

PACT's Kane'ohē Community Family Center (KCFC) Family Center News

A partnership of Parents And Children Together and the Castle Complex Department of Education, partially funded by Aloha United Way, the State of Hawaii Health and Human Services Departments, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement, HPHA and Hawaii Community Foundation.

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Vol. 14. No. 6

June 2008

The Kane'ohē Community Family Center will facilitate the strengthening of families and communities from Kane'ohē to Kualoa by enabling them to identify and use their own and other resources to improve their quality of life and sense of community.

KCFC wishes to thank Ms. Lorie Javier, a returning science teacher at King Intermediate, for sharing about her time spent as a Soldier in Iraq and how important home is to a Soldier from Kaneohe.

The words of encouragement, letters of support and care packages from all across the nation were overwhelming. As I went through my footlocker of deployment documents and photographs to gather some memories and thoughts to write in this article, I came across a July 25, 2007 edition of the Anaconda Times, our local paper in Balad, Iraq. One of the "shout out" messages from home wrote:



"American soldiers, we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you do everyday. Despite what you may hear in the media, we support you. All politics aside, you are Americans and deserve support from your fellow citizens. We thank your families for the sacrifices they endure during your time away. We keep you and every soldier, fallen and living, in our thoughts and prayers. – The Cajen Family".

I don't know The Cajen Family, but appreciate and find comfort in their message. Of the many lasting memories from this experience, and there are a few that have changed me as a person, it is the unconditional support from the home front that is most vivid, warms my heart, and continues to give me strength.

It's very difficult to clearly convey just how meaningful the caring words and kind gestures are to a soldier. I've found that the expression of support has meant more to me than I had realized and is a feeling I could not have understood without experiencing it first hand.

On August 3rd 2006, in typical island fashion, family and friends bid Aloha to members of the 657th Area Support Group (ASG) with hugs, kisses, lei and local snacks. Although it was almost two years ago, I remember waving goodbye to my family in the Fort Shafter parking lot and the short bus ride to Hickam Air Force Base quite clearly. After several hours of waiting, we were given our USO care package (an excellent bag of necessities), boarded a chartered plane, and were on our way to a land half way around the world.

Our landing at Logistical Support Area Anaconda (LSAA) was what I call a "wake-up call." In 120 degrees, at about 10:00 p.m., loaded with military gear, we set foot on the airfield at LSAA and were bussed to a tented holding area while we waited for our pallets of duffle bags to be unloaded.

Within 20 minutes of our arrival, explosions filled the air. The explosions from the mortars were so large that we could feel the compression of air from the blasts. This was our spontaneous introduction to alarm red at LSAA (a.k.a. "Mortaritaville" because

the base averages more than 50 incoming rocket or mortar attacks each month). Yes, we were clearly in a war zone. For about 65% of us, this was our first battlefield experience, and the messages of vigilance were effectively reinforced.

The 657th ASG, an Army Reserve Unit based in Hawaii, was mobilized in 2006 to assume the duty as the "Mayor's Cell" at LSAA, Balad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom V. The unit was comprised of soldiers from Hawaii (at least a dozen of us with roots in Kaneohe), Guam, Saipan, American Samoa, Japan, Alaska, Georgia, Texas, Washington, and Arkansas.


Our mission was to provide force protection, base life support, infrastructure maintenance and improvement, and base master planning for one of the largest bases in the Iraqi Theater of Operations.

Our job was very similar to the operations of the Mayor's office in any typical American city. We managed all essential services to the population based at or transiting through LSAA. These services included: power; housing; operation of five dining facilities; water production; base security; health and safety; emergency services; waste management; laundry services; on-post transportation (city bus service); morale, welfare & recreation services; education center services; and oversight of all major construction on the base.

During our year of service, water production quality was consistently above standards, 100% of billeting demands were met, over 10 million meals were served, over 1,200,000 bags of laundry were cleaned, generator power services were always responsive and reliable, and significant improvements were made in the area of solid waste management with the introduction of incinerator operations.

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**Congratulations to
Meredith Maeda Hawaii
Distinguished Principal of the Year!**



Meredith Maeda, Principal of James B. Castle High School, has been named the 2008 MetLife /National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Hawaii High School Principal of the Year. Under his leadership, Castle High School has significantly raised student achievement, improved the quality of teaching and instruction, created community and educational partnerships, and increased parent and volunteer participation.

This is the second year in a row a Castle Complex principal has received this honor. Last year Kaneohe Elementary Principal, Mitchell Otani was the recipient of this prestigious award.

Family Center

Community Resource and Referral

- Phone 235-7747
- Website <http://kcfc.pacthawaii.org>

Hawaii Parental Information and Resource Center (HPIRC)

- <http://www.pacthawaii.org>

Family Center Services

- Family Support

Volunteer & Community Service Learning Opportunities

- Clerical and Program Support
- Special Event Child Care

The *Family Center News* is printed monthly by the Kaneohe Community Family Center (KCFC), a program of Parents And Children Together (PACT).

