



Airmen and Family Readiness Bulletin

September = Million Minute Month

September 2007

What is the Million Minute Family Challenge™?

The Million Minute Family Challenge is a grassroots effort that encourages interaction and communication among family and friends through playing board games. The goal is to encourage at least 1,000 families or groups in each of the 50 states (that's 50,000 families/groups) to play a board game together for at least 20 minutes (that's 1,000,000 minutes) from September through December.

Volume 2, Issue 9

Why participate in the Million Minute Family Challenge?

When parents play board games with their children, they are accomplishing more than providing entertainment. Playing board games teaches lessons in sharing and communication. It also helps establish a secure and trusting relationship between parent and child, which is a key part of a child's development.

Why play board games?

Board games are the perfect fun activity for family and friends of all ages. They help the youngest players develop social skills including following rules, fair play and good sportsmanship. As children grow, board games can help sharpen vocabulary, spelling, math, creative writing and critical thinking skills, all under the appearance of having fun.

How can I participate?

Families and groups are encouraged to block out 20 minutes in their busy schedules to play a board game. Teachers can invite students to play a game in the classroom. Everyone can participate by logging the number of minutes they played board games at www.millionminute.com.

Special points of interest:

- ✓ Poetry
- ✓ Win a prize for being a great military family!
- ✓ Money Tips!
- ✓ Healthy Life-style Ideas
- ✓ VA Announcement

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Other September Celebrations

- Baby Safety Month
- Library Card Sign-Up Month
- National Coupon Month
- Shameless Promotion Month
- Update Your Resume Month
- National Waffle Week, 4-8
- National Emergency Preparedness Week, 11-17
- Banned Books Week, 23-30
- Do It! Day, 6th
- Wife Appreciation Day, 15th
- AIR FORCE BIRTHDAY, 18th

My Hero, My Protector, My Mom

By Sandra, Grade 6, Bitburg Middle School, Bitburg, Germany

From the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) book *Touching the Hearts of Children Anthology: the Art of Being a Military Child*

A military child sharpens her art Of love and courage and admiration	My hero, my protector, my mom Is the one who protects me
As she follows her military mother Protecting, supporting our nation.	She is the one who protects you She protects us because that is what she is supposed to do.
My hero, my protector, my mom Is the one that kisses me to sleep She is the one that says good morning And makes my day feel sweet	She is the one that makes my meals Fills up my hungry tummy Makes me eat my vegetables Even if they aren't that yummy.
She cares for the wounded When someone calls for help in need Spreading her heart out To someone searching for help indeed.	When I am ready for bed We look at the sky and see How far the moon is and the stars My mother, my teddy bear, and me.
To the ones that can only do so much My mom lends a hand to you For just giving a little It's enough to get you through	My mom is everything to me She does everything for you What she does for our country Is something more than any of us can do.



VA Opens Suicide Hotline

To ensure veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun operation of a national suicide prevention hot line for veterans.

The toll-free hot line number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). VA's hot line will be

staffed by mental health professionals in Canandaigua, N.Y. They will take toll-free calls from across the country and work closely with local VA mental health providers to help callers.

"The hot line will put veterans in touch – any time of the day or night, any day of the week, from anywhere in

the country – with trained, caring professionals who can help," added Nicholson. "This is another example of the VA's commitment to provide world-class health care for our nation's veterans, especially combat veterans newly returned from Iraq and Afghanistan."

Be Active—Be Happy

reprinted from Parade Magazine

By now, you probably know all about the physical benefits of exercise, but new research shows that getting fit improves your psychological health too. “Most of us have heard about endorphins, the natural morphine-like compounds that our bodies release when we exercise long enough,” says Dr James Dillard, one of the fitness experts on our PARADE All-America Get Fit panel. “But many other body compounds also are changed by exercise, including serotonin, which keeps us from getting depressed, and dopamine, which keeps us motivated.”

Less Stress And Anxiety

In the short term, exercise gives your roving mind a rest by providing a time-out from your worries. (It’s hard to obsess about your to-do list when you are concentrating on your next push-up.) So think of your workout as a mini-vacation: for 30 minutes, you will not answer the phone, check e-mail, or take care of others. That alone might lower your anxiety level, but over time the stress-reducing effects become physical.

