

COMMUNITY CORNER

# February is month to celebrate relationships

By Col. William Clark  
GARRISON COMMANDER

The month of February is often associated with Valentine's Day—a day associated with love and relationships. Fort Riley will celebrate relationships with some traditional events, but I also want you to know we have programs and services year-round to help build strong relationships.

Army Community Service, located in Building 7264 on Custer Hill, has several services to aid our Soldiers and Families in leading resilient Army lives. Among those services is the Family Advocacy Program.

Services offered include community education/awareness programs, parent education programs, child safety education, Family Life enrichment programs, primary prevention to support parenting and Family communications, crisis intervention, emergency shelter, victim advocate program,

sexual assault response services and counseling services.

One upcoming educational program that can help build a stronger relationship is the Six Principles for a ScreamFree Marriage seminar, which will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 12 at Building 6220, Nonnamdy Drive.

The seminar is based on the work of author Hal Edward Runkel. Runkel's ScreamFree Parenting approach has been offered at Fort Riley, and this February marks the first time his ScreamFree Marriage will be offered. For more on this seminar, see page 11 in this week's post newspaper.

For more information on ScreamFree marriage programming of ACS programs, contact ACS at 785-239-9435 or email rle.dmwrcs@conus.army.mil.



Col. Clark

If you prefer to speak to religious counsel about your relationship, Fort Riley also has chaplains and chaplain assistants serving every unit. We have six chapels located across the post, all offering worship services and their own enrichment programs, like classes on marriage, a divorce recovery group, childhood sexual assault recovery group, marriage and Family counseling, as well as individual counseling.

For more information on any of the programs listed above, call 785-239-3426.

I encourage all of our couples on post to take advantage of these opportunities. Even if your relationship is on solid ground, it never hurts to get new tools to keep it that way. If you're having issues, make the commitment to work on your relationship.

Our Army keeps our Soldiers moving, and our Families have the important job of supporting them at home. Building a strong base for your

relationship will help couples build resiliency and weather the ups and downs of marriage, and the added challenges that being married in the Army throws our way.

And, if you are looking for more traditional Valentine's Day events, here are just a few events happening around post:

- Sweetheart Dinner and Dance – 6 to 10 p.m., Feb. 14 and 15, Riley's Conference Center
- Couples Zumba – 9 to 10 a.m., Feb. 16, King Field House
- Fort Riley Library "Love is in the air" event – 1 to 3 p.m., Feb. 9
- Valentine's Day Bowling – 5 to 9 p.m., Feb. 13, Custer Hill Bowling Center

To comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, send an email to usarmy.riley.incom.mbx.post-newspaper@mail.mil.

## Local artist shares passion with post

By Calun Reece  
1ST INF. DIV. POST

MANHATTAN – "What compels us as humans is art," said Raphael Fontenot, art teacher, Lee Elementary School, Manhattan. "Whether we're talking theater, or drama, or music, or band, or whatever, I think that's what fulfills us as human beings, and without that ... it's a heartless or soulless society."

Fontenot is a local artist who has shared his passion for art and his paintings with others, including Fort Riley.

"(Fort Riley) asked me (in 2008) to paint a picture of Lady Victory," Fontenot said. "I said, 'I'd love to, (but) I don't know why you picked me.'"

The statue of Lady Victory has a long history with Fort Riley. The symbol of Lady Victory has been an emblem of the 1st Infantry Division since the end of the First World War.

The statue at Fort Riley was made in Poland in 1998 and transported to Fort Riley in 2006. It is a representation of the original Lady Victory monument in Washington.

"(The monument) is a symbol of American valor and the sacrifice of Soldiers on the fields of battle," according to the National Park Service website.

After learning about the significance of the statue and its importance to Fort Riley, Fontenot became concerned about whether he was the right candidate for the job.

"The more they're talking to me about this the more I'm thinking, 'I'm not your guy; I can't do this; I can't do what you want me to do,'" he said. "And they just kept insisting that the more they found out about me, I was their guy."

Fontenot had his own ties with Fort Riley. He lived at Fort Riley during his early childhood years as an Army brat.

"We moved here in 1959 or 1960; I spent probably third grade to seventh grade (at Fort Riley). My dad retired after that," he said.

His family settled in Junction City after his dad retired from service at Fort Riley.

Though Fontenot was not a service member himself, he said Fort Riley left a big impression on him.

"(Several) years ago they lifted headquarters out of here and took it to Germany, and it wasn't the same," he said.



Raphael Fontenot poses in front of two of his paintings hanging in his art classroom Jan. 23 at Lee Elementary School in Manhattan.

Calun Reece  
POST



LEFT: The Lady Victory statue stands as a symbol of honor for Fort Riley Soldiers and is located at Victory Park, Fort Riley. The statue has been an emblem of the 1st Infantry Division since the end of World War I. (Photo by Calun Reece)

RIGHT: A watercolor painting depicts the statue of Lady Victory at Fort Riley next to the division headquarters building. The painting was completed by local artist Raphael Fontenot in 2008 in honor of his father. (Courtesy of Raphael Fontenot)

"When they took that big insignia off that big water tower out at the airfield ... it was sad; it was truly sad."

Fontenot was returning to Fort Riley was wonderful news, he said.

"When they came back (it) was just great, and then this lady comes and says, 'would you mind doing a painting of this... Then I'm thinking, 'I would love to,'" he said.

Fontenot painted the portrait as a way to show honor to his father who had passed away, and completed the watercolor portrait of Lady Victory a few months later.

"I'll be honest with you ... I just stared at that empty paper

for two weeks," he said. "Once I got my wits about me ... I pulled it off."

The watercolor was put on display in the main conference room at the division headquarters building.

When Fort Riley unveiled the watercolor, it was pretty sentimental, he said.

"(Maj. Gen. Robert E. Durbin) gave me his coin and ... I started to cry," he said. "I said 'you guys are honoring me with this and I should be the one thanking you, for ... re-

taching me to the fort."

Painting the portrait allowed him to reconnect to his own past with Fort Riley and the memories of his father.

"It's probably one of the moments that made me the most proud in my life and not because of the painting but because of where I had come from, because of my father, because of my wife's father, and the heritage that they have, and just to ask me, 'would you do this for us?' You know it was pretty humbling," he said.

### TEA WITH THE QUEEN



Susan Todd | CUSTER HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Melanie Lester, principal, Custer Hill Elementary School, visits a kindergarten class dressed as royalty for a Tea with the Queen event Jan. 23 at Custer Hill Elementary School. Students prepared for her visit by reading "Tea for Ruby" by Sarah Ferguson.



Sgt. Scott Lamberson | 4TH IBCT  
Sherri Laird, volunteer, 2nd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., sets up barracks rooms for Soldiers who will soon be redeploying following a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan. Laird, along with other volunteers, made beds, hung shower curtains and prepared the rooms for the return of the Soldiers. In all, the volunteers prepared about 240 rooms.

## Volunteers prep rooms for 'Dragons' return

By Sgt. Scott Lamberson  
4TH IBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Family readiness group recently set up about 240 rooms for single Soldiers, who will soon be returning from their deployment to Afghanistan.

"This is a nice welcoming gesture. They were gone, but they were not forgotten while they were deployed, and soon they will come home to a room that's not bare," said Shannon Lambert, FRG volunteer.

The battalion used a system called Adopt-A-Soldier. Family members and friends of the "Ranger" Battalion and kindhearted people from around the country donated money to ensure these Soldiers will come home to a furnished homier room. The group also put food items and drinks in the rooms that will make the first couple nights back that much easier.

"It will feel nice for the Soldiers to come home and go to bed and not have to worry about getting sheets and basic household items," said Laura Belda, FRG volunteer.

The Families and friends of the battalion have been so helpful. There have been a number of supportive people and groups who have found the battalion on their Facebook page and offered support, Lambert added.

In the desk of each room cards were left from the Families who adopted the Soldier, as well as cards and letters from students in Mesquite, Texas.

In order to accomplish this feat, the FRG had to break the process up into different stages. The planning and preparation began months ago, Lambert said.

Each room was completed with brand new sheets, pillows, pillow cases and shower curtains. Each Soldier also will be coming home to a welcome home banner that has been labeled with each Soldier's individual name. In all, there were more than 50 volunteers who contributed the success of insuring each Soldier will be coming home to a cozy room in the barracks.

"It's an honor to give back to the Soldiers so that the Soldiers (know) that they weren't forgotten and that they are appreciated," Lambert said.

### HOUSE FILL AD

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