

Have less stress through the holidays

By Adriene M. Dicks
Correspondent

For many, the holidays are spent with loved ones, going to parties, wrapping gifts and enjoying traditions passed down through the years. For others, it is a stressful time, but this stress can be dealt with to make the holidays a happier season.

According to Patti Busser, Family Advocacy Outreach manager, issues dealt with this time of year include financial problems and living up to the idea of being happy all the time.

"The truth is most of us don't feel any happier during the holidays. With military families, it is especially hard due to deployments or not being able to travel home. And you know what, it is ok," said Busser.

She says many people can find joy in doing little things like taking a walk through the neighborhood to look at Christmas lights, looking through old scrap books or photo albums, or calling old friends to wish them happy holidays. Also suggested is doing things that have nothing to do with the holiday season, like taking a trip to the beach or going to the gym for a couple of hours for some exercise.

Another issue that can cause stress during the holidays and spill over into the new year is finances. Busser suggests prioritizing and not being

afraid to say no can help finances not be a problem.

"Gift giving is a huge source of stress. Parents feel pressure to give their children as much of their Christmas list as possible, and there are also other family members and friends expecting gifts," said Busser. "But we have to remember what is realistic and most important. What is most important is the time and energy we provide to our children, not the toys. I can't tell you what I got for most of the Christmases of my childhood, but I can tell you exactly which Christmases my father wasn't deployed and when my family came to visit."

Instead of giving gifts to every friend and loved one, some families draw names and only buy gifts for the person selected. According to Busser, it may also be a good idea for parents to predetermine how much money to spend on each child.

For service members, being away from home for the holidays is always a possibility. There are programs at Shaw in place year round to ease the feeling of loneliness. The Family Support Center has the Heart to Heart program which brings families of deployed members together for meals and other activities. It allows them to talk about how they are dealing with the stress of being away from

loved ones. Family Advocacy and chaplains offer counseling. One-on-one counseling can also be sought through a primary care provider or Choice Behavioral Health Partnership. Shaw's Life Skills Clinic offers individual therapy and a four-session stress management class.

According to Busser, exercise is a good way to deal with stress. The Health and Wellness Center has information on nutrition, exercise and how to get back in gear after holiday eating.

"We eat a lot of sweets and carbohydrates during the holidays which can impact our sleep patterns and moods, which in turn can cause stress," said Busser. "Getting back into good eating habits and an exercise routine can get you back to your old self."

According to Capt. Nicholas Lind, 20th Medical Operations Squadron clinical psychologist, a study done about three years ago found people who exercised every other day felt less stressed than people who took antidepressants.

"Exercise is a better antidepressant than any pill," said Lind. "It can improve your moods, appetite and help you sleep better."

"If things really get tough, find someone to talk to," said Busser. "Most of us would like to vent a bit about our holiday stress."



Teen learns shoplifting lesson hard way

(Editor's note: The following was written by a teen found shoplifting at the Shaw Base Exchange.)

That's right, school's out. Hanging with your "buds," cruising the base, swimming, bowling, pretty much just kicking back enjoying fun in the sun. Oh, did I forget to mention filling sand bags, shredding endless mounds of computer paper, cleaning smelly gym equipment and of course picking up garbage?

I guess I should start from the beginning. It was a normal Friday, and after a short stop at Burger King, we headed to the Youth Center to shoot a little pool. Now came our next pit stop, the Base Exchange. We walked around the BX, in what had become our daily ritual, looking at the magazines, checking out new compact discs, all the while talking smack to each other about who was the "coolest" and most popular. It was about that time, while my friends and I were being cool, we made the decision to improve our status with our buds.

After a short discussion and plan, we moved into action. I quickly removed the CD from the rack, lowered it below the shelf and almost instinctively broke off the plastic holder, discarding it under the shelf. I smoothly moved the CD to my best friend, where it immediately disappeared into his pants.

My other friend continued to scan for possible enemies approaching, but all appeared clear. We did it undetected, smooth as ice. As we departed the store, we gave each other that "cool" look, you know the one, the one that let's each of us know we are a couple of "bad dudes."

It was about that time, as we three bad dudes were congratulating each other, another bad dude

entered the picture. You guessed it; "Excuse me, I'm the AAFES detective, and you boys will have to come with me."

Well, you know the rest. We were searched, and I learned for the first time what my rights are. Let's not forget what happened when my dad had to come to the police station.

The look of anger and disappointment from him is something I will never forget; that's a story in itself. Days went by. Besides being grounded and losing some privileges, I felt like this would pass and soon I would be enjoying the rest of the summer hanging with my buds. Oh no, wrong answer, this nightmare continues.

