

1700
MRQ
17 Mar 2009

From: Chairman, Family Readiness Committee
To: Chairman, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), Board of Directors
(BOD)

Subj: FAMILY READINESS COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 1 OCTOBER 2008

Ref: (a) FRC Charter

1. Per the reference, the Family Readiness Committee (FRC) convened at 0932 on 1 October 2008 at the Clubs at Quantico, MCB Quantico, VA.

2. Members Present:

LtGen D. Hejlik, CG II MEF, Chair
Ms. T. McLaughlin, MARFORRES
Ms. K. Faison, MARFORCOM
Ms. E. Montalvo, MCRC
Mr. S. Kelly, MARFORPAC
CAPT M. Steiner, Chaplain of the Marine Corps (Rep)
CAPT D. Gibson, Medical Officer of the Marine Corps (Rep)
Mrs. A. Conway, Spouse, CMC
Mrs. B. Amos, Spouse, ACMC
Mrs. E. Kent, Spouse, SMMC
SgtMaj R. Himsworth, Senior Enlisted Representative, II MEF
Ms. G. Kramlich, L.I.N.K.S. Subcommittee Chair (Rep)
Ms. P. Helland, I MEF Rep
Ms. L. Zilmer, III MEF Rep
Mr. T. Larsen, Ex Officio, Director, MR
Mr. K. Dunn, Ex Officio, Deputy Director, Marine and Family Programs, MR
Ms. A. Jones, Ex Officio, Recorder, MR

Members Excused:

KVN Subcommittee Chair

Others present:

LtGen S. Helland, I MEF
CDR J. Maurice, HQ REL
LtCol C. Kilhenny, MR Division
Maj J. Krause, MR Division
Maj J. Keppeler, MR Division
Maj M. Sumner, MR Division
Capt M. Mellon, HQ CMC
Capt J. Calvin, I MEF
SgtMaj K. Wilson, MR Division
Ms. K. Lewis, MR Division
Mr. G. Gordon, MR Division
Ms. T. Wicks, MR Division
Mr. J. Clarke, MR Division
Ms. C. Erickson, MR Division
Ms. G. Reed, MR Division
Mr. B. Barnes, MR Division
Mr. J. Capellini, MR Division
Mr. M. Tharrington, MR Division
Mr. P. Vosti, MR Division
Mr. D. Turner, MR Division

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Others present continued:

Ms. S. Doss, MR Division
Ms. K. Gates, MR Division
Mr. R. Winkelhausen, MR Division
Ms. L. Philipp, II MEF
Ms. K. Gough, I MEF
Mr. K. Quiner, III MEF
Mr. M. Jackson, MCB Camp Butler
Mr. M. Michener, MARSOC
Mr. J. Sollis, MCB Camp Lejeune
Dr. K. Holmes, MCB Camp Lejeune
Mr. J. Cowan, MCB Camp Lejeune
Ms. K. Catlin, MCAGCC 29 Palms
Mr. B. Ballard, MCB Camp Pendleton
Ms. J. Murphy, MCB Quantico
Ms. M. Bradford, MCAS Miramar
Mr. S. Norton, 8th & I

3. Review of 18 March 2008 Meeting Minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

4. Board of Directors (BOD) Overview. Mr. Larsen provided an overview of BOD and FRC composition and functions for new Members and attendees. It was noted that the FRC charter would be updated to reflect that the FRC would be meeting three times per year, vice twice as currently written.

ACTION: When FRC Charter is rewritten, ensure Charter reflects that the FRC will meet 3 times per year.

5. Old Business Update - Family Readiness Officer (FRO) Survey. LtCol Kilhenny provided an update on the FRO Survey. Since the March 2008 FRC meeting, the FRO Survey had been coordinated with Mrs. Conway and other senior spouses for the development of survey questions. The FRO Survey was a tool to gauge FRO overall effectiveness and identify potential problem areas regarding meeting families' needs. The survey would be administered through the Family Readiness Assessment Tool (FRAT) or a website (similar to ICE) requiring generic username and password. Members discussed accessibility issues regarding families if the website administration option was selected. Mr. Larsen stated that family members would also have the survey mailed to them; however, MR would ensure access for all. The survey was to be staffed to MEFs for further coordination/evaluation. Discussion ensued about providing respondents the opportunity to provide subjective written information in addition to answering set questions. It was noted that the survey had text boxes that would allow respondents to enter subjective input.

ACTION: If the FRO Survey is administered through a website, ensure access for everyone, regardless of ISP.

6. MCFTB/Unit Family Readiness Program Implementation Issues Update

a. Ms. Gates briefed the status of the Unit Family Readiness program, policy issues, and way ahead. Training of FROs and MCFTB staff was in progress. FRO management and MCFTB functionality issues were identified by installation and operational commanders. In response, MR was drafting a MARADMIN containing program guidance. Operationally, FROs would work for their commander; MCCA provided administrative support. It was noted that there was no FRO hierarchy.

Every FRO was considered a staff officer to his/her commander and was expected to coordinate with other FROs for information flow. Mass Communication Tool training would be 2-day training and would include hands-on experience and a skill set check. It was noted that a Help Desk had been established for the Mass Communication Tool.

b. Members emphasized the need to keep the funding process simple. Twenty-five dollars (NAF) per Marine would be provided to commanders to fund MWR (\$15/Marine) and family readiness (\$10/Marine) activities. Discussion ensued regarding allocation of unit NAF dollars between deployed units and their parent commands; ultimately, unit commanders are responsible for the appropriate use of the funds. MR was drafting guidance to clarify the funding process.

ACTION: MR to draft guidance to clarify the funding process and promulgate.

7. Exceptional Family Member Program Update

a. Ms. Erickson briefed. The role of the family case worker was paramount to the delivery of the EFMP program. Case workers were the most visible entity to EFMP families and were to assist with all aspects of care. MR would be hiring a Counsel that would, among other duties, assist the EFMP program and perform in-depth research on State disability and special education laws. MR was in the process of negotiating community pro bono services for families. Also, MR was redrafting the EFMP MCO and working on MARADMINs for "Implementing Guidance" and "Stabilization." Members discussed the two types of Respite Care - EFMP Respite Care for those enrolled in the program and respite care for all others. Mr. Larsen emphasized the need to ensure EFMP families receive respite care whenever needed.

b. Regarding autism support, MR was in the process of developing courses of action and underwriting requirements for ACMC review and decision. Additionally, MR had published an RFI for services at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune. Mr. Larsen stated that autism services would be provided at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune initially and then expanded. The estimated cost of autism services was \$2M per year, per installation.

ACTIONS: 1) MR to address Respite Care needs at installations where daycare is provided by the Navy - Hampton Roads, Miramar, and MCRD San Diego. 2) MR to publish amplifying policy on Respite Care to ensure standardization across the Marine Corps.

8. Children, Youth and Teen Program (CYTP) Update. Ms. Wicks provided an overview of the CYTP Functionality Assessment (FA) findings and plan of action for implementing FA recommendations. FA findings indicated that CYTP needs vary by installation and were dependent on installation mission, demographics and availability of off-base care. Additionally, the FA found that CYTP fee structures were antiquated; staffing was insufficient; and programs were focused on CDCs, not CYTP. To address the FA findings, MR was working with OSD and SECNAV to review and revise fee structures and was to conduct a needs assessment at each installation. Also, MR was working to enhance youth and teen programs by expanding partnerships and provide separate activities for mid and late teens.

9. School Liaison (SL) Program Update. Ms. Wicks provided an update on the SL Program. At the time of the meeting, 21 of 26 SLs had been hired. Four focus areas were reported: develop policy; develop action issue elevation process; finalize training; and staff HQ and regional SL billets. It was reported that Marine Corps-specific SL training was given at the Military Child Education

Coalition conference. Also, development of week-long SL training was underway. Vacancies at MCI EAST and MCI WEST had been advertised. The draft SL Handbook had been promulgated, and MR was awaiting feedback that would be used in SL policy development.

10. Suicide Prevention Program Update. Ms. Ficadenti provided an update on the Suicide Prevention Program. The Marine Corps suicide rate was below a similar demographic group in the civilian sector. At the time of the meeting, 70 percent of suicides to date in the current year were among Marines with a deployment history. Marines with deployment history were not over-represented among total Marine suicides (or attempts), as a large number of Marines had deployed. It was noted that there was a lack of standardized suicide nomenclature, i.e. definition of "attempt." A DoD working group was meeting to assess and standardize suicide attempt data reporting. Many initiatives were underway in the program including, but not limited to, posting of resource material on the Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program Web Site, development of new training programs, participation in the Executive Safety Board (chaired by ACMC), marketing, and development of a relationship with the American Association of Suicidology.

11. Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) Family Support. Mr. Barnes briefed. WWR requirements for MR/MCCS support to wounded warriors and their families were continuing to surface. MR was working with WWR representatives to identify requirements and capabilities. Additionally, MR was participating in DoD-level working groups and was engaged in frequent discussions with WWR.

12. Heroes and Healthy Families. Mr. Barnes provided an overview of the Heroes and Healthy Families annual presentation currently offered only at Camp Pendleton. The Heroes and Healthy Families program addressed issues Marines would typically encounter post-deployment while reintegrating into civil society. The program covered intervention strategies for leaders on topics such as COSC, family relationships, domestic violence, substance abuse, etc. The program was very well-received at Camp Pendleton but was largely driven (and funded) by CA Judge Pamela Iles. MR was assessing the potential to duplicate the program elsewhere. Mr. Larsen stated that MR would continue to work issue of expanding availability.

13. Implementation of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. Maj. Sumner briefed. The Yellow Ribbon program, mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, provided family support to members of the National Guard, Reserves, and their families. Support was required to be provided at 30 days pre-deployment and 30, 60, and 90 days post-deployment. It was noted that the Yellow Ribbon effort was duplicated somewhat by the Marine Corps' family readiness programs. As such, MR was reviewing the Yellow Ribbon program requirements and identifying MCCS capabilities to meet them. MR was also exploring the possibility to provide joint training.

14. Tri-Med Working Group. Maj. Keppeler briefed. DC M&RA formed the Tri-Med Working Group to address and gather data on feedback received from families regarding healthcare concerns such as access to care/healthcare providers, care variations between TRICARE regions, etc. Additionally, the working group evaluated feedback to identify local and/or systemic problems. Elevation of issues to the working group was to be accomplished through the conduct of Town Hall meetings. At the time of the meeting, Town Hall meetings were planned for Beaufort and 29 Palms in November and December 2008, respectively. Mrs. Zilmer discussed problems regarding care for Okinawan cancer patients. Mr. Larsen noted that access to healthcare providers, availability of specialty care, and

travel reimbursement were known problem areas. The Working Group intended to drive legislation changes to address systemic issues as necessary.

ACTION: Conduct a Town Hall meeting in Okinawa to hear concerns for elevation to the Working Group, e.g. treatment for cancer patients and their travel reimbursement.

15. Quality of Life (QOL) in the Marine Corps Study. Mr. Capellini briefed. The QOL Study was conducted in October and November 2007 to determine how Marines' and spouses' perceptions of/satisfaction with QOL have changed across various life domains (income, housing, etc.). It was the first QOL Study conducted since the start of the Global War on Terror. There had been three previous studies conducted in 1993, 1998, and 2002. Findings from the current study were compared to the findings of the previous three. Overall, the QOL study concluded that, despite the war and high operational tempo, Marines and families were satisfied with the level of support provided by the Marine Corps. Also, career intentions and organizational commitment remained high.

16. Closing Remarks. The Chair thanked attendees for their participation and input.

ACTIONS: During the closing remarks, the following actions items were assigned: 1) FRC Read Aheads were to be sent one week in advance of meetings; 2) The FRC Charter was to be re-written and staffed with the FRC; 3) MR was to work toward standardizing training, funding, and policy; 4) Operational commanders should be informed of QOL survey results; 5) In future meetings, include a slide that lists all outstanding taskers/action items, MARADMIN's and policy documents; and 6) Address/review the roles of the L.I.N.K.S. and KVN Subcommittees.

With no further comments offered, the meeting adjourned at 1157.

/s/
LtGen D. Hejlik
Chairman

A. D. JONES
Recorder