

Volunteers Honored, Provided Tools for Deployments

North Dakota National Guard Public Affairs 

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FARGO, N.D. - Volunteers with the North Dakota National Guard came away from this weekend with a little more recognition for their dedication and accomplishments and a box of tools to use as they continue to support their families and other military families around the state. It was all part of "Volunteers Are Our Shining Stars," the 2009 State Family Program Workshop in Fargo.



"Taking care of Soldiers, Airmen and their families is my No. 1 priority," Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general, told the workshop attendees. "We want every deployed Guard member to be confident that their loved ones will be cared for and assisted as part of the North Dakota National Guard family. Providing our military families with the skills for surviving a deployment is incredibly important."

The tips for deployments ranged from heartfelt advice - "laugh every day" - to the practical and quirky - "buy more underwear." Those were just two of the tips offered by keynote speaker and author Karen Pavlicin. Pavlicin, of Woodbury, Minn., turned her challenging yet positive experiences with her Marine husband's deployments into two books - "Surviving Deployment: A Guide for Military Families" and "Life After Deployment: Military Families Share Reunion Stories and Advice." The lessons shared during the weekend stemmed from her experience and writings.

"Think of what's taking up your time that's really not that important," Pavlicin told the crowd of about 75 Family Readiness Group leaders and other volunteers. "Laundry is not that important. Buy more underwear."

Ann Dolence, of Moorhead, Minn., a certified recreation therapist working in psychiatric treatment, also addressed workshop attendees, talking about "Attitudes are Contagious." Several breakout sessions provided more tools and tips, and volunteers were recognized for their efforts during a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Saturday.

"Our volunteers are absolutely key to ensuring the best care and support network possible for all of our military families," said Rob Keller, director of Service Member and Family Support for the North Dakota National Guard. "We can't thank them enough for their dedication in partnering with us to guarantee the best care and resources are provided to all of our military families who serve alongside their Soldiers and Airmen."



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North Dakota Air Guard Hosts Youth Event in Minot

Teenagers aged 16 and older are invited to attend a free event hosted by the 219th Security Forces Squadron at the Minot YMCA on March 15 from 2-5 p.m.

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Biathlon 'perfection' Takes Seven Years

In 2002, Sgt. Blake Hillerson didn't know how to cross-country ski. Seven years later at the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Championships in March, he proved that he's one of the top biathletes in the country.

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National Guard Team Represents State Well in Vermont Competition

A North Dakota National Guard Soldier scored big at the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships. Sgt. Blake Hillerson, of Fargo, earned a silver medal in what he called, "the race of my life!" He battled 53 competitors to ski into second place in the 20-kilometer race with a time of 59 minutes, 48 seconds.

03.12.09, Courtesy Story

State Chaplain Retires From North Dakota National Guard

The state chaplain for the North Dakota National Guard for the past 16 years was honored on March 7 on the occasion of his retirement from the military. Chaplain (Col.) Jeff Franko, 59, has provided chaplaincy support to Soldiers and Airmen across the state since 1988, having first served with the 164th Engineer Battalion in Minot.

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