Shortly after my bad decision to be cool, my dad and I were standing in front of a court, being stared at by some very serious-looking military men. After a short introduction, I realized we were being questioned by the base commander. Unfortunately, I had to re-live my "cool" nightmare, bit by agonizing bit. Besides being restricted from all AAFES facilities, my so-called free time would now be filled by 40 hours of community service. Community service, that doesn't sound too bad. In fact, it sounds more like a pleasant term used to describe some helpful volunteers; "NOT!"

My first day reporting to the Security Forces building, which by the way was a place I didn't enjoy being during my first visit, the events started fast and furious.

I was issued several of my own large plastic garbage bags and started, quickly at first, of course, picking up cigarette butts, paper and what seemed like anything that wasn't grass.

I guess it was about two hours later and three full garbage bags along the way, I realized you

don't notice how much trash is on the ground until someone is over your shoulder, pointing out a piece here, there, everywhere.

The end of a beautiful day, right! Oh no, the best was yet to come. Being a military brat, I was familiar with the term sand bag and through numerous exercises around the base, I had seen some pretty cool structures built with them. You know, those structures were pretty neat, until I realized how a sand bag is made.

Unfortunately, they don't arrive fully formed as they appeared to me and now that I consider myself an expert, I feel I am qualified to enlighten all of you. I was taken to the far side of the base where I was introduced to the largest pile of sand this side of Myrtle Beach.

Next, I learned, after several failures, how much skill it takes to put loose sand in a burlap sack, tie it, then neatly stack it on the ground. My suggestion to you all; Find one of those cool sand bag structures already built and ask the residents if you can rent it.

From day to day, those words "community service" echoed in my ears; from picking up trash, wiping down gym equipment, shredding endless mounds of paper and let's not forget my new friend, the sand pile. After what seemed like all summer, my 40 hours were finally up.

I can say that particular summer was not a great time to be this kid. Forget "COOL," I want to get back to school and you can be sure next summer it will be "A great time to be a kid." Oh, although I doubt it, hopefully my parents will also forget by the next time summer rolls around.

The advice I can offer others: don't steal, it's definitely not worth it!

Essay contest winners presented awards



The winners of the essay contest were presented prizes at the Family Support Center Dec. 11. (From left to right) Darrius Mack, Robin Mack, Chelsea Queen, Adrienne Kennedy, Shane Curnutt, Catelynn Curnutt

Photo by Airman 1st Class Susan Penning

(Editor's note: Following are four winners of the Family Support Center's *Why I Like Being Part of a Military Family* essay contest. Other category winners appeared in previous editions of *The Shaw Spirit*.)

By Adrienne Kennedy 6th - 8th grade category

Hi, my name is Adrienne E. Kennedy, and I'm about to tell you why I like being a part of a military family. I can tell you this, because my dad is in the military.

I like being a part of a military family, because number one, it is fun. I say this, because there are lots of different activities for you to do on holidays or just to have fun.

Number two is because I get to travel to different places whenever my dad gets transferred to another base. Some people say moving is 'boring,' but I say it's fun. I also like being part of a military family because I get to have an ID at the age of 10. I really like it when I meet the people that work with my dad. I like to meet friends who are also a part of a military family. If I were never part of a military family, I couldn't go on base where I know some people care about me, just like my mom and dad. I love being part of a military family.

By Darrius Mack 9th - 12th grade category

In order for me to discuss my feelings, I am first going to introduce myself. My full name is Darrius Laven Mack. I am 15 years old attending Timmonsville High School. I was born in Florence, S.C., on Feb. 12, 1988. I am currently in the 10th grade where I am excelling in my studies as a consistent A-B honor roll student. I have a grade point average of 3.5 -- while being in the top males in my grade. I enjoy playing basketball and drawing many things. I have been a military child since birth. Enough about my life, let me tell you about why I like being a part of the military family.

Being a military child is very interesting for me. I like the fact that I am a part of something that is proud and strong. Living in a military household

has taught me to understand that I, too, can be strong and courageous. We have a lot of benefits. Not only the fact that things are cheaper here than it is in regular civilian life, but also the fact I have knowledge of the past activities that went on throughout the "military existence." I take a military class named JROTC in high school as a 10th grader. I like that when the teacher talks about the things military people do in general, I can spread a good bit of information to my fellow classmates because I am familiar on what he's talking about.

