

COMMUNITY CORNER

Post to break ground on new elementary school in Forsyth area

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

Almost a year ago, I announced in this column that Fort Riley would receive funding to build another elementary school on post. I'm happy to announce today that on May 19 Fort Riley will break ground in the Forsyth neighborhood area on that school. Post leaders, community members and VIPs will be on hand to mark this milestone.

With the growth that has occurred at Fort Riley and the 2012 Homecoming, where all five of our brigades, as well as the division headquarters, will be home, our schools, which are already over capacity, need our attention.

On May 8, 2010, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates originally addressed the overcrowding issue at Fort Riley during a town hall with military spouses on

our post. This along with a visit from Under Secretary of the Army Honorable Joseph Westphal on Aug. 30, 2010, to tour the post's schools eventually led to a Red Team working group session. This working group made up of Fort Riley officials, Geary County Unified School District 475 officials and leaders from the Department of the Army convened Sept. 21 to 23, 2010, to determine how to fix school facility problems at Fort Riley.

It's been a long process to get to this point, but I am excited for what this means for our Families—smaller class sizes, updated facilities and a quality of life commensurate with their service.



Col. Brown

A more than \$20 million project, the new elementary school in Forsyth will have a 650-student capacity. According to USD 475 officials, the district would like to see the new school completed by August 2012 to begin a new school year.

There are many moving parts involved in this project, which will be a true collaboration between the Department of the Army, Fort Riley, USD 475 and construction and contracting teams involved, but I am hopeful we can reach this goal.

Regardless, I remain confident in the educational services our Families are receiving. Just take a look at some of the accolades USD 475 achieved in the 2010-2011 school year and beyond:

- USD 475 Schools earned 79 Standard of Excellence Awards on the 2010 Kansas Assessments.
- USD 475 schools earned

22 Governor's Achievement Awards from 2006 to 2010.

- USD 475 schools received 47 Challenge Awards for outstanding achievement from the confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force from 2002 to 2010.

- Junction City Middle School and Fort Riley Middle School named 2010 "Gold Level" Middle Schools by the Kansas Association of Middle School Administrators.

- USD 475 had seven elementary schools named National Blue Ribbon Schools—Custer Hill, Jefferson, Sheridan, Ware, Morris Hill, Eisenhower and Franklin.

- USD 475 had four elementary schools named National Distinguished Title 1 Schools—Custer Hill, Westwood, Ware and Washington.

While USD 475 teaches our children on post, in the outside communities, school districts

in the Central Flint Hills Region provide education for our military students. USD 383 Manhattan-Ogden has the next largest military child population, and these schools also are providing excellent education services for our Family members.

For information on all of the districts in our area, visit the Kansas Department of Education K-12 Reports website at <http://svapp15586.ksde.org/k12/k12.aspx>. Counties in the Central Flint Hills Region include Clay, Dickinson, Geary, Morris, Pottawatomie, Riley, Saline and Wabaunsee.

School liaison officers also are available at Fort Riley to help parents with school information. Our school liaison officers can assist parents in locating points of contact in the schools and make referrals as appropriate. They help parents understand the policies and procedures of

USD 475 and communicate educational opportunities and information.

To find out more about school liaison officers and how they can help you, visit www.rileymwr.com and click "CYSS" and then "School Liaison Services," or call them at 785-239-1648, 785-240-3260 or 785-240-3261.

So as the school year nears an end and children at Fort Riley look forward to summer vacation, know that improvements to our schools are on the way. Leaders at Fort Riley and within the Central Flint Hills Region are looking ahead to future school years so that we can continue to provide world-class education for our students into the future.

To comment on this article or suggest a topic for Community Corner, email rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil.

Fort Riley volunteers receive awards in ceremony

By Katherine Rosario
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Post officials, friends and Family recognized more than 50 volunteers who gave their time to brigades and organizations on post at the first quarter volunteer awards ceremony May 3 at Riley's Conference Center.

Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley commanding general, said a life that is dedicated to serving others is a life worth living.

"I'm really pleased that there's such a spirit of volunteerism and volunteer service that runs through this community because I think that's part of what makes it extra special to live and serve here," he said.

The volunteers on Fort Riley set an example for the rest of society, he said, because they

are dedicated to helping other people.

"If everyone could just see the kinds of things that happen here in this community, where people commit themselves to someone else for their own benefit and, more importantly, for the benefit of others," Brooks said.

Cierrah Johnson and Alicia Dozier, both high school students, were recognized for their work in the HIRSD Program, which offers students the chance to receive hands-on work experience.

"In addition to working in an organization on Fort Riley, going to school full time and attending educational workshops required to complete the program, these students gained real-life work experience," said Becky Willis, Army Volunteer Corps coordinator.

Julie Roller received the

Helping Hand Award on behalf of Pottawatomie County for her support of the Soldiers returning home and providing care packages to them.

Spc. Naekita Raminne received the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for her service to the USO and visiting veterans in Topeka.

Amanda Bartholome was recognized for her volunteer work in the Mother's Outreach program at Irwin Army Community Hospital. She delivered baby bundles, crocheted baby hats and blankets and helped raise funds.

Danielle Tenconi was awarded for helping Families get in shape during deployment.

"She trained and motivated Families to run, encouraging one spouse to train for the Chicago Marathon and another to train for a half-marathon in Florida," Willis said, adding



Katherine Rosario | POST

Julie Roller, center, accepts the Helping Hand Award from Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley commanding general, second from left, on behalf of Pottawatomie County for their support of the CAB Soldiers returning home at the first quarter volunteer awards ceremony May 3 at Riley's Conference Center. Also pictured are Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Colvin Bennett Sr., far left, and Lt. Fernando Guadalupe, officer in charge, HHC, 3rd AHB, 1st Avn. Regt, CAB, second from right, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Thomson, brigade command sergeant major, CAB.

she traveled to support both spouses.

Jennifer Newbury was recognized for her volunteer efforts at the Installation Chapel Services.

"As an active member of the Fort Riley Catholic community, she has been the primary teacher for the teen confirmation program," Willis said. "This has involved taking the

students on community service projects such as cleaning the cemetery and serving meals at the Junction City Open Door, teaching that learning and real life goes hand in hand."

BRANCHING OUT



Anna Morelock | USAG

From left, sophomores Victoria Carlisle, Sierra Bartholomew and Emily Estrada prepare to dig a hole for a new tree April 27 at Junction City High School. The tree planting was part of a project for the Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program.