Consortium Schools Celebrate Month of the Military Child

Schools in the Welcoming Practices consortium used a variety of ways to honor military-connected students in April, the official Month of the Military Child.

At Wolf Canyon Elementary in the Chula Vista Elementary School District, military children created stars to pin up on the school's Wall of Heroes, shown here.

Military children and families also turned out April 25th for the Salute to Service Fair in Tuna Harbor Park near the U.S.S. Midway in San Diego. The Welcoming Practices team had a resource booth available and military children had an opportunity to win books. The event, which also featured a traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial,
* The San Diego Parent-to-Parent team is scheduling parent workshops and training opportunities in Consortium schools. Email ptop.sandiego@militarychild.org for more information.

* The National School Climate Center will hold its 18th Annual Summer Institute June 25-26 at Winston Prep in New York City. The theme is "School Climate Improvement: Policy, Practice and Leadership Development: What do we do? How do we do it?" Click here for registration information.

* The Military Child Education Coalition will hold a two-day training in Seaside, CA. Sept. 24-25. Supporting Military Children through School Transitions: Social-Emotional Institute is open to area public, private, parochial, and home school and Department of Defense counselors and other educators, installation and community leaders, transition specialists, and military parents. Visit this link to register.

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**Oceanside District's Alternative Learning Center Combines Academic with Social-Emotional Learning**

A three-year-old alternative education program in the Oceanside Unified School District is demonstrating how to meet both the academic and social-emotional needs of students who have struggled in regular high schools and put them back on a successful path.
**Free Guidebooks**

Free copies of our military resource guides for educators and parents are available. Please click [here](#) to request a copy.

If you have already provided us feedback on the books, thank you. If you haven't we still want to hear from you. Click this [link](#) to answer a few questions, and use a computer or a laptop instead of a smart phone.

*Welcoming Practices* is a Partnership Consortium involving five Southern California school districts and the University of Southern California, funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity's partnership program. Grant #HE-1254-13-1-0017

For more information, please visit our [website](#).

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**Quick Links...**

[Our Website](#)

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The Alternative Learning Center (ALC) opened to provide schools a better option than expelling students who had gotten in trouble and needed to be removed from traditional schools. Using APEX Learning, an online program, the school provides rigorous instruction with restorative practices so students can learn from their mistakes and make amends for their behavior.

"They're just the greatest group of kids in the world but wherever they were before just wasn't working," says Principal Barbara Perez. "We push [the students] really hard. But we celebrate with them twice as hard."

Students also receive individual and group counseling and have opportunities for internships so they can develop college and career readiness skills.

In this [video](#), ALC students share openly how the school has changed their outlook toward school and toward themselves.

Since the program began, almost 450 days of out-of-school suspension have been avoided.

The program has been so successful that Perez has been invited to speak at several conferences, and schools both in and outside of OUSD are beginning to implement the model. In this [piece](#) for EdSource, Paul Meyers, the superintendent of the Standard School District, near Bakersfield, writes about how the Alternative to Suspension program in his district is having positive results among middle school students.

"In the first five months of the program, suspensions had decreased 55 percent compared to the same time period in the previous school year," he writes. "In addition, only 7 percent of the students have had to repeat their involvement in the program."

To read more about the ALC, see this [story](#) in the
Chairman of Joint Chiefs to USC: 'Well Done'

Members of the Welcoming Practices team greeted Gen. Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife Deanie when they visited USC recently.

The Dempseys visited to recognize USC's work in support of military and veteran families. This includes the Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families’ recent comprehensive needs assessment survey of returning veterans in the Los Angeles area. The survey, the first like it in a large urban area, is being viewed as a model for other cities. He also highlighted the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative, a network of roughly 400 organizations and individuals working to address issues facing the military and veteran population in Los Angeles.

"My message to you today is 'Well done.'," the chairman said, giving what he said is the highest compliment by someone in uniform. To read more about the visit, click here.

![Image of Deanie Dempsey, Dr. Ron Astor, Gen. Dempsey, Diana Pineda, Dr. Tamika Gilreath](image)

From left: Deanie Dempsey, Dr. Ron Astor, Gen. Dempsey, Diana Pineda, Dr. Tamika Gilreath

Students Visit the Magic Kingdom
To Pick Up Leadership Skills
Here's an assignment most students wouldn't have trouble completing: visit Disneyland, ride some rides and pick up some leadership and team-building skills to take back to your school.

A group of Oceanside High students, including several members of the school’s Student 2 Student (S2S) group, had just that opportunity recently when they participated in a three-hour leadership training program.

Disney's Approach to Leadership and Teamwork is part of the Disney Youth Education Series provided for students at both the Florida and California parks. The experience gave S2S members additional ideas for "ice-breaker" activities they can use to help welcome new students to their school.

Oceanside High students wore badges naming traits emphasized during the training, including confidence, constancy and curiosity.

Patriotic Art Contest Now Under Way

Spread the word about the second annual Patriotic Art Contest, sponsored by Torch 1975 Inc. The contest is open to all veterans and their spouses in California, Arizona and Nevada and designed to give them a creative outlet to express themselves.

The contest runs through July 15, 2015, and the following forms of original visual art will be accepted:
ceramic, painting, photography, sculpture and crafts. Visit Torch 1975’s website and click on Events for detailed information on the contest. To read about last year's winners, see this story in the Orange County Register.

Headlines and Resources

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

- This Military Times story focuses on a new online portal designed to help military families find child care.
- The Hate Prevention initiative, a nonprofit anti-racist association initiated in France, is now making its way to the U.S. The initiative proposes to fight cyber hate through education and create anti-hate "respect zones" for internet sites.
- Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE) is a national initiative, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which takes a public health approach to preventing youth violence before it starts. Online training is available as well as resources and information on funding sources.
- Click here for the latest issue of Academic Anchor, a publication of the Navy Region Southwest's school liaison officers.