



FROM THE HOMEFRONT

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER TO KEEP FAMILIES CONNECTED



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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FAMILY PROGRAMS

This is my first article as Director of Family Programs, and I have rewritten the first sentence multiple times. If this were the days of writing on a typewriter, there would be a pile of crumpled sheets of paper in the corner of my office. I enjoy writing for others - me, not so much.

So, I've been thinking about what I would like to convey to our families about Family Programs and why we do what we do. It is not for accolades, in fact, we prefer not to have attention drawn to us. We want to get the job done and remain anonymous. It is not for the money, we will never get rich doing what we do. We work odd hours, sometimes that includes evenings and weekends. Like many others, we are asked to do more with less, and sometimes the issues we are working on are downright heartbreaking.

So, why do we do it? Because we care-we truly want our families to be healthy, happy, and thriving! The people I work with are remarkable. They are dedicated, steadfast, and caring. We may not always have the answers, but I guarantee we will do our best to find them. Like every family, we have our ups and downs, successes and failures, but we keep trying- for you and your families.

I would also like to recognize our former Director, Mr. Dave Leonard. Dave was our director for a record nine years and made numerous contributions to the success of this program. I called Dave the "Closer". Dave left no stone unturned when it came to finding solutions that would benefit our families. I learned a lot from Dave, such as never giving up and always staying positive. We wish Dave all the best in the next chapter(s) of his journey!

- Miriam Boyle

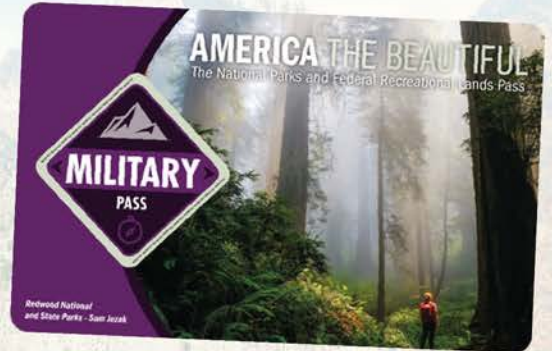


Hello Guard Family,

I have a situation in my family that I don't think is unique to National Guard Families in Vermont. I have two teenage children who, despite all their school activities, friendships, and employment, constantly complain they are bored.

In our search to find things to do, we have come across some great ideas that offer incredible opportunities for vacations that also have incentives for military family members.

The **America the Beautiful National Park Pass** is available free of charge to U.S. military members and dependents in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard and Reserve and National Guard members. Also, children up to age 16 are admitted for free. Each pass is good for the pass holder and up to four adults. For more information, visit the National Park Service website: [Entrance Passes \(U.S. National Park Service\)](https://www.nps.gov/entrance-passes) ([nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov))



Orlando, Florida offers a unique opportunity to visit multiple parks and amusement areas all within the same area. Research Disney World, Disney Hotels, Universal Studios, or Sea World to see what military discounts are offered. For more information visit: [Walt Disney World Resort \(go.com\)](https://www.go.com), [SeaWorld Orlando Military Discount - Tickets | SeaWorld Orlando](https://www.seaworld.com), [Military Ticket Deals and Specials | Universal Orlando Resort™](https://www.universalorlando.com).



Fresh out of ideas? You can always visit websites like Armed Forces Vacation Club to plan a vacation or staycation. A membership with Armed Forces Vacation Club is free to all current, veterans, and retired members of the United States military, National Guard, Reserves (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard); including Gold Star families and Civilian employees of the DoD (appropriated, non-appropriated, or retired), Association of the US Army (AUSA) members and the immediate families of all the above (spouses, parents, and/or children). For more information, visit: [Membership Resources & Eligibility | Armed Forces Vacation Club \(afvclub.com\)](https://www.afvclub.com).

These are only three ideas to spend time as a family unit. Regardless of which option you choose, the thought of spending time together making memories after a long winter is appealing for everyone. So, start planning today!



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WE HAVE DIAPERS!

