

Miramar CLF Report
September 18, 2008

The September 2008 Community Leaders Forum meeting was held on board MCAS Miramar in the new "HUB," which is a large facility designed to meet the many needs of Miramar's men and women and their families.

This project involved the gutting of the old galley and library. The buildings were redesigned and remodeled into a facility that encompasses 1.5 acre under one roof.

One of the largest facilities within the HUB is the new Station Library. Covering 24,000 square feet, and housing over 50,000 volumes, the library offers an oasis of information and educational tools. In addition to books, the Library also has music CDs, videos, over 150 different magazines and a wide selection of audiotapes. The Library has eight computers with free Internet access as well as one for word processing. Printers are available for use, as is a fax machine and a photocopy machine for a small fee. The Station Library has the driver's handbook (in English and Spanish), as well as the motorcycle handbook. Service members can also pick up an application for drivers licenses or official state identification cards.

The HUB contains a Career Resource Center for Marine Corps personnel to provide information and assistance to aid service members, retirees, veterans, DOD civilian employees and their family members in career planning and job search.

Within the Career Resource Center there are representatives from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Veteran's Affairs (VA) and Employment Development Department (EDD). Automated services consist of computer workstations for use in preparing resumes, cover letters and federal applications. Internet capability is available on all computers. Fax service, copies and a telephone for employer contact is available.

The Resource Library has newspaper publications, video and books on the job market and how to better prepare for civilian employment. Employment listings for local, nationwide and overseas employers are up-dated daily. All of these services are free.

The Hub regularly holds Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Workshops. Moving from military to civilian life can be an exciting and much anticipated process, but also a bit nerve wrecking. TAP has developed a series of classes designed to arm personnel with the knowledge needed to succeed to make an effective transition from military to civilian life. Classes are tailored to non-retiring enlisted personnel, junior officers and retiring senior military personnel.

Spouse Transition Classes are offered to spouses with a deployed military sponsor, knowing that the service person will retire or end active service shortly after returning to MCAS Miramar. Spouses are invited and encouraged to attend the four-day transition class to learn information that may assist the family with future relocation and employment. Reservations can be made 30 to 60 days in advance of the class date. Spouses are always welcome to attend the transition program when their military service member attends.

The TAP includes Employment Assistance Workshops, which provide guidance on the Federal Employment Application process, such as how to handle difficult and common interview questions and successful techniques for developing a resume.

Computerized Skills and Self-Assessment programs help job seekers make career and educational choices based on interest, skills and personality types.

Military Spouses seeking employment or changing career paths, or are new to the area, are strongly encouraged to use the services and resources available at the Career Resource Center.

The HUB contains something called a Cyber Center, which provides a place for everyone to have Internet access, whether for email, games, X-Box Live, or just to go online. For gamers, the Cyber Center has the most up-to date equipment with intense graphics, web cam and more. The game selections are continually updated so users are always playing the most current version..

The HUB contains a Distance Learning Center designed to provide Marines with anytime access to E-learning resources. Using the Center, Marines have access to thousands of courses covering a wide variety of subjects from military skills to technology and personal development courses. Marines

also have access to the current family of electronic Tactical Decision Simulations that support their PME curricula. Finally, Marines can complete online examinations for MARINET and MCI courses delivered from the Distance Learning Center and receive self-education bonus points that count toward promotion.

Education Center: Whether finishing up or just getting started, the Education Center has innumerable ways to reach educational goals. And the staff is highly in tune with the demands of military life and has developed several programs that enable military personnel to advance educationally in spite of obstacles. Whether the goal is earning a degree or simply gaining a new skill, the Education Center offers flexible and effective ways to further goals and maximize time.

The Education Center includes ten classrooms in which colleges teach a wide range of courses. The Center currently offers programs at the certificate, associates, bachelors and masters levels. They also proctor a wide range of exams to include Military Classifications Tests, Pearson-Vue, Air University, FAA, SAT, ACT and college distance education exams free to active duty service members. Many of these proctoring services are available free or charge or for a minimal fee to retirees and family members.

One of the most popular facilities within THE HUB is the Enlisted Recreation Center called "The Great Escape." The Great Escape, Enlisted Recreation Center, is the home away from home for active duty enlisted service members, reservists, and their guests over the age of 18. The Great Escape was developed as a non-alcoholic alternative to the Enlisted Club. The facility is open 365 days a year, over 95 hours each week.

The Great Escape hosts daily, weekly, and monthly activities including: The Great Escape Olympics, barbecues, ice cream socials, and Off Base Adventures to explore Southern California's exciting attractions. The facility also hosts the Home for the Holidays program, pairing single service members with host families in outlying cities.

The Great Escape has a movie room with over 800 movies that are updated every month. The newest feature is a home movie theater with a projection system containing a 130" screen with surround sound. The movie room is filled with leather recliners and giant movie-sac beanbags.

There is a billiard room with six tournament-size pool tables, a Game Room that features computer games, a main lounge area with large TVs and plenty of overstuffed couches, a foosball table and a ping-pong table.

When hungry, the Marines can dine in the Legends Sports Grill, which serves E-5, and below Active duty Marines, Sailors, dependents and guests.

All in all, this center of activity called THE HUB provides a terrific home away from home and an excellent resource center for Miramar's Marine Corps family.

On a personal note: Nothing like this existed 40 years ago when I was a young Fighter Pilot. The services have come a long way in providing much needed services for our military men and women and their families.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C Frederick