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**Special section:
Training and
education**

page 6

E-waste recycling

page 26

**Rehabilitating
historic homes**

page 36

The Art of Recovery

**Wounded warriors find new
opportunities through
artistic expression**



CONTENTS



SPECIAL SECTION: Training & Education

- 6 The Training Advantage**
Take the initiative to control your own career development.
By Vicki Sharp
- 12 Imagine What You Can Achieve**
A new charter school at Joint Base Andrews is the first of its kind on a military installation.
By Joy King Lutes
- 16 Tailored Continuing Education**
The Air Force Housing Education Program celebrates two years of learning.
By Jeffrey J. Kallas
- 18 Healthy Career Advancement**
A new scholarship program is now open to all spouses of active military personnel.
Adapted from a press release



SPECIAL SECTION: Waste Reduction

- 20 The Path to Global Sustainability**
Vandenberg AFB shares the secrets of its successful waste reduction initiative.
By Robert LaRosa, P.E.
- 26 E-Waste Recycling**
The Soaring Heights partnership at Davis-Monthan AFB is working toward complete electronic waste recycling.
By Vicki Becker



30

FEATURES

- 30 The Art of Recovery**
Wounded warriors find meaning and new career opportunities through art.
By JoAnne Castagna
- 32 Building Memories**
Historic residential buildings continue the long tradition of Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
By Donald Brannon, Laura Cole, and Yvette Bell
- 36 It Takes a Village**
More than 150 historic homes have been rehabilitated at Fort Belvoir.
By John Scharl
- 40 Sustainability's Three Rs**
A privatized housing project finds ways to reuse and recycle during housing renovations at Fort Rucker.
By Brandon Masters
- 44 People, Not Plans**
Create a dynamic, team-oriented workplace culture that will last.
By Mark Towers



40

47 A Dream Within Reach

Resources to help active-duty service members and their families make the right decisions about homeownership.

By Jason Menke

49 Supporting Wounded Warriors

"Miles Drive for Fisher House" raises more than 85,000 airline miles and \$13,000 for Fisher House Foundation.

50 Defense Communities 2011 Article Index



44

DEPARTMENTS

4 President's Message
PHMA President Del Eulberg reflects on leading during times of change.

54 Military Marketplace
Check out this go-to resource to find companies that provide products and services to the military housing and lodging industry.

56 Advertising Index

57 PHMA Corporate Sustaining Members



Please send your articles for *Defense Communities* to Birgitt Seymour at phmadefensecommunities@earthlink.net.

NEXT EDITORIAL DEADLINES:

March/April: February 13
May/June: March 20

ABOUT THE COVER

Retired SSgt Greg Miller now works with children through his interactive art studio. For more on how wounded warriors are finding new opportunities through art, see page 30. Photo courtesy Heather Miller.



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Defense Communities magazine is designed to keep those who operate and manage the whole spectrum of military housing and facilities maintenance informed on the industry's latest technology, products, and services. It provides a forum for members to share lessons learned, news and events, and training opportunities and updates.



The Training Advantage

What's good for your boss is good for you, too, so don't ignore the importance of investing in your skills

By Vicki Sharp, NALP, CAPS, CDPM

The economy may be improving inch by inch, but many companies are still struggling, looking for ways to cut back on expenses while trying to stay afloat. Most of us are doing the same thing with our personal budgets, as company cutbacks mean little or no raises or perhaps even the loss of a job.

In the November/December issue of *Defense Communities*, I advised bosses to invest in training, no matter how hard pressed their budgets are. That advice cuts both ways. If you're looking for a new or better job, your training is one of your most important assets.

Today, finding a job isn't easy, and finding a career is even harder. Companies are still cutting back. Others may be in a hiring freeze, waiting to see if the economy improves before adding new employees to the company budget. Because of such uncertainty and concerns in the business world, hiring authorities can be very choosy when filling positions. Of

course, this means they will be sorting through many résumés, looking for the best-qualified person.

You need to be that best-qualified applicant, so here are a few things to consider.

Job or career?

First, you need to make a decision. Which do you want—a job or a career?

What's the difference? Plenty. A job is filler material, something you do to pay your bills until you find that "one great thing" you really want to do. A job is something you have to do while a career is something you love to do. Sometimes a job can become a career, but that only happens when you allow yourself to be open to learning new skills, and only when you constantly look for opportunities to take on more personal responsibility for your own success.

That's what happened to me. After serving my initial enlistment in the Army, I needed a "job" and found one totally by accident. I needed a place to live and ended up getting a job leasing

apartments. (More on how that happened later.)

