

STRONGER FAMILIES

CONNECTION

Connecting You
With the Families
You Serve

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Reaching Those Who Serve

Because of you, Stronger Families was able to give strength and resiliency to soldiers and spouses of the 10th Mountain Division stationed at Fort Drum, located in the remote northern region of New York.



FORT DRUM, NY

Fort Drum, home of the 10th Mountain Division, is located in northern New York, just 30 miles from Canada. The Great Lakes are to the west, the Adirondack Mountains to the east, and the St. Lawrence River and the Thousand Islands in between. Nearly 20,000 active duty service members and their families call Fort Drum home.

Teaming Up With USO Fort Drum

Stronger Families teamed up with USO Fort Drum to offer an OXYGEN couples seminar to help strengthen the marriages of service members returning from the Middle East.

The couples that attended this OXYGEN seminar were young and a bit reserved at first. Through the various breakout sessions and interactive learning activities, the instructor was

<< *A soldier from the 10th Mountain Division says goodbye before boarding a flight to Afghanistan. (Reuters)*

able to cut through their reserve. Several couples opened up about their difficult upbringings and how those experiences affected their marriages. It proved to be a challenging, yet very rewarding time that resulted in lasting impact for them.

One couple wanted to share this about their experience: "We both came here feeling misunderstood. Now, we can take the information we've learned and use it as a bridge to healthy communication." Another couple, who admitted to having a lot of challenges in their marriage, shared: "We were able to truly see each other through our partner's eyes. You helped us rebuild the bonds of love in our relationship in a loving, informative, and light-hearted manner. Thank you!"

And THANK YOU for your generosity and making this happen! ■

Joining Forces to Serve America's Wounded Veterans and Their Families

Thanks to your incredible generosity, Stronger Families joined forces with Operation Homefront's Transitional Housing Team to strengthen, encourage and support wounded veterans and their spouses.



^^ Couples discuss the importance of community in their transition from military to civilian life.

v v Wounded veterans and their spouses work through the "Wheel of Life in Transition" activity.



^^ Executive Director Noel Meador leads the group through the OXYGEN Transitions workshop.

“ We are so happy you came [to San Antonio]. It was great to hear others speak about what they are going through and knowing we aren't any different. ”

—Jason and Cindy R., Army Veteran couple

It's been in the headlines and highlighted on national and cable news: America's veterans are not getting enough help once they leave active duty service. Now, thanks to your generosity, some of these families have begun receiving the relationship support they need.

Stronger Families has joined forces with Operation Homefront to help veteran families. Teams from Operation Homefront's Transitional Housing Program (which allows wounded service members to live rent free while they go through the transition process) hosted *Taste of OXYGEN Transition* classes for resident families in San Diego, CA; San Antonio, TX; and Gaithersburg, MD this spring.

Being There When it Counts

The majority of the couples that attended each of the three classes are struggling through the transition process. There are many contributing factors, including physical disabilities and PTSD, loss of community, job searches, and financial security.

Throughout the evening, couples learned new ways to strengthen their marriages and to work through issues in a positive and healthy way. Couples that attended were also given free online memberships to access additional relationship tools and resources, and to encourage learning and growing together.

More relationship-strengthening programs with Operation Homefront are planned for this fall. ■

If you would like to donate a free one year premium membership to a veteran couple, go to strongerfamilies.com today!

Your Support for Military Families Around the Globe

Do you know that there are thousands of couples around the globe growing closer by learning new ways to strengthen their most valued relationships? At Stronger Families' online support center, couples can go explore and learn about a variety of topics, including communication, PTSD, finances, conflict resolution, infidelity, and more. We know you will be encouraged to read just a few of the many hundreds of comments of gratitude we have received this year.

Heartfelt thanks to YOU, our supporters, and the USO for providing military and veteran couples free access to StrongerFamilies.com.



Charlie T

Thank you!! You have no idea how much you have just helped me!

Reply •



Markel E

thankful for content online and for the info on this book

Reply •



nyasha b

The best thing i have Ever listened to. thank you

Reply •

“This program is completely awesome. My husband is in the Army and he absolutely loves his career. This helps us have a great connection, and I can be supportive of him as he goes out to take on the world—thanks to YOU.”



Electrician Dallas Tx

Thanks for the concepts you have provided here.

Reply •



Samuel M

I needed this badly! gonna watch this often as a reminder

Reply • 1



sonia c

Simply awesome! what a great topic & perfect guest....thank you

Reply •

“ I think [OXYGEN] is exactly what we needed for our relationship. Thank you—it was the first time that we actually worked on our marriage! ”

—Sean and Jillian K., MacDill AFB, FL

vv Stronger Families' Garrick Pang with Special Forces OXYGEN graduates from MacDill AFB, Florida.



Serving Special Ops Families

As U.S. Special Forces fight the bulk of the war against ISIS, your help for married service members on the front lines means more than ever.

TAMPA, FL

To a degree unprecedented in American military history, war is being waged by a handful of elite US troops, even though the scale of battle is incredible. The effects of this long and intense level of combat are felt not only by those fighting, but by the families they leave behind to complete their mission.

Special Operations leadership is turning to Stronger Families as a resource for helping families stay strong and resilient during this time of intense fighting. They recognize the incredible strain that military couples are experiencing right now.

Special Forces couples like Will and Ashley Chauncey. They attended an OXYGEN seminar last January. As part of the program, they took a pre-seminar assessment. Ashley was in tears, feeling like their results spelled disaster for their marriage.

But the couple gained practical tools and insights at the seminar, and felt hopeful and optimistic.

Training for Success

When Will and Ashley learned that the OXYGEN seminar was being offered again, they signed up and invited others to, as well. Will spoke to Sean, a fellow airman, who didn't feel it was necessary to attend. Will's answer was, "In the military, you train and prepare for every situation to be successful in your mission. You don't think this applies to your marriage? You need to be there."

Convinced, Sean and his wife, Jillian, came to OXYGEN. Afterward, they shared, "This is exactly what we needed. It was the first time that we actually worked on our marriage!"

Will's summary of the program? "It's one of the best programs I've found in the military." Will plans to continue spreading the word and encouraging other couples to sign up. ■

Your Help for Local Families

JOINT BASE LEWIS MCCORD, WA

Thanks to your ongoing support, Stronger Families is now in its seventh year serving military families at Joint Base Lewis McChord, one of the five largest U.S. military installations. Many service members stationed there are experiencing high operational tempo, so leadership has requested that Stronger Families find innovative ways to provide family support to units whose priorities and schedules have made a dramatic shift.

Stronger Families worked with the Command Chaplains to offer customized, online relationship support, and several one-hour *Taste of OXYGEN* classes—in both live and webinar format—that present a popular relationship topic in a way that is interactive and educational.

“Once we understood how we were different, it was encouraging to learn that our differences could actually enhance our relationship.”

—Bob and Jan D., JBLM, WA

So far in 2017, you have helped more than 60 service members and their families, with more to come! Additional classes are scheduled throughout the remaining months of 2017 to help even more military couples build a stronger, more resilient marriage. These heroes and their families are grateful for your support! ■