- ★ All Sizes Available Including Training Pants
- ★ FREE To All Military Members and Veterans
- ★ Available at the Family Programs building at Camp Johnson and the Air Guard Base



PROS AND CONS OF GROUP THERAPY

PROS

- **Support from Peers** - The opportunity to receive support from others who are experiencing similar issues can reassure and validate your feelings. Sharing an experience is a powerful way to feel part of a community.
- **Learning from Others** - Group Therapy allows participants to listen to others who have navigated similar experiences and help them avoid the same mistakes. The ability to learn how another has successfully dealt with a problem is incredibly helpful.
- **Cost-Effective** - Worrying about the cost of therapy is one of the top reasons many don't seek it out. Group Therapy can be the most cost-effective way to find help.
- **Increased Accountability** - When a person is accountable to others, they may be more motivated to make the changes that can lead to greater success with their goals and behavior.

Group Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that involves a small group of individuals who meet regularly with a trained therapist to address their emotional and psychological issues. While Group Therapy can be highly effective in certain situations, it also has its drawbacks. In this article, we will explore the **PROS** and **CONS** of Group Therapy.

CONS

- **Lack of Individual Attention** - If a person, or issue, requires more in-depth attention, Group Therapy may not be able to provide it.
- **Group Dynamics** - It's no secret that group activities often bring out certain personalities that dominate, shrink, or form cliques. This can lead to feelings of isolation, competition, and jealousy.
- **Confidentiality** - When disclosing personal and sensitive information to a group it can be more difficult to have complete confidence that the information stays within the group.
- **Limited Scope of Issues** - Group Therapy may not be appropriate for all types of issues. Some issues may be too personal or too complex to be addressed in a group setting.

Overall, group therapy can be a valuable form of psychotherapy for many individuals. It can provide support, community, and new learning opportunities. However, it may not be suitable for everyone, and there are potential drawbacks to consider, such as a lack of individual attention and complex group dynamics. Talk to the trained therapist about these issues either before or after the session. Ultimately, the decision to participate in group therapy should be made in consultation with a mental health professional who can help determine if it is the right choice for a particular individual.

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS OF COMBAT VETERANS GROUP

A supportive community for loved ones of combat veterans.

Join us for open discussions, sharing experiences, and connecting with others who understand the journey.

For more information email Charlene Caiano charlene.a.caiano.ctrearmy.mil



WHERE: JOSH'S HOUSE
162 HEGEMAN AVE, COLCHESTER, VT
WHEN: 2-3PM
EVERY 3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH
MARCH - SEPT (NO GROUP IN JULY)



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MILITARY ON SOURCE



Fun & Fitness >



Hobbies >



**Joining the Military
Community >**



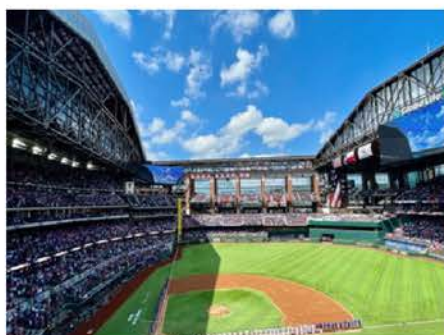
Libraries >



**Recreational
Lodging >**



Single Life >



Tickets & Tours >



Travel Planning >

To access these MilLife Guides, visit: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/recreation-travel-shopping/mwrl/millife-guides>

Still Need Help? Connect with an expert 24/7 at 800-342-9647. We get MilLife and we're here 24/7 to connect you to the right kind of expert guidance - from quick answers about specific issues, to personalized coaching, to confidential counseling.

VERMONT VETERAN OUTREACH FOOD, FAMILY, & TIPS FOR A SAFE SUMMER

Summer is making its way to Vermont! My name is Brianna Haley, and I am your Outreach Specialist for Caledonia, Windsor, and Orange counties. I hope you are all looking forward to sunshine, barbecues, and lake days.