Exercise breaks down the hormones and other chemicals that build up during periods of intense stress, reports the American

Council on Exercise. Researchers also believe it helps treat nervous tension: The electrical activity of tense muscles decreases measurably after a bout of exercise.

A Better Mood

Recent studies indicate that exercise can be effective as antidepressants in treating mild depression. Moderately depressed individuals who engage in aerobic exercise for 30 minutes at least every other day often experience an upswing in their mood within two to three weeks. Researchers believe this may be due to changes in brain chemicals, including an increase in endorphins and decreases in cortisol and other stress hormones. Even short periods of exercise, such as a brief walk, can have an immediate, positive effect. And consider exercising with a friend or taking a class: Social interaction has been proved to help with depression.

A Full Night’s Sleep

The equation is simple: More physical activity equals less insomnia. Exercise helps ensure a good night’s rest in two key ways: The simple act of moving tires your body out, leaving you less

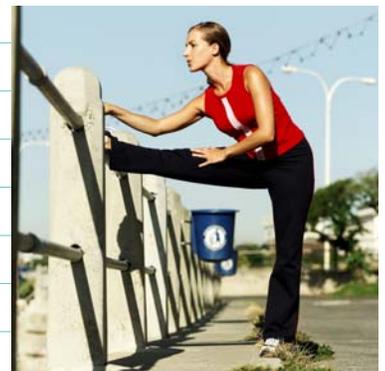
likely to toss and turn. Working out also reduces stress hormones and anxiety, which can contribute to sleeplessness.

An Improved Self-Image

By taking positive steps to improve your health and looks, you gain a feeling of control over you life and body. That sense of accomplishment and confidence will carry over to other areas of your life, raising your overall self-esteem. While you are working out, nip any negative self-talk in the bud (*I hate how I look. I can’t believe I’m so fat*) and concentrate instead on appreciating all that your body is capable of doing.

A Sense of Spirituality

Experts view increased spiritual awareness as an added bonus of the mind/body connection of exercise. The growing popularity of yoga, for instance, is not just due to its physical benefits. Through its noncompetitive nature and emphasis on breathing, yoga can help you learn to live “in the moment”. You don’t need to do a “downward dog” to reap the spiritual benefits of exercise though. A solitary walk can help you feel more at one with nature. and gain



For more information about PARADE’s All-America Get Fit Program, go to

THE MILITARY SPOUSE

Author unknown

There he stands in camouflage...yet he cannot hide from you.
You can pick him out in a crowd, and eye his stride among a formation.
There he goes, away from you again, off to do his part and be his best,
leaving you in his wake - never behind, yet always longing for his return.
There you are, amidst boxes and paper and confusion, creating a home, designing a household, transforming a building into a loving nurturing, comfortable environment.
Memories will be made here. Events will be celebrated.
Children will be born, graduate, grow, change. Your family will evolve. Your love will increase. Your marriage will improve. And then you will be asked to leave it all...again.
There are those who do not understand...
Who cannot comprehend what it takes to fulfill your role, to fill your shoes, to be all that you need to be.
They marvel at times, criticize at others, seldom appreciate, cannot imagine. There are those moments when you are where they are.
When you marvel, criticize, lack comprehension and are unable to muster understanding. And then he appears at the door, or on the phone, or through a rumpled letter addressed to "My Love" and suddenly there is comprehension and understanding, affirmation and conviction.
For by his presence, through his voice, in his message you KNOW that you've been beckoned to a noble calling, when asked to be a military spouse.
Invited to support a soldier who allows freedom, who guards democracy, who instills leadership. And in your role you see a slice of life that few others have the privilege to experience...
Flags appear more brilliant to you...
Parades draw out more emotion for you...
A patriotic song is a musical message played just for you...
A hand-over-the-heart is as stirring as an embrace for you...
A parting kiss can hold you for months...
A welcome back embrace can fill you up from lonely months...
A grave marker is a stark reminder of the meaning of devotion...
A tear shared is a stark statement on the meaning of sacrifice...
A duffel bag on a baggage claim gives you pause and connection...
An eagle's soar gives you inspiration. There you are...
The military spouse, the one asked to be strong, the one willing to belong.
The one who is often required to do it all.
The one who is privileged to stand beside a true American - day in and day out.
There are military spouses around the world, beside soldiers, airmen, marines and sailors.
They share a bond, a unity and a duty to be there, always for their hero.
There.
Said.
Done.
There are no better...anywhere.