When I got the job offer, I thought to myself, "Well, this is something I can do until I find something I like better." But I was lucky. My boss saw something in me and wasn't afraid to show me the ropes. At first, I thought she was just unloading her work on me so she wouldn't have to do it. Soon, I realized that she was preparing me for a career. Within a couple of months, when another community management position opened up in the company, she recommended me, and I was on my way up my career ladder. Today, 36 years later, I'm still working in the field I love, and I can't imagine doing anything else.

Once you've decided you're looking for a career, not just a job, let's talk about making you successful in that venture.

Look the part

Appearance matters. It matters a lot. There's wisdom in the old saying that you should dress for the job you

want, not the job you have. Looking to move up in the company? Then you need to look like someone who can easily step into that next position. Required to wear a uniform to work? Make sure it is always clean, neatly pressed, and worn exactly to established standards. If there is no prescribed dress code, take a look at how people dress who are in the position you want. If the boss wears a suit to work, you won't get positive attention by showing up in jeans and a golf shirt.

If you are going for a job interview, do some research and check out the company culture. If the photos on the company websites show people in suits or business attire, that would be the most appropriate dress for your visit to their offices. Once when I was hiring, a woman showed up for a job interview in jeans, a T-shirt, and house slippers. I didn't even look at her qualifications and didn't care about her potential—she wasn't appropriately attired for a job interview.

The day of the job interview, I've learned, applicants will look their absolute best. If that's not good enough, don't hire them, because they're never going to look better. Most employers pay close attention to your attire when considering your application. After all, it's not just the quality of the job you do; it's also the appearance you present to the customer. Employers are hiring the whole package, so appearance does matter.

Multiple body piercings and tattoos may allow you to express your individuality, but they can be very distracting to others and could keep you from getting the job you want. Flashy clothing and make-up, along with heavy perfume, can have the same effect. When trying to impress the hiring authority, less is best. Light makeup for ladies, clean shaven for guys, and conservative clothing and jewelry for everyone are always appropriate at the workplace.

One more area where appearance counts is in the presentation of your resume and cover letter—no typos



Think Before You Speak

In today's world of rapid-fire questions, expectations of instant answers, and constant barrage of comments via email, Twitter, Facebook, and other electronic media, it is easy to communicate quickly and later wish you had taken the time to think first. So before you speak (or write) hastily, remember this acronym: THINK.

T—Is it true? The truth is always the best answer, even when it's difficult. A friend once said that if you always tell the truth, you don't have to remember so much. When we don't tell the truth, we lose trust, something that is most difficult to earn back. So, whether it's good news or bad, always tell it like it is.

H—Is it helpful? No matter who you are talking or writing to, first decide how you can be helpful. Don't just throw down a problem. Report the problem and add your idea for a solution. Even if your solution isn't the right answer, you've shown that you are a person who tries to solve problems, not just pass the buck.

I—Is it inspiring? Never underestimate the power of a positive message. When someone does something great for you, or achieves a goal, take the time to congratulate and motivate that person for even more success in the future. You never know when some small positive comment will inspire someone to achieve more.

N—Is it necessary? Today we are on information overload. Email messages flood our inboxes. Junk mail fills our mail boxes. Consider whether the message you're sending is really important, then remember this great acronym: BLUF, Bottom Line Up Front. Provide a succinct overview with your recommendation quickly, then provide backup information if needed. Also, be careful of using the "reply to all" email function. Decide who really needs to be kept in the loop, and only copy those who really should be involved. Lastly, unless a situation requires a paper trail, think about using the phone instead of sending lengthy emails back and forth.

K—Is it kind? Anyone who looks at blogs, Facebook, or other social media can see that we've lost our manners. People will post things that they would never say face to face, many times using language that is almost unforgiveable. Electronic media have created a faceless forum that allows people to turn vicious quickly. Let's start a trend of posting only what's positive and saving the anger for the punching bag at the gym. It's time we all became a little more kind.

allowed. Check the grammar and sentence structure. Do not simply rely on the spell check function of the computer. Using the wrong word or poor sentence structure can be disastrous.

Here is an example of what can happen if you rely on spell check: "I worked at ABC Corporation for too years. I left the company because their were two many people in the job and they had to cut somebody." Sure, each word is spelled correctly, but the words themselves are wrong.

Try it this way: "I was employed with ABC Corporation for two years. Unfortunately, my position was eliminated due to budget cutbacks in my department."

Show your experience

Do your research and make sure your résumé identifies the strengths you bring to the advertised position. That may mean rewriting your résumé each time you apply for a different position. For example, you might be terrific at marketing and also great with the financial aspects of the business. If the company is looking for an asset manager, the financial strength is probably more important, so don't start your résumé with your marketing experience.