When the sun comes out, we all want to be outdoors enjoying it, whether you're out hiking, working in the garden, on the boat, or on a motorcycle, you need to remember to stay hydrated. Our bodies are constantly losing water; extreme heat and physical activity can increase the rate at which our bodies lose it. If you notice you are thirsty, fatigued, have muscle cramps, feel hot, have dry skin, have nausea, dizziness, or are confused, you are most likely dehydrated. Heat stroke can also occur. It is essential to get medical help immediately if you notice that your body temperature is over 103, sweating has stopped, you have rapid breathing, and convulsions, or become unresponsive.

Summer also brings Independence Day on July 4th, where people celebrate and socialize with barbecues, fireworks, and parades. Did you know that fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires every year? Some things to remember:

- **NEVER ALLOW YOUNG CHILDREN TO HANDLE FIREWORKS.**
- **NEVER HOLD LIGHTED FIREWORKS IN YOUR HANDS.**
- **NEVER LIGHT FIREWORKS INDOORS.**
- **NEVER POINT OR THROW LIGHTED FIREWORKS AT ANOTHER PERSON.**
- **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A BUCKET OF WATER, HOSE, OR EXTINGUISHER NEARBY.**

For those who enjoy the water, make sure you have life jackets. Even great swimmers still need life jackets. Make sure it fits properly and can properly fasten. If you're unsure about your jacket - hold your arms straight up over your head, ask someone to grasp the tops of the arm openings, and gently pull up. Make sure there is no excess room above the openings and that the jacket does not ride up over your chin or face.

Summer wouldn't be complete without some motorcycle safety. Make sure you're wearing the proper attire, while you might think you look cool in a tank top and sandals - road rash hurts! Protect your eyes with sunglasses or goggles and always wear your helmet! Stay aware of your surroundings - some people don't like to share the road with bikes. And ultimately, stay safe and enjoy the scenery.

As always, feel free to reach out to your local Outreach Specialist if you are experiencing food insecurities, financial challenges, or any complications in certain areas of your life that you need assistance with. We are here to help!!

Vermont Veterans Outreach Program
Vermont Army National Guard Armory
99 Fairground Rd
Bradford, VT 05033
Vermont Military & Family Support Center: (888)-607-8773



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Feelings should be indicators, not dictators.

Lysa TerKeurst

Lysa TerKeurst



“They can indicate where your heart is in the moment, but that doesn't mean they have the right to dictate your behavior and boss you around.” (Unglued: Making Wise Choices in the Midst of Raw Emotions)

Chaplain Reflection:

Psalm 40:1 (ESV), I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

I am thankful for feelings and how each feeling provides me with so much information. I feel excited when I return home from a trip and reunite with my family. I am sad when I know someone who is suffering. I feel and fill in the blank. Feelings are important indicators of what is going on in one's heart and it is important to acknowledge one's feelings. However, a person must also be cautious not to let feelings control one's thinking and actions.

How often have you regretted a decision, a word, or a behavior based on your feelings? Everyone could share a story and the life lessons afterward. Since we know that our feelings change based on the circumstances, then we must also learn the importance of waiting till our emotions calm down before making a decision, speaking a harsh word, or acting only later to regret it.

The Psalms are filled with emotions: praise, fear, doubt, anger, sadness, loneliness, thanksgiving, etc. David learned many life lessons and wrote about some of them, and yet one of the most important lessons he learned was to wait upon the LORD.

For God and Country-Live the Call!
CH (COL) Brett Charsky



CH (COL) Brett Charsky
VTNG State Chaplain
Cell: (802) 318-0692



VERMONT GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE TO PREVENT SUICIDE AMONG SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Suicide is a national public health concern that affects all Americans, including **Service Members, Veterans, their Families (SMVF)**, and those who love them. In 2020, Vermont veterans died at a 36% higher rate than the U.S. (Vermont 43.0 vs. U.S. 31.7 per 100,000). In 2021, the rate of deaths by suicide by Vermont Veterans is 3.5 times higher than non-veterans (83.1 Veterans vs 23.7 non-Veterans per 100,000).