I like to wear the uniforms also (even though my school has an Army branch). I just like the feeling knowing I have something on my uniform that explains I have done something worth speaking about. It may seem like I'm haughty, but I'm not. I just love that strong taste of achievement, kind of like the same taste I have when I'm playing basketball on the court. I plan to do a lot of productive things with my life, and I won't forget to give the military credit for some of the strong ambition I have. Being a part of this family really gives me a backbone to lean on. It supports me really well. It doesn't matter if it's during school, home time, or just around my everyday life. I am accustomed to it.

So in conclusion, I like being in the military family because it builds up my confidence. I love this life, and I wouldn't trade it for anything in this world. My fellow civilian friends like my way of living too, even though it is new to them. I hope you've enjoyed my point of view on where my feelings are. Thank you for your time of reading this.

By Robin Mack 9th - 12th grade category

I like being a part of the military family. One reason is because a lot of opportunities come my way to become a better citizen within my community. I also get the chance to meet new people of many different nationalities and learn about different cultures. That way, when I step out into the real world, I will have already experienced some things that others may not have. So, I will be used to it. Then, I like the base community and setting because it is safe. Because I am a part of this fami-

ly I can receive great benefits for medical and dental health. Each day I am learning more and becoming a better person. I realize I am blessed and am very thankful to be a part of this great family.

By Shane Curnutt 9th - 12th grade category

"Why I like being part of a military family." Now that is somewhat of a biased statement, isn't it? Maybe a better one would be, "What is it like to be part of a military family?" But, I will go with the original one. I guess being part of a military family has its ups and downs. I'm a teenager and I will admit that most of the time I look at the downs. However, this is a positive essay, so I will continue with the positives.

I guess the number one positive part of being in a military family is the fact that almost anywhere we go, we have each other in times of adjustment and change. I think this is because we all go through the same thoughts and emotions and we all can relate to one another.

So, I think support is the number one reason I like being in a military family. I see many other families that are not as close to one another. I think the main reason for this is because they have never been exposed to extreme cases or situations as that of a military family. I am grateful the military has provided me and my family such an opportunity to bond as what we have.

I think another positive part of being in a military family is the many wonderful opportunities we have experienced. My family and I have enjoyed experiencing Europe as well as most of the United States. I know as a fact many families are not as fortunate as mine, and we are very lucky to have experienced (and still experiencing) the many cultures and different lifestyles around the world.

Now that I look at it, I guess that there are more positive aspects than negative of being part of a military family. I am grateful I have had so many wonderful experiences and I look forward to many more in the future. I think being part of a military family is really awesome and I wouldn't trade it for any other in the world.

Loose lips can sink ships, down aircraft

By Michael Alston

20th Fighter Wing COMSEC manager

It was because of a break in the enemy's security that U.S. forces were able to learn the location of and capture former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein Dec. 13.

In the war against terrorism, information can be a powerful weapon. Keeping it secure is vital, and losing it can cost lives.

Communications Security, a part of Information Assurance, is the process of denying unauthorized people information derived from telecommunications and to ensure the authenticity of telecommunications.

"Having an effective COMSEC program is very essential to the mission of the Air Force," according to Tech. Sgt. Danny Goldston, COMSEC alternate manager.

"During Vietnam, while we had superior forces, we suffered heavy casualties due to lapses in protection of information resources," said Goldston.

To prevent the same things happening today, care must be taken in guarding information and information systems. Everyone in the chain of command has a role in ensuring an effective COMSEC program.

Everyone, from the base commander to the most junior member, is responsible for keeping

communications secure.

Each member must safeguard COMSEC material according to Air Force Instruction 33-211, *Communications Security User Requirements*, and control the material until it is destroyed or turned in.

Shaw's Information Assurance office strives to have the best COMSEC program possible. This can only be done with everyone's help. All Team Shaw members need to be knowledgeable of COMSEC responsibilities.

For more information call **895-1134**. After duty hours, call **895-5850**. Remember, an ounce of prevention is definitely worth our security. *(Staff Sgt. Lee Watts contributed to this article.)*



Spirit Spotlight



Staff Sgt. Tami Estep

Organization: 20th Medical Support Squadron

Duty title: Pharmacy craftsman

Hometown: Cortland, Ohio

Time in service: 11 years

Family: Husband, Billy

Off-duty interests: Jet skiing, martial arts and watching football

Words I live by: "Persevere to finish what you start."

The Shaw Spirit runs announcements for sporting event winners, adult and youth sporting leagues, retirements, award winners and graduates. For more information, call 895-2018 or send an e-mail to spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil.