



# WEEKLY UPDATE

23 November 2020

It's Motivational Monday and this is your weekly ACS Update, all the Soldier and Family Readiness news you can use to support the personnel in your organization. During November we're going to encourage everyone to focus on the #FiresFifty truism #12—"Never take anything for granted." Our friends at the Graham Performance Enhancement Center tell us that gratitude is a cornerstone of resilience and we agree! Whether it's living in this military community, thawing out from last month's ice storm and truly appreciating electricity, or being thankful for our Military Families that have "kept the homefires burning" for the past 200+ years while our Service Members have defended freedom, we are grateful and don't take anything for granted! To make this rather long weekly document easier to read, new information will be shared in bold font.

## Community Information Services

New to Lawton Fort Sill and wondering where to turn next? Let an ACS Specialist at Fort Sill's Army Community Service help you. We'll help you complete an Intake, Assessment, and Prioritized Service Plan that can be resourced right here in our local community. The Specialist will then help you access all the resources necessary to complete your Prioritized Service Plan, whether that's at ACS, on-post, in the surrounding community or through a National Resource such as Military One Source. And they'll regularly check-in with you until all the goals on your Prioritized Service Plan are achieved. So whether you are trying to find your way around Lawton Fort Sill, want to borrow a few things from the Lending Closet, need help finding Spouse Employment, want to join in on one of the New Parent Support virtual playgroups, or need a second set of eyes on your Family's Spend Plan, contact an ACS Specialist at 580-442-4916. We are here with Real Live Solutions for Successful Army Living!

**Fort Sill's Emergency Management Office will be hosting a Winter Weather Seminar on 24 November, 0900-1000, via Facebook Live ([HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/OFFICIALFTSILL/](https://www.facebook.com/OFFICIALFTSILL/)) for anyone interested in Fort Sill's Winter Weather processes and procedures. Contact Steve Gluck at (580) 442-2533 for more information.**

Several charitable organizations coordinate sending cards and care packages to deployed Service Members during the Holidays, and for most, the deadline for participation is 1 December. Although not an endorsement, here's a quick list that may be helpful to those wanting to know what their options are:

<https://www.minted.com/lp/send-christmas-cards-to-soldiers>

The American Red Cross is offering a virtual Stress Management and Relaxation Technique Resiliency Workshop on 19 December. Topics of this interactive session include multi-tasking, working from home, supporting children, wellness plans and much, much more. To RSVP for the workshop, or for more information, e-mail [laura.arias@redcross.org](mailto:laura.arias@redcross.org).

Nye Library hosts a Story Time each Wednesday at 11:00 AM CST. This early literacy program is for pre-readers. Normally they offer a movement activity, story, craft, and game. To support social distancing they currently only offer the craft. They hope to resume normal story time operations in the future! There is a 7 family limit and they rotate families through within the hour time frame. Please be patient as they clean



between participants. Mask/face covering are required in the library (except for children under 6yrs and/or for health reasons).

Nye Library's "Space Catastrophe" escape rooms, November 28 at 10:30 am or 2:30 pm. You and your team will have ONE HOUR to search for clues, solve puzzles, unlock containers, find artifacts and solve crimes. Think you've got what it takes? Teams can range from 2-8 people. Participants must be 18+. Teenagers may be allowed on a team with their guardian. For more information, please call Nye Library at (580) 442-2048.

Military One Source Blog: Holidays Hitting Differently This Year? "In any other year but this one, my holiday shopping would be complete by now. My blood type would have been seasonally transfused with PSL positive and I would have vacations and parties enthusiastically doodled into boxes on the calendar, lamenting "Gosh, the next few weeks are going to be crazy," while my eyes twinkled with overbooked excitement."  
<https://blog-brigade.militaryonesource.mil/2020/11/03/holidays-hitting-differently-in-2020/>

You'll find information about a winter clothing drive, movie matinee, pre-school, kids, teens, and adult activities, literacy dogs, legomania, free OKC Zoo tickets, and more in the Lawton Public Library monthly newsletter <https://www.lawtonok.gov/departments/library>

USO Oklahoma hosts a Community Walk each Wednesday morning through November 25th on Fort Sill's 3 mile track. Meet at the pavilion. USO will provide the water and snacks. Kids are welcome!

Christmas in the Park, Nov 27, 2020 - Dec 31, Ackley Park, Elk City, OK. Visit Elk City's Ackley Park this holiday season to celebrate Christmas in the Park, one of the best light displays in Oklahoma. This event features millions of lights and hundreds of festive displays every night, as well as plenty of Christmas music. On Friday and Saturday nights, bring the kids out to visit Santa's gift shop, ride the Candy Cane Train and go 'round on the Centennial Carousel. Enhance your tour of the lights with a ride on the Double Decker Bus or the Trolley. In addition to all the fun at Christmas in the Park, go to the Cub Scouts to get a free cup of hot cocoa to warm you up. There will also be special appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus.  
<https://www.visitelkcity.com/>

Clinton Festival of Lights, 1 December, Frisco Avenue, Clinton, OK. The Clinton Festival of Lights features a community light parade, festive window displays throughout the downtown area and a Christmas decoration contest. This annual holiday celebration in Clinton also includes a Santa's workshop. Carolers will fill the streets with Christmas music and you can even get your picture taken with Mr. & Mrs. Claus. Take a break from the main festivities and get your holiday shopping done early with a variety of downtown open houses in the shops and boutiques in downtown Clinton. At the Clinton Festival of Lights, refreshments will also be available and don't forget to grab a sweet treat at the annual Chocolate Festival that is part of the Christmas excitement. <http://clintonok.gov/News-and-Events?block=106&title=Festival%20of%20Lights>

**Cordell's Christmas in the Park, 3 December, 5:30-8:30 PM, Lee Park, Cordell, OK. As Thanksgiving winds down and Christmas festivities start, head to Cordell for Christmas in the Park to kick off the holiday season. This free event transforms Lee Park into a winter wonderland, complete with beautiful lights, ven-**



**dor shopping and activities that inspire a holiday spirit. Participate in a sidewalk chalk contest, visit the silent auction at noon and stay tuned to see if your name is drawn for any prizes. At 5pm, enjoy the Christmas in the Park Parade, followed by the lighting of the park and Santa's visit to the Park Pavilion. Take pictures with the family and celebrate the season during this joyful event.**

**[www.thecordellchamber.com/christmas-in-the-park.html](http://www.thecordellchamber.com/christmas-in-the-park.html)**

Minco Honey Festival, 5 December, Minco High School, Minco, OK. Satisfy your sweet tooth at the Minco Honey Festival with pure Oklahoma honey. During this celebration of nature's nectar, tour the Ross Honey Plant, Oklahoma's largest honey processing facility. At the plant, which opened in 1935, learn all about Oklahoma's official insect, the honey bee and honey production, then sample an impressive array of honey products and take home a sweet treat from the gift shop. After the plant tour, stick around and enjoy a small town Christmas celebration, complete with Santa Clause, a craft show, kiddie tractor pull and honey bake-off. In addition to the honey plant, hourly tours of the Great Plains Cotton Gin and wind towers will be offered at this full day of family fun. Known by locals as the land of milk and honey, Minco dairy producers will be set up on Main Street with free samples of local cheese, whole and chocolate milk. Guests can also meet Lucas Ross, the official "Son of a Beekeeper." Call 405-352-0518 for more information.

## **Employment Readiness**

Those seeking employment locally will want to check out Oklahoma Job Match through the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission website <https://oesc.ok.gov/>. The website which features an OSEC Virtual Agent to guide you through the process of filing a claim, applying for unemployment, as well as exploring available jobs in all fields and a host of training resources. Want to connect with employers seeking Veterans and Military Family Members? There's a section for that as well.

**Military Spouse Education & Career Opportunities** (MySECO) is hosting some fabulous virtual events in December including:

- **3 December, 2pm CST, MSEP LinkedIn Live with Sitel, a global customer experience leader**
- **10 December, 2pm CST, Career Coach Live on creating and maintaining a positive image**
- **15 December, 12pm CST, MSEP LinkedIn Live with ESS/Proximity Learning**
- **17 December, 2pm CST, MSEP Partner Connect with Skillstorm**

The Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program at Fort Sill is also an excellent resource for MilSpouse job-seekers. Check out their weekly virtual offerings on their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/FortSillSFLTAP/>

The USO Pathfinder Program on Fort Sill, also serves MilSpouses as well as transitioning service members. You'll find information and announcements from the USO Pathfinder Program on their social media page <https://www.facebook.com/USOOklahoma/>

Transition is nearly a constant with Military Life. Military Spouses, whether transitioning into, through, or out of Military Life are encouraged to enroll in DoD's MySTeP. Created by military spouses, MySTeP is a self-directed, online learning tool that guides military spouses through the available resources, benefits, pro-



grams and tools for your entire military journey

<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/8656>

## Exceptional Family Member Program



**EFMP** Family Support

EFMP @ACS recently participated in Cameron University's Disability Awareness Resource Fair. Several agencies in the community came together to discuss their services and supports for persons with disabilities. Discussions during this virtual meeting were replete with information on resources for various special needs. In addition, several persons with disabilities reflected on the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, shared personal experiences and discussed the impact the ADA has had on their life. A recording of the event is available at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/hJQUt5GHrcNRUcSg7>

The DoD Exceptional Family Member Program launched an online tool, EFMP & Me, providing 24/7 support to military families with special needs. Through tailored checklists, EFMP & Me users can navigate services, connect with resources and advocate for themselves or a family member with special needs. Visit EFMP & Me <https://efmpandme.militaryonesource.mil>

EFMP Social Connections, Tuesday 17 November at 2:30pm. Exceptional Families are invited to come together for support, resources, great conversations and connections. Call 442-4916 or ask to join the EFMP group at [www.Facebook.com/FortSillACS](http://www.Facebook.com/FortSillACS) to register for this event.



## Family Advocacy Program

The New Parent Support Program telehealth services are a hit! Join our Home Visitors for weekly activities geared just for pre-school kids and their favorite big person including:

- Virtual Exploring the Park, December 1st & December 15th, at 9:30am
- Baby Massage group every Wednesday at 11:00am
- **Parent Table Talk, December 3rd & December 17th during nap time, 1:30 pm**

Military relationships need to be as resilient as the people in them. Look to Military OneSource for proven resources to help you strengthen your bond and navigate common relationship challenges.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support>

**NPSP is also asking you to Join their Home Visitors for a meetup to help celebrate our beloved Veterans from the comfort and safety of your home. We will be keeping our Veterans safe while showing them how much we love and honor them. This event includes a drive-thru craft kit pickup on Monday, December 7th for you and your child to make beautiful holiday decorations for our beloved Veterans. Our Home Visitors will be safely passing out kits while you stay in your cars. Drop off details for completed crafts are to be determined so please follow our event on the Fort Sill Army Community Service FaceBook Page for more details.**

Registration is required to attend. Follow the Caravan Club, A Veterans Holiday Event on the Fort Sill Army Community Service FaceBook page for registration information.



## SafeKids

Our friends at Safe Kids Worldwide want to remind all parents that cooking is the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. That's why all our Military Families are invited to download a printable Cooking Safety Checklist at <https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/nfpa-skw-cooking-safety-checklist.pdf> now in preparation for the traditional Thanksgiving meal. What safety tips does Sparky have for chefs and chefs in training? Find out!

## Financial Readiness



Military Personal Financial Counselors can help Commanders, Service Members, and Family Members on everything from budgeting to investments to consumer protection issues. Fort Sill ACS is lucky enough to have 3 Personal Financial Counselors within our Financial Readiness Program. Learn more by downloading the program guide at <https://finred.usalearning.gov/assets/downloads/FINRED-PFC-G.pdf> or give us a call at 580-442-4916.

Mark your calendars now for the Fort Sill Financial Readiness Team's virtual Credit Repair Workshop on 16 December, 10-11:30am CST. Credit is a part of who you are financially. Improving your credit score will not only help you qualify for loans when you need them, it will also keep your security clearance in good standing. Join the FRP team to learn what you can do, as a consumer, to improve your credit score. RSVP for the workshop by calling (580) 670-1932 or by e-mail at [pfc2.sill.usa@zeiders.com](mailto:pfc2.sill.usa@zeiders.com)

Many people have told us that one of the blessings in disguise of COVID-19 stay at home recommendations has been the amount of money they are saving. If you are experiencing that small blessing as well, the FRP team wants to encourage you to plug those savings into your emergency fund. Need more info? MilSpouse Money Mission has some great videos called "[coffee shop tips](#)" that might be able to point you in the right direction. Need a plan personalized to your family? Our Personal Financial Counselors at ACS are here to help at 580-442-4916.

Join the TSP Training and Liaison Specialists for engaging presentations and live Q&A sessions on TSP topics that matter the most to you. Free live webinars, held multiple times a week, are Ideal for all federal employees, uniform service members, agency/service representatives, military educators, and other parties that are interested in learning about the TSP. December webinars, available on [tsp.gov/webinars](https://tsp.gov/webinars) (webinar password TSPweb), are as follows:



- 1 December, TSP Loans
- 1 December, TSP Investment Funds
- 2 December, TSP Post-Service Withdrawals
- 3 December, TSP Contributions
- 8 December, To Retirement & Beyond (Parts I & II)
- 9 December, TSP In-Service Withdrawals
- 9 December, TSP Investment Funds
- 10 December, New to TSP or Need a Refresher? Ask Away!
- 14 December, 2020: What has Changed at TSP?



- **15 December, TSP Contributions**
- **16 December, TSP Post-Service Withdrawals**
- **17 December, TSP Death Benefits**

Fort Sill's Financial Readiness Team is your one-stop-shop for financial training within your organization. Whether you are looking to inform your organization about TSPs, the Blended Retirement System, vehicle or home-buying, or debt reduction the FRP Team has you covered with 3 Personal Financial Counselors and the ability to tailor a virtual training to your organization's specific needs. See the attached training request form for more information or contact FRP Manager, Ken Lewis, at 442-4916, [kenneth.a.lewis4.civ@mail.mil](mailto:kenneth.a.lewis4.civ@mail.mil) to schedule your unit's training session.