With the support of Governor Phil Scott and Adjutant General Gregory Knight, state government, Vermont National Guard, Veterans Administration, healthcare organizations, community partners and military family members have come together to form the Vermont Governor's Challenge team: **Mission Connect Vermont** to develop a strategic plan to prevent SMVF suicide across the state...

...but we need your help!

We need to gather information from you on issues/gaps in service including housing, mental health, employment, education, etc. Please scan the above QR code and complete the survey.

CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAMS



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Summer break seems to be getting shorter and shorter. Before we know it, the new school year will be upon us. As a parent or caregiver, it is one of our many jobs to prepare them for this transition of returning to school.

Transitions are opportunities for children to learn and grow. A smooth transition between home and school can help children feel better about themselves and teach them to trust adults and other kids. However, transitions can also cause a bit of anxiety. Some strategies parents and caregivers can use to help children cope with the transition back to school are:

- 1. Be excited about the change!** If you are excited and confident, your kiddo is more likely to be.
- 2. Get ready.** Visit the new classroom/school with your child. Introduce your child to their teacher before school starts.
- 3. Build a social network.** For the first-timers, arrange a play date with another kiddo that will be in their classroom. This will guarantee there's a familiar face in the room.
- 4. Get into the routine.** Start earlier bedtimes and have them help with tasks like packing lunches and picking out clothes for the next day.
- 5. Communicate.** On the first day of school, be sure to take extra time to discuss the day ahead and behind. However, do not prolong the goodbye - staying will only make it harder.
- 6. Spread love.** Always say goodbye to your kiddo and tell them you love them. If they are struggling with your exit, make supportive statements like, "It's hard to say goodbye, we'll see each other later."

Above all else, be their parent: show them compassion, teach them, and be engaged in and curious about their life. Remember, transitions are challenging, but can be very rewarding, start your child off on a good foot for the upcoming school year!

1) Change in RULES



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik4ZVUnP7II>

2) Change in ROLES



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ij9ugLZrbfy>

3) Change in RELATIONSHIPS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TqKPDhmv2M>

4) Change in ROUTINES



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Usdi8MAO_Y

5) Change in RITUALS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tug5YHF6wNk>

5 Big Changes Workbook



<https://www.ngfamily.vt.gov/Portals/38/VTNGCYP-5BigChanges.Workbook.pdf?ver=mGLUEujWimC22Leic5yuBA%3d%3d×tamp=1676996383961>

Back to school

I can't believe it's already back-to-school time. Feels like I just put away the winter boots. This is the perfect time to teach your children about financial literacy.

If your kids aren't old enough for back to school, the US Mint has free interactive games and activities to teach children about money www.usmint.gov/learn/kids. These games are a great way to get your children started on the road to good financial health. While sitting with your young children, let them feel money and trace the coins with their fingers; our society doesn't use cash a lot anymore so seeing it and feeling it is a good way to make it a concrete concept.

For those with school-age children, share with them what the back-to-school budget is. Start with small numbers for the younger kids, and raise the dollar amount they can spend as they get older. Guide them through comparing prices and show them how sale items and coupons can significantly affect how much they can get.

This will hopefully start the conversation about 'needs' versus 'wants', and let them make the choices, sometimes one is better than four, but the decision will be theirs to make.



Megan Sather - Personal Financial Counselor
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If your children are closer to graduation, give them a specific, itemized budget for back-to-school items. For example, maybe \$50 for new sneakers and they choose ones for \$30 and keep the difference. For them, the understanding of 'needs' versus 'wants' becomes crystal clear when they are motivated to spend less. This can also start the conversation about saving versus spending.

Did you know that many banks and credit unions have no-fee youth savings accounts? It's never too early to teach your children about saving and spending money wisely.

Also, there are a lot of free Financial Literacy activities for children of all ages on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Money As You Grow website. www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/money-as-you-grow/ They have creative ways to start the discussion and books you can read to your little ones about money. So, go ahead and get the conversation started!



Interested in free school supplies? Reach out to your local Military & Family Readiness Specialist or Vermont Veterans Outreach Specialist for more information.



