

# **FAMILY READINESS GROUP**

## **TIPS FOR**

### **AVOIDING BURNOUT**

- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FIRST.**
- **Stick to caring, and let the Guard do its part in delivering specific services.**
- **Stop and take a breath.**
- **Evaluate what you are doing and set priorities.**
- **Consider using a telephone answering machine.**
- **Do not try to be “all to all.”**
- **Mutual support goes both ways. Ask for help!**
- **Look for your own support in friends, Family and church.**
- **Do not overextend yourself.**
- **Know your limits.**
- **Make sure you eat and sleep as regularly as possible.**
- **Dysfunctional Families will devour you. Refer them to professional organizations.**
- **Understand and stick to the role assigned to you.**
- **Learn resources for referring problems.**
- **Do not judge success in “thank you's.”**
- **Do not compare your group to others; this is not a competition.**
- **Seek advice from senior spouses; they have been where you are now.**
- **Learn ways to delegate.**
- **Leadership is a risk; do not try to please everyone.**
- **Don't reinvent the wheel; use systems in place.**
- **Do not be afraid to try something new.**
- **Be yourself!**



Websites to help FRG Leaders:

- <http://forlancey.com> - FRG Leader online forum For and By FRG Leaders.
- [www.military.org](http://www.military.org) - direct connection to command information for your unit.
- [www.cinccpac.com](http://www.cinccpac.com) - Operation Homefront's Community of Military Wives and Women in Uniform.
- <http://deployment.military.com> - Library for deployment health and family readiness information.
- [www.militaryfamily.com](http://www.militaryfamily.com) - Official DoD website for reliable Quality of Life information.
- <https://www.militaryfamily.com> - Your connection to the Army Integrated Family Support Network.
- <http://www.militaryfamily.com> - National Military Family Association.
- <http://www.militaryfamily.com> - the only comic strip about life as a military spouse
- <http://www.militaryfamily.com> - Military One Source 1-800-342-9647 24/7 assistance.
- <http://resources.militaryfamily.com> - headquarters for military-oriented spiritual resources.



# FRG Meeting Ideas

FRG meetings are meant to be a time for spouses to get together to get to know one another, and build camaraderie. Coming up with meeting ideas can sometimes be a challenge with the wide range of demographics present in FRGs. Here are some meeting ideas to help entice spouses to attend.

### Themed meetings:

- MASH party - dress as your favorite character. Set up a tent outside for everyone to walk through with cots, a still, etc. Invites could look like dogtags.

- Tacky party - stick toilet paper on your shoe, ride there with friend on the back of a bike, wear robe/curlers. Serve drinks in mason jars, chips in a bag with canned dip.
- Ice Cream Social - build the world's largest sundae in a 10ft. gutter from the hardware store.
- Chinese Auction: Everyone brings a white elephant (or pick a theme) placed in a brown grocery bag. Bring Nickels! Have a

small lunch bag for each white elephant. The lunch bag is placed on the floor; people toss nickels at the bag until the timer goes off. Last person to get a nickel in the bag wins the white elephant item!

- Company Feud: Questions are prepared and presented to teams. Similar to Family Feud! BN S-1 can help with questions.
- Men's Potluck: Men do the cooking, women do the judging.

The idea is to make it FUN!!!

# Recruiting Volunteers



When it comes to recruiting volunteers for your FRG events, the same rules apply that you learned from your mom as a child. Say, "please" and "thank you," show appreciation for what others have done, and always take responsibility for your own commitments.

A few things to keep in mind:

- ★ Military spouses are in no way obligated to volunteer.
- ★ Realize and appreciate that Families have other priorities. Every Family has a life outside the military.

- ★ Accept that it's okay if spouses choose not to volunteer
- ★ Always remain positive about volunteerism.
- ★ Express the need for volunteers at functions. Be specific about what you need. Give limited times and dates for volunteering.
- ★ Maintain the role of encourager, facilitator, and role model.

- ★ If you don't hear "No" once in a while, you aren't asking enough!
- ★ Assign new FRG members a mentor to help create a cohesive team.
- ★ Book more volunteers by sounding exclusive. "We only have a few more slots left..."
- ★ Advertise the need for volunteers well in advance.

## Best Practices for Recruiting and Retention of Volunteers

- Offer training
- Praise the volunteers-recognize them with an award in front of Families and Service Members
- Match the volunteers with the work that they want to do
- Contact local VFW for potential volunteers
- Recruit retirees
- Host "meet and greets" for units
- Volunteer recognition: April
- Offer food to the volunteers
- Remember birthdays, anniversaries, kids' graduations
- Let the volunteers help make decisions in regards to conference planning, training, etc...
- Recruit volunteers on a one-on-one basis
- Provide units with a volunteer orientation packet that includes sample position descriptions, volunteer agreement forms and some general information about the Guard and FRG
- Educate Families so they understand the role of the volunteers and approximately how much time they should expect to give when exploring the option of volunteering
- Visit a unit during a Family Day (this could potentially be a hard time to recruit but it is worth trying)
- People are hesitant to volunteer in a group environment, but many times will share one-on-one with someone in the unit once they have a better idea what they are supposed to do and how much time they are expected to give
- Encourage Commanders to appoint his/her leaders rather than to have some type of election - Family Members rarely know each other well enough to nominate someone for a volunteer position

# Celebrating Volunteerism!

Here are creative and inexpensive ideas to show others how much you care. From your FRG volunteers to your deployed Service Member; from the new parents in your unit, to your own children, every FRG Leader can find something useful here.

## Everyday Recipes to Celebrate Volunteerism:

- Thanks For Raisin' The Tough Standard - Mini box of raisins
- No One Holds A Candle To You! - scented votive candle, b/d candles
- You Are A Lifesaver! - Package of lifesavers with a note
- Your Vision Is Our Guiding Light! - mini-flashlight
- You Take The Cake! - cupcakes
- Thanks For Working Your Buns Off! - hot cinnamon buns
- A Noteworthy Accomplishment! - package of post-it notes
- You Are Berry Special! - fresh berries or jam
- Hugs and Kisses! - Hershey's candies
- I'll Stick With You! - stick of gum
- You're Worth a Mint! - package of peppermints
- Thanks for the Great Ideas That You Have Planted! - Seed packet
- Thanks For Holding Things Together! - Paper clip
- Thanks For Stretching Your Limits! - Rubber band
- You Can Soar to the Greatest Heights! - Kite string
- Thanks for Not Letting Things Fall Apart! - Safety pin
- You Licked the Challenge! - Lollipop
- You Keep Us on an Upward Roll to Success! - Tootsie roll
- You Measure Up to a Fantastic Leader! - Ruler or measuring tape
- Here's The Scoop, You're Doing a Wonderful Job! - Ice cream scoop
- We Are So Fortunate To Have You as a Volunteer! - Fortune cookie
- No One Matches Your Volunteer Contribution! - Book of matches
- You're #1 In Our Book! - Book
- You're Worth a 100 Grand to Our Organization! -100 Grand® bar
- Your Creative Juices Really Made a Big Difference! - Box of juice
- Thanks for Energizing our Organization! - Electric wire or a battery