In short, tailor your résumé and your presentation to the job skills the prospective employer desires. Then list the extra cool stuff about your abilities behind those required skills.

Seek out training

Employers today are looking for what you will bring to the company. They want someone who can come to work ready to contribute. They don't want to worry about what they have to do to get you ready for the job. This means you may need to get additional training, and it may be at your own expense, but it will be money well spent.

I have heard employees say things like, "If the company won't pay for me to attend that training seminar, then I'm just not going. They need to train me if they want me to do the job." What a terrible and shortsighted attitude, especially in today's job market.

Do your research and make sure your résumé identifies the strengths you bring to the advertised position.

Look at it this way: if you want to be a doctor or a nurse, who pays for your medical school or nursing school? You do. If you want to be a lawyer, who pays for law school? You do. Even if you want to be an IT professional, who pays for the technical school where you learn how to do that? You do. In fact, a lot of service-oriented folks pay for their own education to get where they want to be. The people who cut your hair or give you a facial had to go to cosmetology school—and chances are, they paid for it themselves. Why should it be different for any other industry?

Focus on the opportunity to get more training as a chance for self-improvement and a step toward better opportunities ahead. Becoming well prepared for the job you want will have a positive impact on potential employers. After all, if you won't invest in your own future, who will?

PHMA offers a multitude of training opportunities throughout the year, many of which provide certifications upon completion. Compared to tuition for your college degree, or even the cost of getting a real estate license, these classes are most affordable. If your company does not pick up the cost or reimburse you for this training, you should attend anyway. Doing so shows your current or future supervisors that you believe in yourself and bring valuable tools to the job. What's more, earning these certifications can result in higher pay and better jobs in the future.

Stand out

So what's the bottom line? It's polish: Polish your shoes, polish your résumé, and polish up on your skills through training. These tools will help you impress your current employer or stand out in a field of applicants. They'll

help you get the career you want.

Oh yes, I promised to tell you how I got the leasing job. I did it by taking the initiative to handle a problem. I was standing in the leasing office, waiting my turn to talk to a very busy manager. She was working by herself, had several people in the office ahead of me, and her telephone was ringing and ringing. This was back in the days before there were automatic answering machines, call waiting, call forwarding, or other such luxuries. Back in 1975, all you got was a telephone that rang and rang, until someone finally answered it or the caller finally gave up.

The second time her phone started ringing, I answered it. I politely told the caller that the manager was busy, and took a message. When it was my turn to talk to the manager, I gave her the message.

While she was walking with me to see the apartment, she asked where I worked, and I told her I had just gotten out of the Army and would be looking for a job as soon as I found a place to live. She told me I didn't need to look because she needed an assistant manager. Because I took the initiative to answer the phone and take a message, she hired me on the spot.

While my initiative of answering the phone got me into the industry, putting everything I've written above into play is what kept me here and got my career underway. If you've found you love this industry, and found your career here, try using some of these tips. I'm sure you'll move successfully along your career path. ■

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Imagine What You Can Achieve

A new charter school at Joint Base Andrews sets a record and creates community

By Joy King Lutes

On Oct. 6, 2011, the Imagine Andrews Public Charter School (IAPCS) hosted a grand opening ceremony at its new Joint Base Andrews facility.

The event provided an opportunity for community and military leaders to join with students, parents, and teachers to celebrate the extensive collaboration that went into bringing the charter school—the first of its kind on a military installation—to fruition.

Among those involved in the collaborative effort to bring the school to the base was school board member SSG Tanner Welch, whose son Logan is an IAPCS second-grader.

In the short time since the school's first day, Staff Sergeant Welch has noticed an improvement in his son's attitude. "Things have changed for the better," he said. "Before, when he would come home from school, Logan would talk about how disruptive the other kids were or who got into a fight that day. He didn't want to go back. Now, he talks about the fun



Jennifer and Lenny Partaka send sons Lenny Jr. and Frankie off for their first day of school at Imagine Andrews.

he is having and what he is learning."

This represents an important change for the parents at Joint Base Andrews.

Needed: A school

When Staff Sergeant Welch received

word he would be assuming a post with the 3rd U.S. Army's Infantry Regiment, also known as the Old Guard, at Fort Meyer, Virginia, he decided to live on base at Joint Base Andrews. But he faced the looming question: "Where are your kids going

to go to school?"

The lack of an on-base school, coupled with the common perception that nearby public schools are overcrowded and underfunded, had left many Joint Base Andrews families facing a similar dilemma. They enjoyed many of the features of living on base, including the new and renovated housing provided by AMC East Communities, a 50-year joint venture between Clark Realty Capital (CRC) and the Department of the Air Force.