While we are very fortunate to have patriotic and supportive employers in Vermont, we are always concerned about any discrimination that our Guard and Reserve members may receive from their civilian employer. If you ever feel that your supervisor is taking advantage of you regarding your military service, please contact our office and talk about it with our staff. Should they feel that the situation deserves deeper investigation, then our ombudsman will follow-up with you.



To stay on the "straight and narrow" with your boss, whether it's a drill weekend, a traditional Annual Training period, or a deployment, be sure to follow the guidance below:

Communication is so important when it comes to informing your civilian boss about your military responsibilities. ESGR offers sample notification letters & templates to use when you must notify your civilian leadership of your Guard or Reserve duties. Whether you are going to, or coming from, military service, these documents are meant to help inform your bosses and start the conversations needed to put everyone on the same page. These letters also include important information about ESGR, and how we help employers, too. Visit www.esgr.mil/Volunteers/Resources-Library to learn more.

Our employers, while not sacrificing as you and your family do, also give. They have to keep their business running while you are gone. MANY go above and beyond what Federal law requires them to do. Please consider saying thanks to your boss or company by requesting a Patriot Award. You can do that online at www.esgr.mil/Employers/Employer-Awards. Once the award arrives, our office will come to your place of employment to do a formal presentation.

Should you have any questions regarding your rights and responsibilities as an employee while serving, please contact Ms. Linda Fowler, at 802-338-4187, or linda.fowler10.ctr@army.mil.



Hello! My name is Susan Demers and I'm the new Vermont Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA). As a TAA, I cover all Reserve and National Guard components of any branch of service throughout the state. Though I have never served myself, I have been a National Guard military spouse for the past 13 years.

Please understand that what I do is not a part of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). I know they sound very similar, but TAP is for service members (SM) who are separating from the service completely. The Reserve Component Transition Assistance Advisors Program (RCTAA) is designed to help a SM before, during, and after separation. The official rule of eligibility is 180 consecutive days or more of Title 10 orders, but I am here to help all SMs - regardless of their eligibility.

So, what exactly do I do? As your TAA, my job is to DIRECT you to the BENEFITS you have earned, with the COMPASSION of someone who truly wants to help you succeed.

You can think of me as the Google to your benefits. It's my job to know what you qualify for and whom to contact at different organizations so I can streamline the process for you. The areas that I can help you with include state and local benefits, VA Assistance for Physical and Mental Health, Disabled Veterans Program Assistance, Education and Training Assistance, Employment Assistance, Health and Life Insurance, Financial Assistance, Relocation, Homelessness, and Career Change.

I want to thank you for your time and your service. Now let me serve you!



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KITCHEN SPOONS
& COMBAT BOOTS



Kitchen Spoons & Combat Boots was developed by Family Programs to provide service members and their families with informational content based on identified gaps in services. From Kitchen Spoons to Combat Boots, these informative sessions help balance life on the home front, during military service, and everything in between. Currently, the Kitchen Spoons & Combat Boots webinar series is on hiatus until further notice BUT don't worry, you can view past webinars by checking out the Second Time Around podcast episodes on the Family Programs website: www.ngfamily.vt.gov/Programs-Services/Kitchen-Spoons-Combat-Boots.

TOPICS OF INTEREST COVERED

• EMPLOYMENT • TRANSITION READINESS • FINANCIAL • RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT

To learn more about our future webinar launch, follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/kitchenspoonsandcombatboots

Hello! You will often hear from leaders that the Vermont National Guard is a small family. Service members and their families are the bedrock of our strong National Guard community here in the Green Mountain State. We align ourselves with service because we believe in our mission. Often, it is a family affair. As we celebrate career milestones like retirements, enlistments are happening with those beginning their service standing alongside those concluding it. I am pleased to announce that there was an addition to my family on April 29th, 2023! Carter Raymond Thomas was born at a healthy weight of 9 pounds 6 ounces. My spouse Ashley Teague (Thomas) who works in the VTARNG at the USPFO and I are grateful for all the warm wishes and support we have received.



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Military OneSource
TBD

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