November is Military Family Month.

Nominate your family or a military family who manages family and military life wonderfully for the honor and prizes of 2007 Family of the Year.

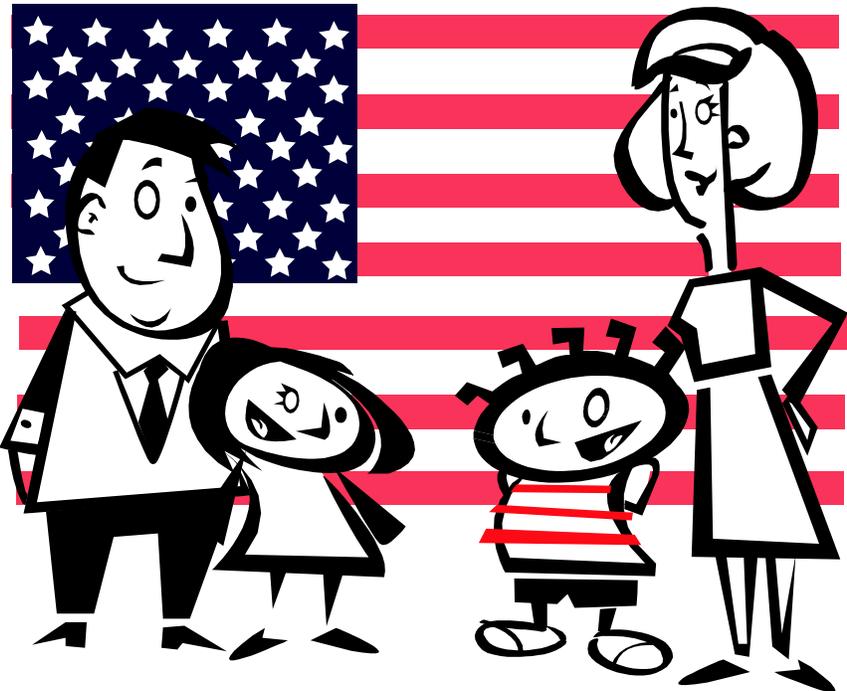
Nomination is simply done. Write a short essay (maximum of 2 pages) describing the family and what makes them so special; then bring it to Family Support in person, by fax (330-609-1511) or email (janice.barnes@youngstown.af.mil)



2007 Family of the Year

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**School's Back in Session:
What do YOU want to learn
this year??**

We're on the Web
See the Base Homepage!

New School .. New Teacher (from iVillage.com)

It's time for a new school year and the reality that teachers and students have to adjust to one another. The following advice come from a teacher and iVillage.com

"Students and parents need to acknowledge that in life, you're not always going to get along with everyone all the time," says Wisconsin high school teacher, Jen Scott Curwood. But don't feel like you have to choose sides if your child is convinced his teacher doesn't like him — or that he doesn't like her. "If a teacher is doing something unfair, address that and advocate for your child," says Lisa Cutter, Colorado mother of three. "But if it's a personality conflict, coach your child and give him the tools to handle it."

To coach your child through a personality conflict:

Let your child know they don't have to be "best pals" with every teacher — but they do have to be respectful. "Bottom line is a teacher is an authority figure," says Cutter. Make sure your child knows that disrespectful behavior is not acceptable.

- Encourage your child to chat with his teacher — whether it's about school work or the local team's success. He may just find that his teacher is not so bad, after all. Sometimes teachers are burned out, and that translates into grumpy behavior. Ice-breaking conversations can help turn the tide.

- Be sure your child keeps on top of his work. Don't let a

personality conflict affect your child's school work — kids may blow off work because they don't care for the teacher. But let your child know this only hurts him — and strains the relationship further.

If your child still doesn't have success, talk to the teacher — without going on the offensive yourself. New York mother Paula Marcotte had to intervene when her son's teacher embarrassed him in front of the class. "I ended up calling her, keeping things positive and not accusatory, to get her point of view," Marcotte says. "We talked for a long time, and it turned out she didn't realize she'd embarrassed him. She ended up apologizing to him, and by the end of the year my son said he was actually going to miss her."