But the families still struggled to find ways to provide their children with a quality education. Many were forced to make tough decisions, such as moving off base, paying for expensive private schools, or home-schooling their children.

Clark Realty Capital and base leaders discussed these concerns, which were confirmed through multiple resident surveys.

"We continually strive to create a sense of community and offer features and amenities that increase the quality of life for our residents," said Darin Singh, Development Executive at Clark Realty Capital. "In the case of Joint Base Andrews, it was clear that what our community needed was a school."

The success of the AMC East project, which far exceeds its net operating income, enabled the Clark team to secure support from its bondholders' representative for this school initiative. A modern but temporary 15,000-square-foot facility was provided for the school at no cost while a larger permanent building is being developed to accommodate the school's growing population. While the current enrollment is 265 in grades K-4, there are plans to expand to approximately 500 students in grades K-8 within the next five years as the school moves into the new 30,000-square-foot facility in 2012.

Enter Imagine

Understanding that a school is made up of more than just a building and blackboards, CRC and the Department of the Air Force called in Imagine Schools, the country's larg-



Latasha Jones hugs her daughter outside Imagine Andrews. The school's temp facility was provided rent-free by AMC East Communities.

est charter school operator, to create a concept for Joint Base Andrews that would address the unique needs facing military children.

"Through creative teaching techniques and specialized curriculum design, Imagine Andrews will provide rigorous, yet nurturing, learning opportunities to prepare students for lives of leadership, accomplishment, and character," said Pat Crain, Imagine Schools Maryland Regional Director.

The team set out to accomplish this goal by hiring administrators and teachers who had military backgrounds themselves or were military family members. As a result, Imagine Andrews underscores the commitment of everyone involved in the project to create and maintain a feeling of community at Joint Base Andrews.

"They understand what it means when a kid comes to school and says, 'My mom is being deployed,' or 'My dad is involved

in a field exercise,'" Welch said.

The school staff's care and attention to detail resonates with the students and parents and is echoed by base leadership.

"This day has been a long time coming," remarked Col Ken Rizer, Joint Base Andrews 11th Wing commander, at the grand opening ceremony. "This beautiful building and the amazing teachers, administrators, and students who occupy it are testament to a collaborative labor of love of a scope I've never seen in my 25 years in the United States Air Force.

"This is going to be a great school that will offer excellent educational opportunities for the attending students while enhancing the ties between the community and the base." ■

Joy King Lutes is public relations consultant and freelance writer in the Washington, D.C., area. Reach her at joy@meridian77.com.



Tailored Continuing Education

Housing personnel sharpen their skills through the Air Force Housing Education Program

By Jeffrey J. Kallas

Housing personnel have access to a rich learning opportunity, thanks to the Air Force Housing Education Program through the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Civil Engineer School. The program, which has been in existence for two years, was developed through a coordinated agreement with the Office of the Air Force Civil Engineer Housing Division (HQ USAF/A7CH), the Air Force Civil Engineering Support Agency (AFCESA), the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment (AFCEE), and AFIT.

From day one, the goal of the program has been to provide tailored continuing education to housing personnel within the civil engineering community. This “tailoring” is accomplished through the Housing Education Review Committee (MAJCOM and Air Staff representatives), which establishes the priority for course reviews, revisions, and initial course development based on the needs of the housing



community. From this vision of curriculum requirements, subject matter experts are selected from within the field to accomplish the challenging task of course development. Furnishings Management Operations is an example of the latest topic being developed.

Through an established centralized funding process, provided by HQ USAF/A7CH to AFIT, each eligible member is given an opportunity to attend courses, thus eliminating budget concerns at the installation level while promoting consistency in education and providing a career path

for the housing field. This centralized education and funding is in line with the President’s mandate and the Air Force goal to identify and implement efficiencies.

The end result has been that more than 1,000 participants each fiscal year have attended Air Force-conducted or vendor-approved classes, including PHMA’s annual Professional Development Seminar. These housing professionals have learned new skill sets, collected tools to perform their day-to-day operations, and shared their best practices within a blended learning approach—all while saving money for the Air Force.

For more information on upcoming Air Force Housing Education Program classes, please visit the AFIT website, www.afit.edu/cess. ■

Jeffrey J. Kallas is a contractor providing support to the Office of The Air Force Civil Engineer, Housing Division, and the Air Force Institute of Technology, Civil Engineer School. Reach him at jeffrey.kallas.ctr@afit.edu.



