

To The Point



The 7th Annual Wreaths Across America was held on Saturday, December 3 at the West Point Cemetery. Ms. Jackie McNally, an ACS community volunteer, successfully collected the donations which enabled all graves to be covered with 7,045 wreaths. Dr. Todd Crowder, Professor, from the USMA Department of Physical Education, conducted the annual ceremony where Gold Star Families, Survivors, and community members placed the wreaths on the gravesites. Over 500 volunteers participated in this event which included unloading the truck at 10am and placing wreaths at the ceremony held later in the day. Begun in 2010, by Jackie & Dan McNally, both volunteers, and Dr. Todd Crowder, West Point Wreaths Across America, (WP-WAA) is a local event that attempts to mirror the larger Wreaths Across America (WAA) event which began in 1992 centered at Arlington National Cemetery and many other cemeteries world-wide. Generally, the national WAA event is held during the Army-Navy weekend, and WP-WAA has been granted special exemption by the national office to conduct our ceremony a week or two prior.



If you are interested in volunteering at West Point, please contact the Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC) at (845) 938-3655

YOUR ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE STAFF

Dr. Joseph Gall	Director, Army Community Service
Louise Ennesser	Information and Referral
Kathryn Seymour	Relocation Readiness
Louise Ennesser	Employment Readiness
Amy Weyhrauch	Financial Readiness
Amy Weyhrauch	Army Emergency Relief
Jennifer Partridge	Army Volunteer Corps/AFAP/AFTB
Josephine Toohey	Exceptional Family Member Program
Lucia Mendez	Social Services Assistant
Shelley Ariosto	Family Advocacy Program
Vacant	Family Advocacy Program
Priya Mittal	Military Family Life Counselor
Dan Toohey	Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
Raul Lopez	Survivor Outreach Services

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER

622 Swift Road, West Point, NY 10996

845.938.4621/2519

DSN: 688.4621/2519

FAX: 845.938.3019

<http://www.westpointmwr.com>

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West Point Army Community Service



Employment Readiness Program



Spouse Ambassador Network

Learn about the Spouse Ambassador Network, a group of organizations united to help military spouses achieve their education and career goals.

The Spouse Ambassador Network is a group of like-minded organizations who belong to the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) and are dedicated to raising awareness of military spouse education and employment resources.

As a military spouse, you can take advantage of the services, support, and networking opportunities provided by these organizations while building your network inside and outside the military community.

Spouse Ambassador Network organizations:

Air Force Association promotes a dominant U.S. Air Force and a strong national defense and honors Airmen, their families and the Air Force heritage.

Association of the United States Army works to support all aspects of national security while advancing the interests of America's Army and the men and women who serve.

Blue Star Families provides a broad range of military spouse employment initiatives throughout various points on their career path.

Easter Seals – Veteran Staffing Network provides supportive services to spouses and veterans with disabilities or special needs to aid them in becoming job ready.

Hiring Our Heroes (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation) helps veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses find meaningful employment.

In Gear Career, a program of Hiring Our Heroes, in which mentors provide advice, answer questions and share experiences via local chapters and online communities.

LiftFund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, provides educational resources and small business loans to businesses that do not have access to capital from typical lending sources like traditional banks.

Military Officers Association of America provides career transition assistance, military benefits counseling, and educational assistance to children of military families (to include enlisted).

Military Spouse eMentor Program offers an information sharing, learning and support community for military spouses.

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Military Spouse Foundation provides an online career planning and entrepreneurial training center.

Military Spouse J.D. Network supports military spouses in the legal profession by providing a network connecting military spouse attorneys with each other and their supporters.

Military Spouse of the Year honors military spouses of all ranks and all branches of service by recognizing the military spouse's contribution to the military community and our country.

Military Spouse Corporate Career Network provides career training and access to job opportunities.

National Military Family Association works for benefits and provides programs that strengthen and protect military families.

Navy League of the United States is a volunteer service organization founded in 1902 by President Teddy Roosevelt with the mission to support the men and women of the sea services and their families.

The Milspo Project empowers and educates military spouse entrepreneurs through live leadership events, online educational resources and local chapter meetups.

The Military Spouse Advocacy Network works to promote strong military families through education, empowerment and support.

The Other Side of Service provides a global community for professional military spouses formed to leverage the success of one spouse in order to inspire, motivate, and empower others.

The Rosie Network promotes military family-owned businesses to the public and provides entrepreneurial training and mentorship opportunities.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors provides programs, educational assistance and support to those grieving the death of a loved one serving in the Armed Forces.

For more information, download the Spouse Ambassador Network Fact Sheet or call 800-342-9647 to speak with a certified Career Counselor.

Visit <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/Portal/Content/View/1494> to view this and more information about military spouse job search assistance.

The Employment Readiness Program is ready and available to assist with any aspect of your job search. Please don't hesitate to contact the office at 845.938.5658.



Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program
Invites the West Point Community to

Wee Ones Open Play Group

January 9, 23 & 30 / February 6, 13 & 27 / March 6, 13, 20 & 27
9:30-11am

Youth Center Gymnasium, Building 500

Wee Ones Open Play Group is designed for you to play, learn and make new friends. Plus, Wee Ones will help your little one develop their social, cognitive and motor skills. Simply show up and play!

Wee Read

January 5 & 19 / February 2 & 16 / March 2 & 16
9-10am

ACS Resiliency Center, Building 626, Second Floor

Wee Read provides parents the opportunity to introduce their children to reading and language development. Each session, we invite you to listen to a story and participate in fun-filled activities that promote speech development and learning.



Wee Ones Open Play Group and Wee Read invites children birth through four years of age and their parents. There is no charge for participation. Space is limited for Wee Read and registration is required.

If there is a Code Red or Code White, the groups are canceled.



845.938.3369/0626
westpoint.armymwr.com



Together. Listening. Connecting (TLC)

Let's talk about Cyberbullying. January 19th, 11:30am-1pm @Lee Area CDC, bldg. 140. Snow date: January 20th, 11:30am-1pm.

Understand the ins & outs of cyberbullying. Get ahead of this real and growing problem for today's youth.

Presented by Cornell University Cooperative Extension Orange County. For Parents & Caregivers of children of all ages. Free child care is available!

Register to reserve your spot by calling 845.938.5655 or visit: westpointmwr.com by COB January 17th.

LET'S TALK ABOUT **CYBERBULLYING**



Financial Readiness Program

How to Craft the Perfect Budget: Start the new year off right by taking a critical look at how you spend your money

If you're feeling stressed and anxious, here's one way to cure that: Get your budget back on track. A budget that works can work wonders for your mental health.

But that's easier said than done if you're constantly grappling with debt and living paycheck to paycheck. If you're wondering where to start and how to achieve budgeting nirvana, here's a road map from the experts.

A crash course in budgeting. Pull out the calculator, a tablet (paper or digital) and several old bank statements. Then do some math.

1. Record your take-home pay.
2. Subtract savings for retirement, emergencies and other goals like your child's college education. (Some cash-strapped people may be rolling their eyes – put money in an emergency fund before paying the electric bill? But just about every financial expert will tell you to pay yourself first. If you don't, you probably won't do it at all.)
3. Subtract the amount you have to spend every month on your mortgage, utilities, gas, food and debt.
4. According to Loescher, "That equals how much you can spend on everything else."

What your budget should look like. It can be hard to come up with an exact amount you should spend on food, housing and other items on your budget because everybody's situation and cost of living is different. But the bottom line is that the more money that goes toward housing or any particular category, the less money you have for everything else. So if you're curious if you're spending more than most experts recommend, here are some rules of thumb for the main areas of a budget.

Housing and utilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, most single people spent 36 percent of their take-home pay on housing-related expenses (including utilities) in 2014, the most recent data available. If you were married in 2014 and both spouses worked, you probably spent 30 percent of your income. If you live in a big city like New York or San Francisco, where rent is insanely high, then all bets are off, and you may pay far more.

Food. If you're spending about 12 percent of your budget on food, that's about average for single people, according to the BLS. It'll be a little higher if you have a working spouse and kids, but not much. If you're spending, say, 25 percent of your income on food, you're probably doing something wrong, like eating out too often.

Transportation. According to the BLS, most people spend about 16 percent of their budget on car payments, gas and maintenance. If your car is paid off, you're way ahead of the curve.

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Strategies for better budgeting. So much of budgeting is simply being smart about money or using a clever strategy to pay your bills. Some approaches to consider include:
Using cash more. A lot of financial experts praise the idea of switching to a cash system. It may seem a little nuts if you like to pay bills online, but those who continually spend beyond their means might want to try this suggestion from Rita McGrath, a business professor at Columbia Business School in New York City.

Make your budget work for you. Maybe your spouse or another family member thinks you spend money on dumb or wasteful things, but if you're budgeting for them and are otherwise doing OK, you probably aren't being dumb or wasteful at all.
Or maybe you get the coffee and you go on vacation, but you cut back somewhere else. The point is that what works for somebody else's budget may not work for you. And that's OK. In fact, one could argue that if you can get your budget under control and have your coffee and drink it, too – especially while on vacation – you're doing more than OK.

For the complete article please visit:

<http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2016-01-20/how-to-craft-the-perfect-budget>

The Financial Readiness Program is ready and available to assist with any questions regarding budgeting or financial assistance. To set up an appointment, please don't hesitate to contact the office at 845.938.5839.



This Holiday Season, Watch Your Mental Health as Well as Your Waistline

By Col. John D. Lawrence, garrison commander, Fort Riley

FORT RILEY, Kansas (Army News Service) -- With all the tempting food choices available over the holidays, it's understandable that many Soldiers are concerned with staying physically fit, but staying mentally fit is just as important.

The holidays can be a challenging time for anyone. It is a season of traditions, charged with memories and emotion -- and some of those may evoke feelings of happiness, but also sadness. For Soldiers who are unable to be near loved ones and family during this time, the season can be especially hard.

The season comes with its own added layer of activities and responsibilities that can exhaust our time, money and emotional energy. Although many of us look forward to the holidays, others may long for a more tranquil time, such as a leisurely day in June by the pool.

Each of us paints his or her own a mental picture of the ideal holiday, but reality can sometimes fall short. This season, try to manage expectations and create new traditions. For those of you who can't be with your families, try connecting with local friends. You won't replace the traditions you grew up with, but you might broaden your understanding of the holidays.

If your location or deployment keeps you from your loved ones, make it a priority to use the electronics available to you to reach across the miles and connect with them.

Financial stress might make some wish they could skip the whole holiday thing, but one tried and true solution is to draw up a budget and stick to it. Overspending isn't confined to the holiday season; it carries over and also affects life in the new year.

Look for opportunities to volunteer. Spending time in a festive atmosphere with other people doing good work can lift your mood and lead to new friendships.

And always remember: Most of us, at some time during our life, will have difficulty coping with our circumstances -- there is no shame in seeking assistance.

Your Army family is there to help: If you want or need help, reach out to local resources like the Army Community Service, veteran centers and chaplains.

If you're looking for self-help, Military OneSource has information and recommendations covering a variety of topics for Soldiers, Families, civilians and veterans.

Visit www.militaryonesource.mil to learn more.

Family Advocacy Program (FAP) January/February/March 2017



Wee Read celebrated its first birthday this past July and continues to meet the first and third Thursdays of each month, 0900-1000, in the Army Community Service (ACS) Resiliency Center, 2nd floor of Building 626 on Buffalo Soldier Field. Wee Read is a time for children, ages birth through 4 years of age and their parent(s) to enjoy a book or two and a related craft activity. One of the goals of Wee Read is to provide an early literacy learning experience for

children and helpful tips for parents to continue the learning wherever they may go. Book handling behaviors, talking about the pictures and words in the book and involving children in the story are a few of the ways in which Wee Read shares a reading experience.

For more information please contact Family Advocacy at
(845) 938-3369 or better yet,
participate in Wee Read - hope to see you there!



Have you just gotten orders for overseas?

Korea? Italy?
Hawaii? Germany?

Congratulations!
Exciting times lie ahead!

All of these locations and many more are considered overseas tours. As a part of your normal outprocessing, you will be required to attend an ACS Overseas Brief. This Brief will prepare you for the good and not so good aspects of moving and living overseas. Make the most of this fabulous opportunity to live abroad. Don't be caught unaware and uninformed. Let ACS take the stress and uncertainty out of your overseas move. Call to reserve your spot at the next briefing today.

Please contact ACS Relocation Readiness Program at (845) 938- 3487 to schedule an individual appointment.

westpointmwr.com/acs



Returning from an overseas assignment?
Is life "Stateside" not what you remembered?
Then you need the ACS Relocation Readiness

Re-Entry Briefing

Come learn about what to expect as you reintegrate into US Culture and how to transition the easy way!



Please contact ACS Relocation Readiness Program at (845) 938- 3487 to schedule an individual appointment.

westpointmwr.com/acs



Relocation Readiness Program

Moving Tips To Keep You on Track

Whether you are a “meticulous mover” or a “no worries road warrior” – we have tips to make the moving process smoother for you:

Tip #1:

Build up a support team – find a friend who can take the kids. Create a positive relationship with your transportation team. Make sure you are on the same page as your spouse on what needs to be done. Incorporating all of these can lessen your burden and your stress level.

Tip #2:

Take a timeout. Going all day long will cause you to feel drained and short-tempered. If possible, schedule several breaks for yourself throughout the moving day. Ask your spouse or a friend to step in for a small block of time so you can decompress and collect your thoughts.

Tip #3:

Include the entire family ~ it's their move too! Let them in on the plan. Walk everyone through the steps of the move. Children feel more secure knowing what is going to happen even if this is the family's 10th move. Include everyone in the cleaning.....everyone handles moving in their own way. Some may not mind if you throw away all their clutter, while others will get upset. Come up with a plan that works for everyone.

Tip #4:

Get everyone packing. No matter the age, have each child pack up what they would like to bring on the road. This will help them feel secure in knowing that their most precious items will be making the trip.

Tip #5:

Provide INTEL.....share the research with your children about schools, parks, extra-curriculum activities. If there seems to be more negatives than where you live now, play up the positives to keep them excited.

Tip #6:

Know the moving process. Your first stop should be www.move.mil and then set up an appointment with your Transportation Counselor at your installation.

Tip #7:

Keep good records. Get a folder where you can keep all of your paperwork, receipts and miscellaneous notes on your move. Make sure to include a list of important contact numbers for the losing/gaining installations and the moving truck driver and company POC.

Tip #8:

One of the biggest mistakes made during military moves is not separating out items you do not want packed.....do not assume that notes stuck to items around the home will stay on during the craziness of moving day. Clearly explain to the movers the do and do not pack items.

Tip #9:

Stress-free pet moving.....update contact information before the movers arrive, put a current phone number on your pet's tag or update their microchip. Moving is very stressful for your pet – so try to find a safe and secure place for them.

Tip #10:

Use all the available resources such as www.move.mil, www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil, www.pscmypov.com, your local transportation office and Army Community Service.

We all learn from each PCS. We fine-tune our moving preparations. We learn new and creative ways to get all the things done each time. So whether this is your first or 10th PCS move, let ACS help you plan. Give the ACS Relocation Readiness Program Manager a call and set up an appointment for your next PCS move at 845.938.3487.



USAG WEST POINT ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE

LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT SERIES CLASS SCHEDULE

Army Family Team Building (AFTB) is a fun, educational program designed to enhance one's knowledge of the military and encourage development of personal and leadership skills.

Army Family Team Building **LVI: Military Knowledge**



One Day: 8:30am-5pm

January 26

April 13

July 27

October 26

Army Family Team Building **LVII: Growth & Resiliency**



Two Days: 8:30am-4:30pm

February 22 & 23

May 24 & 25

August 23 & 24

November 1 & 2

To sign up call 845.938.3655.

Classes are held at ACS, Bldg. 622.
A minimum of 10 students must be registered to run a class.

AFTB classes are also available online:
www.myarmyonesource.com





USAG WEST POINT ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE PCS WORKSHOP CLASSES



Smooth Moves

January 18, 10-11am

Expect how to prepare and expedite the entire process of moving.



School Transition

February 15, 10-11am

Easily move your student from one school to the next is the secret to making a smooth and easy transition.



Moving with Kids

March 15, 10-11am

Understand the common concerns & fears as children prepare to move from one community to another.



westpoint.armymwr.com

@WestPointArmyCommunityService

Reserve your space today

845.938.3487



The Exceptional Family Member Program

**March Is Developmental Disabilities Awareness
Month with the 2017 Theme: It Matters To ME**



National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is an opportunity to promote respect for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to educate others on the spectrum about the abilities people with I/DD possess. For example, some disabilities are visible (a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches to ambulate), while other disabilities may not be easily recognized or seen by the eye (cognitive impairments that affect the way a person speaks, learns, or interacts with others).

College Programs for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Scholarship Opportunities

Too often students with intellectual and developmental disabilities aren't encouraged to consider college for their future. With the right services and supports in place, many young adults can successfully attend college and graduate with a degree. For the complete article with more information and a list of college programs in the area and Scholarship Opportunities that are designed specifically for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities go to:

<http://www.thearcfamilyinstitute.org/spceial-campiangs/college-programs/>

For help with advocacy, information or to assist you and your family with other opportunities please contact the EFMP Office on West Point at 845.938.5655/0232.





Paws for Kids



- Jan. 10, 24, 31
- Feb. 7, 21, 28
- Mar. 7, 21, 28

3:30-5pm
ACS, Bldg 622



westpoint.armymwr.com

845.938.5655/0232



American
Red Cross



Accessibility
Help and
Information



Make a World of Difference!

Sponsorship Training

A well trained sponsor can make a world of difference for an incoming Soldier and their Family. Being a great sponsor takes dedication, time and training. You bring the dedication, your supervisor gives you the time and ACS provides you with the training. Prepare to do your part today.

Call to reserve your spot at the next Sponsorship Training class:

***Sponsorship training can also be completed online!
Go to: http://www.westpointmwr.com/acs/Relocation_Readiness.htm
and click on the Sponsorship button to get started now!***

**Please contact ACS Relocation Readiness Program
at (845) 938- 3487 to schedule an individual appointment.**

westpointmwr.com/acs



**Accessibility
Help and
Information**





Gold Star Families Voices Act Vets History Project



Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04) announced that the Gold Star Families Voices Act (HR 4511)—which expands the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project (VHP) to include family members of veterans who died as a result of their service or who are missing in action—has been signed into law. Smith's legislation was approved by a unanimous voice vote in the House on September 6, 2016 and by a unanimous 97-0 vote in the Senate on November 15th. "The new law honors the men and women who gave 'the last full measure of devotion' in the service of our nation by allowing family members to tell their stories on their behalf," said Smith, who served as chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and authored more than a dozen laws to expand the benefits and services provided to our nation's veterans and surviving family members. "The Veterans History Project is designed to help preserve and catalog the memories of our nation's veterans so that current and future generations may hear and better appreciate the realities of war and the sacrifices borne by those who served in uniform. "With enactment of this legislation, we are adding new voices to this rich history project—and recording the sacrifices of all who have served. Family members will now have the opportunity to create a lasting record of their fallen loved ones."

Congress created the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress in 2000 to collect and catalog the stories of American war veterans. The project has been a great success. Earlier this year, the Library announced that it reached a milestone: it has collected more than 100,000 testimonies of veterans who have served in military engagements since World War I in a permanent record. Until now, the project accepted only first-hand accounts of living veterans, unintentionally leaving out the men and women who did not return from the battlefield. Under Smith's law, immediate family members can now participate on a veteran's behalf including parents, spouses, siblings and/or children.

Smith's bill is endorsed by the New Jersey Gold Star Mothers organization, whose President, Judi Tapper—the proud mother of Petty Officer First Class David Tapper, a Navy Seal who was killed in Afghanistan on August 20, 2003—stated: "Never in history has there been a forum to replace our heroes' silenced voices. This legislation provides it. In their names, may their stories be told."

Senator Roy Blunt, who led the effort to pass this bill in the Senate, said: "We would not be the nation we are today if not for the profound acts of courage and selflessness of our fallen heroes. We, as Americans, owe it to these men and women to know their names, to honor their deeds, and to preserve their memories. The Gold Star Families Voices Act makes an invaluable project even better by giving the family members of our missing and fallen service members the opportunity to share their stories and ensure they become a part of our nation's historical record. I thank American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. and Representative Chris Smith for championing this bill, and my Senate colleagues for getting it to the president's desk."

For the complete article please go to:

<http://chrissmith.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=399934>

For information about the Survivor Outreach Program or help with services, please call the ACS
SOS manager at 845.938.5654



WHAT'S HAPPENING!

A PROGRAM OF

PAVE

FOLLOW US:



STOMP Workshop

When: April 3—4 2017

Where: Lee Area CDC

Blgd 140

West Point, NY 10996

Please bring your child(ren) if you are not able to obtain childcare for all or part of each day you are able to attend.