## **Non-Medical Counseling**

Life can be challenging at times. Military life is no exception. That's why Military Family Life Counseling services are free, anonymous, and available from the safety and comfort of your own home through either secure telephone or video call. Fort Sill has 8 adult and 16 child and youth MFLCs. To connect with an adult MFLC call us at 580-442-4916. To get connected with a child and youth MFLC call either ACS or Fort Sill's Child and Youth Services School Liaison Office, Augelica Fleming at 580-442-2130 Learn more about this DoD funded program at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling>

Our Fort Sill assigned MFLCs are backed up 24/7 by Masters Level Counselors available through the Military One Source Non-Medical Counseling service which can be accessed at any time by calling 1-800-342-9647. So if you are feeling a little down reach out!

Relationship Help Made for the MilLife is right at your fingertips! Every relationship could use help from time to time. And military life adds its own unique set of challenges. Whether you're a military couple looking to reinvigorate your bond, rebuild connections or retool your relationship skills whoever your "we" may be, we're here to help and support you. Military OneSource can connect you to free expert guidance, support, tools and resources made with the military in mind, including:

- One-on-one relationship coaching, skill building or counseling.
- Love Every Day, a text-based tool for encouraging communication.
- Virtual resources, such as webinars and other e-learning.
- Relationship articles for every stage of the MilLife.

Join the thousands of people who have found more rewarding, more resilient relationships with information, guidance and expert help through Military OneSource. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support>

## **Relocation Readiness**

If you're new to the area and looking for the inside scoop on all that the state has to offer there's no better place to start than the Travel OK website <https://www.travelok.com/> Whether you are looking for shopping, restaurants, fun things to do or places to stay the website, which is divided by region, not only offers insider recommendations you can save yourself a buck or two by checking out the deals and coupons sec-





tion! Oh, did I mention the downloadable maps and brochures. Or the fact that they've got an app. Check it out!

The Fort Sill Lending Closet, full of regular household items available for loan, is now open through a "low-contact" process. If you are scheduled to PCS this winter please contact ACS immediately after you schedule your move with transportation. We'll discuss your family needs, your timeframe to borrow the common household items we have in the lending closet, and then get the sanitized items packaged for a scheduled, curb side pick-up. Call us at 580-442-4916. Please note that all ACS services, including the Lending Closet, are available by appointment only. Call ahead to help us help you!

## Soldier and Family Readiness

The **Military Families Learning Network** invites military family service providers and Cooperative Extension professionals to online professional development opportunities where they can exchange experiences, resources, and research to enhance professional impact and professional growth. MFLN will host several upcoming webinars for professionals providing services to Military Families. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are provided for most of MFLN's professional development webinars. Registration links are available on their website. Of particular note this month are:

- 1 Dec., Make New Friends: Promoting Friendship and Belonging
- 3 Dec., Engaging Families in Clinical Services
- 8 Dec., 2020 Personal Finance Year in Review
- 16 Dec., Implementing Lifestyle & Performance Medicine
- 17 Dec., Plugged-In & Left Out: Creating Meaningful & Engaging Virtual Connections with Individuals with Disabilities

Sample SFRG SOPs are available on MilSuite. The SOPs were created with guidance from Army Directive 2019-17 (Changes the Family Readiness Group to the Soldier and Family Readiness Group Program); which establishes policy changes to fundraising, reporting, and informal funds activities for the Soldier and Family Readiness Group (SFRG) Program. Visit <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857725> to download the samples. Additionally, Fort Sill's SJA offers a localized SFRG sample for Commanders. Commanders and SFRG Representatives are encouraged to contact their Brigade Legal Officer.

Family Care Plan Checklists and Forms are also available on MilSuite. A Family Care Plan prepares the Soldier and the family in advance for the Soldier's deployment and reassures a deployed Soldier that everything is taken care of at home, minimizing family-related stress and enabling the Soldier to concentrate more fully on his/her mission." Visit <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857726>

## Survivor Outreach Services

Fort Sill's Virtual Run for the Fallen will occur anytime between 21 November and 7 December at each participant's location of choice. A limited edition T-shirt and stickers will be included in the price. For more information visit <https://sill.armymwr.com/calendar/event/run-fallen-virtual-run/4751791/53863>





Several organizations are currently making plans for National Wreaths Across America Day on 19 December. Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,100 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad including the Fort Sill National Cemetery. Learn more about how your unit or organization can volunteer for this amazing national event at [www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org).

Thank you so much for your help in sharing the resources contained within this ACS Update with those who may benefit from it. I truly believe that Personal and Family Readiness are foundational to Resilience. Please take a minute to tell us how we're doing and what else we might assist you with by filling out an [ICE comment card](#). That's it for this week.

Optimism is a Force Multiplier! #AskACS  
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