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CELEBRATE FATHERS

Hawaii Coalition for Dads
10th Annual CELEBRATE FATHERS event!

- * Saturday, June 14th
- * 11am - 3pm
- * Windward Mall

Father-Child Look-Alike Contest, Daddy packs, prizes, entertainment, and information tables for dads, kids, and families.

For entry forms for contest, call HCD at 841-2245

HAPPY FATHERS DAY

(continued from front page)

Some of us found long hours of work (14-16 hours a day) a blessing, as it helped us overcome loneliness, hardships of the environment, and helped pass the time. Some of us were able to bring home a little closer through music (ipods are wonderful), preparation of local foods (spam musubi, shaved ice, Filipino, Japanese, Guamanian, and Samoan dishes), and Internet communications with family and friends.

I am very grateful that I was surrounded by the Spirit of Aloha while deployed. Not only were the Soldiers I worked with the best local-style cooks, they were also among the most competent professionals, able to effectively perform their duties while treating people with Aloha (deep care and respect).

The noncommissioned officers on my team were the most talented event organizers I know. Their holiday office decorations throughout the year, karaoke get-togethers, birthday celebrations, and planning of an Asian Pacific American Heritage program that shared Pacific-Rim culture with the Anaconda population are among the connections to home that kept morale up even through some challenging times.

Support from the home front was tremendous – schools, local companies, and families sustained our need to remain connected to our communities with generous care packages, phone cards, and thoughtful messages.

Thank you to all who have expressed and continue to express your support to the service members who answer the call to duty and defend freedom in far away lands. Your kind gesture, unexpected care packages, or letters mean a lot more to a soldier than you may think.

One year is a long time to be away from home. A lot of things can and do change in a years time. I know that each soldier's experience "down range" is unique, and every community throughout our great nation has endured the challenges of deployment and suffered loss because of this war. For me, it is the memory of these connections to home – the ability to bring a "way of life" with us making a positive difference where we can. Along with the reflection on the caring gestures from strangers (hand shakes, hugs and words of appreciation as I walked through the airport in uniform), and the continued unconditional support and patience from family that have given balance to my deployment experience.



- 4th Community Works in 96744 Mtg.**, 3pm at QLCC. Call 235-7747 for more info.
 - Oogles 'n Goggles Preschool Family Night**, 6pm, Kaneohe Public Library.
 - 10th Windward Community Children's Council Monthly Meeting**, 6 - 7:30pm, Windward Dept. of Health Conf. Rm. Open to all parents and guardians of special needs children. 586-5363.
 - 11th King Kamehameha Day!**
 - Kahaluu Neighborhood Board Mtg.**, 7pm, KEY Project, 527-5749.
 - 12th Koolauloa Neighborhood Board Mtg.**, 7pm, Hauula Community Center, 527-5749.
 - Kids Hurt Too, Healing Young Hearts Support Group**, 6 - 8pm at Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, 735-2989.
 - 14th Alzheimer's Support Group** 10 - 11:30 am, Kaneohe Community Family Center. Learn more about Alzheimer's and resources, 239-1552.
 - 15th Father's Day!**
 - 16th Ohana Food Distribution**, 3 - 4:30 pm at KEY Project, Kahaluu.
 - 17th Caregivers Support Group** Provide support for families, grandparents, and relatives raising children, at Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center. 5:30 - 7:30pm. Dinner will be served, bring your keiki. Call to RSVP at 235-7613.
 - 18th Grandparents Raising Grandchildren** 9am, Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center. Call Bernie at 235-7613 for info. about this month's activities.
 - 19th Kaneohe Neighborhood Board Mtg.**, 7 pm at WCC, Akoakoa, Rm. 103 - 105, call 523-4815.
 - 20th Student Orientation**, Windward Community College, info. on registration, campus resources and college survival tips. Mandatory for students graduating from high school in 2008. 3:30 - 5:30pm at Akoakoa, Rm. 201.
 - 26th Kids Hurt Too, Healing Young Hearts Support Group**, 6 - 8pm at Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, 735-2989.
 - 28th Internet Safety & Security for Boomers and Seniors**, 9 - 11am at WCC, Hale Kuhina Room 114, call 235-7433 to register.
- Kaneohe Library:**
Toddler Storytime, Thursdays, 12, 19 & 26 at 10:15am; ages 18 months - 3 years
Preschool Storytime, Tuesdays, 10, 17 & 24 at 10:15am; ages 3 - 5 years
Summer Programs:
Niall de Burca, Storyteller, June 22nd at 2:30pm
Bishop Museum: Learn about Bugs, June 29th at 2:30pm
Ronald McDonald: Imagination, June 25th