Interactive Breakouts to learn:

- ⇒ What your child's IFSP/IEP can do for them when goals are written "SMART"
- ⇒ 504 accommodations and modifications when transitioning out of high school.
- ⇒ Advocating – Making a Plan

Network with peers and professionals to gain knowledge about your local community and available resources.

For additional information, or to register please contact us at:

Josephine.Toohey@usma.edu

845-938-5655

Workshop Layout Day 1 - What You Need to Know!

- Your right as a parent of a child with a disability
- What to have when PCS/ETS occurs.
- Communicating effectively to attain collaborative relationships for your child.
- **Your Childs' IFSP, IEP, or 504**
(Please bring a copy if you would like to learn how they will be best supported)
-



Workshop Layout Day 2 - TRICARE, SSI, and Medicaid for the Military Family.

- TRICARE/ECHO/ABA
- The steps taken to apply for SSI and Medicaid

Wills, Guardianships, and Special Needs Trusts

- Planning for the future of your child without you





Make a Difference

**Submit your suggestion to improve
our community and the Army Family!**



If you have a problem you believe affects the readiness & well-being of the West Point local community or Army as a whole, AFAP — is your tool to voice your issue to Army leadership.

Accepted year-round!
westpointmwr.com/afap.htm

Call 845.938.3655





When You Call, They Will Answer

Answer the call and help the Family until their situation or concern is resolved. That, simply put, is what Military OneSource specialty consultants do, day in and day out, for military families with special needs.

"A Family calls with a specific concern. Let's say their child has a behavior issue at school," Angel Myers, Military OneSource special needs specialty consultant, explains. "We'll problem-solve with them, come up with ideas, and find what works best for them." When you call Military OneSource, you will speak to a live person every time. The goal of the Military OneSource consultant answering the phone is to "triage" the Family by determining their needs, and then connecting them to whatever or whoever meets that need, such as a service provider. The consultants take such calls 24/7/365. When a Military OneSource consultant identifies a Family as having a special needs concern, the consultant helps the Family schedule an appointment with a special needs specialty consultant like Angel Myers.

They're a dedicated group of experts, Angel notes. All the special needs specialty consultants hold master's degrees in behavioral health fields, have specialized training and education in the field of child and adult disabilities, and conduct weekly research related to their field in between working calls and cases.

They are also a diverse group. For example, one is a Navy veteran and special education teacher, and another is a military spouse and former Exceptional Family Member Program coordinator. That diversity helps them deal with the variety of calls they receive.

"The issues are wide ranging," Angel says. A spouse calls because her elderly father has dementia. A mother calls because her daughter is transitioning into adulthood. "An issue could be temporary, resolved on the first call, or chronic, requiring extensive research and involving multiple provider and clinic referrals." The consultants' goal is to keep a Family with the consultant they start with, no matter how long it takes.

Angel explains that many families reach out to them right after a diagnosis, unsure of what resources might be available to help them. "We assess their situation and advise, 'Here are the benefits available. What would be most helpful to you?' Then we help them get there."

Here are five other ways specialty consultants are able to help military families:

Services are free. The specialty consultant's time with and assistance to the Family is 100 percent free, provided through the Department of Defense.

Qualifying is easy. Any service or Family member eligible for Military OneSource can request to speak with a special needs specialty consultant, including active duty, National Guard and reserves (regardless of activation status) and Coast Guard members (when activated with the Navy), immediate Family members, survivors (non-remarried spouses and children), veterans up to 180 days past retirement and civilian expeditionary workforce (when deployed).

Calls are unlimited. Families can make as many calls as they need, and they can even call back a year later and request to continue with the same specialty consultant they had previously.

Cases are confidential. Calls are never recorded. Specialty consultants discuss subject matter when necessary to pool their expertise and find a solution for a Family, but they never discuss personal Family details.

Families are empowered. The specialty consultant identifies what the Family needs, and then connects them to appropriate resources, often doing so via three-way calls with benefits agencies or service providers. "We often coach the participant on the line, what they might do and say," Angel says. "And they often pursue it themselves. We just step in when they need us to."

Meeting the Family where they are highlights the specialty consultants' partnership approach. "We empower families," Angel says, "by giving them the tools they need so they can continue advocacy for their loved one and move forward." - The Exceptional Advocate