Healthy Career Advancement

The National Institute of Whole Health is opening its military scholarship program to all spouses of active military personnel

Adapted from a press release

Military spouses now have a new opportunity for career education. The National Institute of Whole Health (NIWH) recently announced that all military spouses, regardless of their partners' military rank, are now eligible for the NIWH military scholarship program.

The scholarship can be used toward any of NIWH's educational programs. Originally intended only for spouses who were eligible for Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA), the program has been expanded to accommodate increased need for educational opportunities.

"Since announcing the scholarship a few months ago, we have been inundated with calls from military spouses who want to participate but do not qualify for MyCAA benefits," said Georgianna Donadio, NIWH Program Director.

"The original intention behind the scholarship program was to assist in providing demystified whole health information for the people who need

it most," she said. "Given the response we've had over the past months, it is clear to us that this need exists for a much wider military spouse audience."

Scholarship support

Millions of U.S. military spouses can now partake in NIWH's automatic \$1,250 scholarship, good toward NIWH certification programs—the Whole Health Educator, Whole Health for Nurses, Whole Health Nutrition Educator, and Whole Health Coaching certifications. The programs enable military spouses to enrich their existing education for career advancement. Spouses can train to care for the whole person, addressing not just physical health, but the emotional, nutritional, environmental, and spiritual aspects as well.

Participants can also elect to enroll in NIWH's whole health certificate of study programs and receive a scholarship equal to 25 percent off the standard tuition. The NIWH Family Health Advocate Certificate

of Study, Whole Health and Wellness Certificate of Study, and the Health and Wellness Coaching Certificate of Study are open to all noncredentialed students for personal health enrichment.

These programs were uniquely designed to assist military families in supporting their own members' personal health needs, addressing many of the health concerns affecting active military members today, including post-traumatic stress conditions and brain injuries.

NIWH courses are delivered through a relationship-centered, whole-person-health-focused curriculum and are designed to empower learners and their clients with demystified health information to take greater control over their health and well-being. In addition, all courses are video-based and streamed online from anywhere in the world, ideal for military families who move frequently.

For more information, call 888/354-HEAL (4325) or visit www.niwh.org. ■

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Company, Contact	Phone	Web Site	Page
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Ista-North American, Bill Kirk	352/895-8839	www.eso-global.com	38
Kaba Multihousing & Institutional, LaShawnda Robinson	248/837-3700	www.kabamultihousing.com	21
Kenyon, Suzanne Owens	860/664-4906	www.kenyonappliances.com	48
Microfridge Inc., Benjamin Otte	508/660-9200	www.microfridge.com	7
MilitaryByOwner Advertising, Dave Gran	540/446-4676	www.MilitaryByOwner.com	22
National Apartment Association Education Institute, Bridget Dunn	703/797-0609	www.naahq.org	37
Norix Group, Inc., Randy Duffer	800/234-4900	www.norix.com	53
Picerne Military Housing, Bill Mulvey	401/228-2800	www.picernemilitaryhousing.com	45
Protect-a-Bed, Brian Hirsch	414/731-1663	www.protectabed.com	C3
Safeplay Systems, Eric Torrey	770/591-7000	www.safeplaysystems.com	46
Salsbury Industries, Ricardo Alva	323/846-6700	www.mailboxes.com	24
Stanley Black & Decker Government Solutions, Jennie Dannecker	610/776-3853	www.stanleyblackanddecker.com	43
The Refinishing Touch, Mario Insenga	770/642-4169	www.therefinishingtouch.com	41
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University Loft Company, James Jannetides	317/631-5433	www.universityloft.com	C4
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Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Customer Service	800/644-8083	www.wellsfargo.com	11
Yardi, Spencer Stewart	800/866-1144	www.yardi.com	5

CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT

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For more information, visit www.abcsupply.com or contact Ken Long, national account executive, at 574/202-0910.

CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT

ABC-Team is a German playground manufacturer with approximately 30 years of experience in the playground business serving our main customer: the U.S. military services all over Europe.

Our full range of equipment includes, among others, wooden playground equipment, metal playground equipment, outdoor amenities such as benches, trash bins, and educational play supports (for example, play panels), and multi-sports fields for soccer, basketball, and volleyball, as well as age-related fitness structure elements.

All of our equipment is built, installed, and certified according to ASTM, CPSC, and ADAAG. We are an IPEMA member and GSA contract holder.

Our playgrounds are completed with certified fall surface depending on requirements, such as mulch, sand, or rubber surfaces (tiles or pour-in-surface).

Our services include certified playground inspectors (CPSI) and graduated playground maintenance managers (NRPA). For additional information, visit www.abc-team.de.

