

COMMUNITY CORNER

Fort Riley donations reach highest mark

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

While I'd planned on discussing resource conservation this week, I just couldn't let a great accomplishment pass unnoticed. This year, Fort Riley contributed \$340,828.20 to the Combined Federal Campaign.

That is more than \$90,000 over our goal of \$250,000 and the most Fort Riley has ever contributed.

I'd like to give a special thanks to Dori Farrow from the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Dori has done a great job coordinating this campaign for seven years. I'd also like to thank the unit and organization representatives who went office to office and Soldier to Soldier to make sure everyone had the opportunity to give. Your work paid off.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank everyone who gave to this year's campaign. I must say, though, I'm not surprised by the outcome. Those who serve in and work for our nation's armed forces are some of the most selfless people I've met.

While the news is filled with stories of struggles and economic hardship, our Soldiers, Family members, civilian employees and contractors found a way to share with those in need.

This giving spirit isn't limited to the once-a-year Combined Federal Campaign. Operation Santa, which collects toys for children in need is reporting that they've easily collected at least \$15,000 in toys and donations so far this season.

Our community gives year round. Besides donating money, many at Fort



Col. Brown

Riley donate their time – which often is a more precious commodity. Each quarter we recognize our volunteers for their efforts.

They donate thousands of hours, and in a time when resources are limited, their donated time is more valued

than ever.

Army Family Team Building – which just celebrated its 15th birthday – offers classes taught by volunteers. Projects, such as Operation Santa, rely on the efforts of volunteers to complete their missions.

Family Readiness Groups, which help keep all of our spouses in the loop before, during and after deployments, are run by volunteers. Opportunities abound.

If you are interested in being a volunteer at Fort Riley, contact the Volunteer Corps Program at Army Community Service. Stop by Building 7264, call 785-239-9435 or visit its page at www.riley.army.mil. Just click Services, Family Services, Army Community Service and Volunteer Opportunities to learn more.

Again, thank you to all of our Soldiers, Family members, civilian employees, contractors and those within the Central Flint Hills Region who make the effort and take the time to give to those in need and support programs across the installation.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for Community Corner, e-mail rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil.

Holiday conference brings Families together

By Ashley Strehle
1ST INF. DIV. POST

A young girl with little black pig-tails and a red and white outfit danced to the Christmas music, swinging her arms back and forth to the beat. With rosy red cheeks and a smile spread across her face she definitely had the holiday spirit.

Could she be the youngest and cutest Santa impersonator ever? Possibly. But she also was one of the attendees of the Family Advocacy Program and Exceptional Family Member Program's Holiday Conference.

The conference was held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 10 at Riley's Conference Center.

The educational and social conference allowed Families involved in EFMP or FAP to interact.

Families could join in singing holiday songs or they could work on craft projects that were available.

Santa also dropped by the conference to help sing holiday songs and talk to the Families.

EFMP has been holding similar holiday conferences for about 12 years, Laurie McCauley, EFMP manager said.

FAP joined EFMP for the holiday conference about six years ago.

"It's been a positive thing," McCauley said.

She said the conference is an opportunity for Families from both programs to get to know each other.

"I think it brings their spirit into the holidays, allows them to join together with that happiness," McCauley said.

Around 250 or 350 people have attended the event for the last couple of years.

McCauley said she sees the holiday conference as a way to give back to the Families involved in both programs.

"I believe they give so much; contribute to the standards of the Army. This is an opportunity for them to be



A young girl dances to holiday music at the Family Advocacy Program and Exceptional Family Member Program's Holiday Conference on Dec. 10 at Riley's Conference Center.

Ashley Strehle
POST

given to," she said.

The program is fun for the children and the parents, she added.

"It's something we can do for the Families to say how much we appreciate them," McCauley said.

EFMP is a mandatory enrollment program for Families with exceptional Family members.

Exceptional Family members are described as anyone with a physical, emotional, developmental or intellectual disability who requires special treatment, therapy, education, training or counseling.

The mission of EFMP is to make sure the medical and educational needs of these individuals are appropriately met.

EFMP works with military and civilian to," she said.

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A volunteer helps children with craft projects at the Family Advocacy Program and Exceptional Family Member Program's Holiday Conference. The conference was held Dec. 10 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Riley's Conference Center.

Ashley Strehle | POST

E-9's Sunflower Chapter donates to Operation Santa Claus

By Shandi Dix
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The Sunflower Chapter of the Armed Forces E-9 Association donated \$200 to Operation Santa Claus Dec. 11.

The association budgets donations for many organizations and events in the surrounding communities throughout the year on an annual basis.

"We select those that provide a service to our Soldiers and the commu-

nity," said Richard Hearron, chapter president. "Operation Santa Claus is just one of those functions."

Operation Santa Claus accepts new, unwrapped toys for children who may not otherwise receive gifts during the holiday season.

"We are overwhelmed with the hospitality of the Junction City, Fort Riley and Central Flint Hills Region," said Sgt. Maj. Randy Bailey, with Operation Santa Claus and a Soldier in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S.

Army Garrison.

The toys collected are wrapped and given to children throughout the Central Flint Hills Region including Fort Riley, Junction City and Manhattan.

"We are greatly appreciative of all donations that we receive from independent Families to major companies," Bailey said.

Monetary donations are welcome as well, such as the one the Armed Forces E-9 Association made.

The local Armed Forces E-9 Associ-

ation has about 75 retired E-9 members from various services in Kansas.

Most of the retired E-9 members retired from the Army here at Fort Riley, Hearron said.

"Operation Santa Claus can use this money for any purpose they need," Hearron said.

Companies and Families donate money that is used to purchase more toys to refill the organizations stock, Bailey said.

Donation drop-off boxes also are

available in Junction City, Manhattan and Fort Riley. The Fort Riley Fire Department has drop-off boxes at each of the fire stations throughout Fort Riley.

Donated toys go to toddlers and older children so people should remember both age groups when donating.

The last day to donate is Dec. 21.

Last year Operation Santa Claus made the holidays a little bit better for about 3,600 children with more than \$37,000 in cash and toy donations.

Soldiers are detailed out through

their brigade to assist with Operation Santa Claus.

Bailey is assisted by his "elves": Sgt. 1st Class Burnice Smith, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team; Spc. Glenn Mishler, 1st Sustainment Brigade; Pfc. Christopher Diber, Combat Aviation Brigade; Pfc. Richard Westbury, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; Pfc. David Daniels, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team; Pvt. Erin Rogers, 2nd HBCBT; and Pvt. Bradley McKnight, 1st HBCBT.