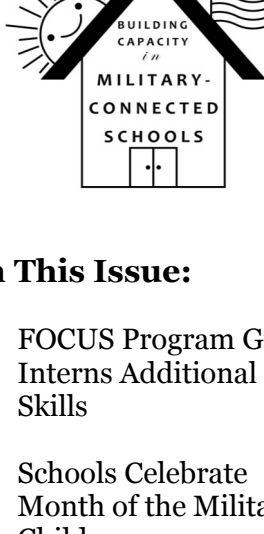


Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools



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Upcoming Events:

'Transitions' Workshop: The [Exceptional Family Member Program](#) (EFMP) at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego is holding a workshop May 16 on making the transition from EFMP to civilian support services. The workshop--open to active duty service members and Department of Defense service providers, will focus on topics such as special education law, school transition, TRI-CARE and other health coverage and V.A. benefits for families. For more information or to RSVP, please contact the EFMP office at: (610) 524-8031/8086/6078 or nguyena@usmc-mccs.org

Resource Fair: Military Families Strong will hold a Family Resource Fair at the Temecula Civic Center on May 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The center is located at 41000 Main St. Over 30 organizations will be represented, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest County, Blue Star Mothers, and the United Way. For more information, email Reyna Reyna at military-familystrong@gmail.com

Grant Opportunity: Applications are now being accepted for Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program grants. The three-year grant awards range from \$250,000 to \$400,000. The deadline is May 25. Supporting military families is one of the competitive preference priorities. Click this [link](#) for full application information.

MCEC Conference: The Military Child Education Coalition's annual National Training Seminar will be held July 27-28 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas. Speakers include former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach and Stephanie Sanford of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The early registration rate is available until May 31. Check this [link](#) for more information.

Questions, Comments or to Unsubscribe: e-mail us at raastor@usc.edu

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FOCUS Project Equips Interns with New Skills to Support Military Students

Building Capacity's Master's-level interns brought a new intervention into the military-connected schools where they were working this year--a modified version of the successful FOCUS Project.

Based at the University of California Los Angeles, FOCUS stands for Families OverComing Under Stress and provides research-based resiliency training to military families. In this new school-based, skill-building version, children learn how to cope with the challenges of deployment and reintegration when a deployed family member returns home. See our [November newsletter](#) for key components of the school-based FOCUS program.

Providing interns from the University of Southern California (USC) and San Diego State University with this training allowed FOCUS to reach many more families and expand its services beyond Camp Pendleton.

It has also allowed them to offer something that their host schools would not have had otherwise, says Ediza Garcia, a FOCUS specialist at UCLA.

"I think because FOCUS has an established, positive reputation in the schools that it opens doors for [the interns]," she says.

The interns are also provided with call-in consultation sessions so they can share experiences and ask questions of the FOCUS staff.

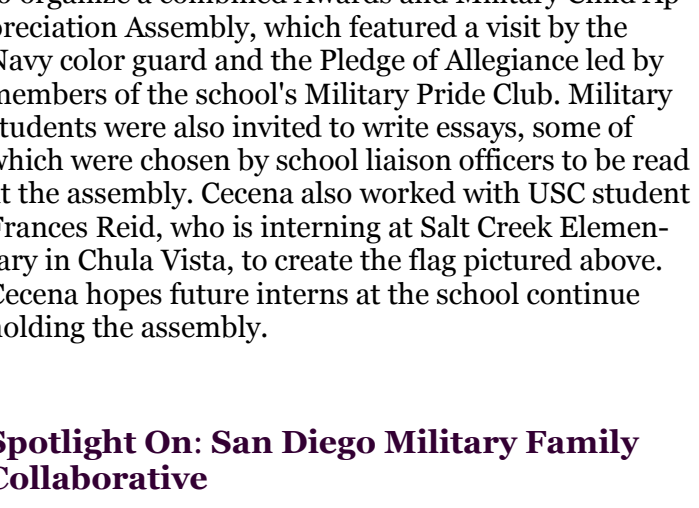
This new version is being used by 26 interns and will be evaluated to determine its impact in the schools. Garcia adds that she hopes to continue the use of the program in the consortium schools next year.

Kristine Anderson, a USC MSW student interning at Veteran's Elementary School in Chula Vista this year, said the modified FOCUS curriculum was "clearly developed by people who knew kids well. It is fun to teach, and the kids enjoy the lessons.

In addition to learning the skills, the children also enjoy simply getting together with other military children they can relate to, Anderson says.

"All of my students look forward to attending," she says. "I think FOCUS is a great asset for all military-connected schools."

Celebrating the Month of the Military Child



A flag featuring all of Olympic View Elementary School's military students, created by USC MSW interns Vanessa Cecena and Frances Reid

April was the Month of the Military Child, and several schools in the Building Capacity consortium held special activities to mark the occasion.

At Olympic View Elementary School in Chula Vista, for example, USC MSW intern Vanessa Cecena helped to organize a combined Awards and Military Child Appreciation Assembly, which featured a visit by the Navy color guard and the Pledge of Allegiance led by members of the school's Military Pride Club. Military students were also invited to write essays, some of which were chosen by school liaison officers to be read at the assembly. Cecena also worked with USC student Frances Reid, who is interning at Salt Creek Elementary in Chula Vista, to create the flag pictured above. Cecena hopes future interns to create the program holding the assembly.

Spotlight On: San Diego Military Family Collaborative

The San Diego region has a wealth of community organizations eager to provide services and programs for military families. But many needs among active duty families still go unmet. That's why the Military Family Collaborative was created--"to bridge some of the gaps that we were seeing," says Joe Buerhle, a program coordinator at the [Healthy Start Military Family Resource Center](#), part of Social Advocates for Youth San Diego.

Created in 2010, the Collaborative now consists of about 50 organizations, with about 200 participants--including school liaison officers, PTA members, politicians and non-profit providers--who attend the monthly gatherings. The meetings focus on how to improve coordination and access to the programs that military families are the most concerned about, such as child care and early-childhood education, and to work with schools to make services available.

"If we as service providers don't know what each other are doing, how much more disconnected and confused are the military families?" Buerhle says.

So far, outcomes have included greater awareness and communication. But Buerhle says eventually the collaborative will coordinate efforts "around specific issues and community needs."

The meetings are held the fourth Friday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m. and are open to anyone interested. The location varies, so it is best to send an email to jbuehrle@saysandiego.org. The next meeting is May 25.



California Congresswoman Susan Davis (center) at the March Collaborative meeting with Dr. Ron Astor, Building Capacity principal investigator, and Diana Pineda, the project's San Diego field manager.

Building Capacity Guidebook Preview: Portfolios for Mobile Students

When a student transitions from one school to the next, he or she might bring along a portfolio of work from the previous school. This might as simple as a kindergartener's self portrait or as in-depth as a high school student's research paper. Even if these materials are not part of an official transcript, teachers should examine these items for several reasons.

First, the work can be used to create a connection with new students. They have probably brought something that they are proud of, so asking them about the assignment is a chance for conversation.

Second, the work can provide a glimpse into where the child stands academically.

Finally, teachers can even get ideas for their own classrooms by viewing projects that students have created in other schools.

Teachers should also think about helping students compile small portfolios of their best work in the event that they are moving again.

Headlines

We regularly feature stories, reports and resources related to military children on our [website](#). Check back often for new additions, such as these:

The *Daily Press* covered Dr. Jill Biden's visit to Lee Hall Elementary, a military-connected school in Newport News, Va.

The *Le Mars Daily Sentinel* featured an Iowa organization that supports military families during deployments.