ability to support military spouses and their families in their career development is highly dependent upon shared responsibilities, awareness and collective competences of community partners. If your organization is interested in supporting military spouses in their career development contact Katie.Ochin@forces.gc.ca.
SPouses ENGAGE IN TRAINING AND JOB FAIR AT METSpouse PROGRAM EXPANSION

The spousal employment challenge has repeatedly been identified as a major problem for Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) families and has proven to be a common consideration leading serving members to release from the CAF.

In April 2016, Canada Company, in partnership with Military Family Services aimed to address the need to fill this gap by launching the Military Employment Transition for Spouses program (METSpouse). The focus of METSpouse is to complement existing Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) employment programming with a network of national employers that will help ripen the condition for success of a mobile workforce. Throughout the pilot, MFS and Canada Company worked with eight MFRCs in Halifax, Valcartier, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Shilo, Petawawa and Winnipeg to recruit, register and support spouses as they participate in the program. To date, the program boasts over 120 employers, and has enrolled over 400 military spouses. Of these spouses, 51 have found meaningful employment as a result of METSpouse program.

On April 19 2017 in Toronto, the METSpouse program was expanded from being available in 8 military communities to all military spouses across the country and abroad. The event featured a morning of career development training for more than 70 military spouses and an afternoon job fair, where military spouses could put their newly acquired skills to work. In attendance was Col Dan Harris the Director of Military Family Services, the President of Canada Company Ms. Angela Mondou, military representation from 4th Canadian Division, LCol Steve Nolan, with Mr. Mike Hamilton, Head of Sales and Distribution at RBC featured as the keynote speaker.
MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILY RESEARCH

The Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) works with Canadian decision-makers and other like-minded organizations to support military and Veteran families in identifying and addressing the unique standards of health protection, prevention and care that they deserve. For example, CIMVHR continues to work with the Vanier Institute’s Military and Veteran Family Leadership Circle to develop tools and resources with the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Most recently, CIMVHR has collaborated with the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists to understand occupational therapist awareness and knowledge potential health vulnerabilities and system access issues for military and Veteran families.

CIMVHR’s annual conference, Forum 2017, will feature more research on families than ever before. As the official research partner of the Invictus Games Toronto 2017, CIMVHR’s Forum 2017 will be an unprecedented opportunity to generate interest in issues relating to the care and well-being of Veterans, military personnel and their families.

In the meantime, researchers within CIMVHR’s network of 42 Canadian universities have been active:

QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY:

Dr. Heidi Cramm and her team continue the Targeting the Mental Health of Canadian Children Growing up in Military Families research, funded by the Health Research Foundation; they are now recruiting educators and healthcare providers to ensure representation of multiple perspectives. For more information, please contact: heidi.cramm@queensu.ca.

Linna Tam-Seto, a doctoral candidate, continues her work to develop a military and Veteran family health cultural competency model for healthcare providers. Linna is now recruiting healthcare professionals who work with military and Veteran family members. For more information, please contact: linna.tam-seto@queensu.ca.

SUNNYBROOK HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Dr. Alyson Mahar continues to lead the cohort study of military families posted to Ontario from out of province at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, using routinely collected healthcare data.

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY:

Preliminary data from The Strengths in Military Families Study, led by Dr. Schwartz, suggests that military families are generally resilient, but with unique challenges and perspectives that warrant more attention from researchers and service providers. To find out more, please contact: parents@ucalgary.ca.

Dr. Kelly Dean Schwartz is conducting a secondary analysis of Veterans Affairs Canada data from the Life After Service Study (LASS) that will assist in identifying additional research themes relevant to families of Veterans.
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY:

Dr. Deborah Norris is supervising two Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology Research projects that focus on military and Veteran families:

Kaitlin Wynis is conducting in-depth interviews to research the question

How do family members of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veterans in Atlantic Canada with a mental health problem cultivate family resiliency during Military to Civilian Transition (MCT)?

Through these interviews, Kaitlin is aiming to develop a better understanding of resiliency during transition.

Kimberley Smith-Evans’ thesis research,

What social processes foster the development of post-traumatic growth (PTG) for couples?,

examines the relationship between spousal support and experiences of PTG among CAF Veteran couples living with service-related Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

Drs. Cramm, Norris, and Schwartz are co-leading a study to better understand the health and well-being of CAF Veterans who are dealing with mental health concerns during their transition from military to civilian life.

Dr. Rachel Dekel from the School of Social Work Bra Ilan University in Israel delivered a public lecture hosted by CIMVHR at Queen’s University entitled Blurring Boundaries: PTSD and Couples, which explored the challenges of boundaries and roles in the family. The lecture will be available on the cimvhr.ca website. Dr. Dekel is also working with Canadian researchers (shown in photo) on a qualitative systematic review to understand the experience of children growing up in military and Veteran families who have a parent with PTSD.

The qualitative systematic review team:
Dr. Christina Godfrey (School of Nursing, Queen’s University), Dr. Heidi Cramm, (Co-Scientific Director, CIMVHR), Dr. Rachel Dekel, Ms. Susanne Murphy (School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Queen’s University).

For more information on CIMVHR’s military and Veteran family research projects and knowledge translation initiatives, please contact Dr. Heidi Cramm, Interim Co-Scientific Director of CIMVHR and lead researcher for military and Veteran family health. She can be reached via email at heidi.cramm@queensu.ca, through www.cimvhr.ca, or by phone at 613-533-6094.