

Local educators honored for work with military kids

Thomas Zimmerman, Carlisle Barracks Public Affairs Officer

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Army War College and Carlisle Barracks leadership honored nearly 40 local educators for their work with military children April 28.

Pictured here are educators from the Carlisle Area School District. The rest of the photos can be found at www.facebook.com/usawc

Being a child in a military family presents its own unique challenges. They attend multiple schools in a short period of time, face the challenge of making new friends with each new move. Many military kids experience things many of their civilian classmates do not.

That's why the Army War College community took time April 28 to honor nearly 40 local educators from five local school districts and Saint Patrick's School and Trinity High School, for their work with military children. The superintendents of Carlisle, Big Spring, Cumberland Valley, Mechanicsburg and South Middleton school districts, Saint Patrick's School and Trinity High School, worked with the school liaison office here to identify the exceptional principals, teachers, and counselors who educate military children for honors.

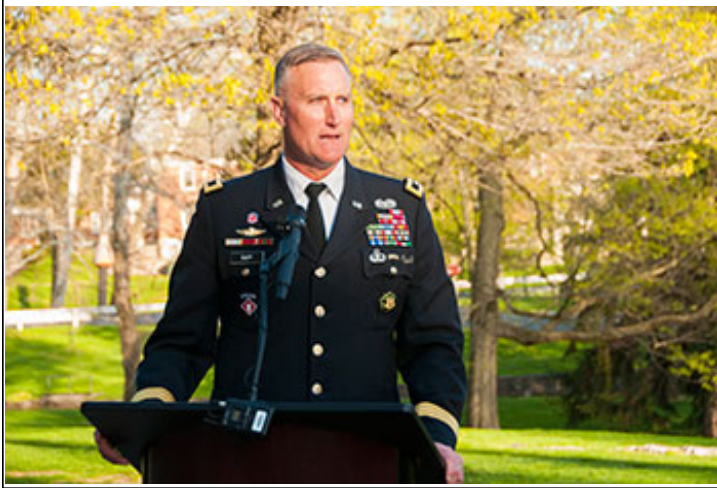
The event was hosted by Maj. Gen. Bill Rapp, Army War College Commandant, and his wife, Debbie.

"I want to say thank you for what you do for our children," said Rapp. "The military moves a lot. My kids are no different. What makes it special is the reception that they get by school districts in the areas into which we move. The reception that they get makes being a military kid that much more fulfilling. This is our opportunity to thank you."

He pointed out that an overwhelming majority of the students who attend the Army War College bring their families with them and the school districts here are a major factor in their decision.

"That was the case when I was here as a student in 2003. It was because of the schools and the work you all do in

welcoming them.”



Maj. Gen. Bill Rapp, Army War College Commandant, hosted the event honoring local educators.

Rapp acknowledge the challenge for teachers and coaches who may only have these kids for a year, but still make a heavy investment in them.

“It’s hard to invest in a kid that you know only has one year, but I’ll tell you, they’re good kids. They are deserving of a chance and you all give it to them. This is our opportunity to say thank you.”

Guest speaker Pedro Rivera, Pa. Acting Secretary of Education, expressed his appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the educators.

“This is a reminder that I am member of an incredible team,” he said. “Especially in education, no one does this alone. It truly takes a village to support the students that are entrusted in our care. Being here is a great opportunity to celebrate exactly that. To celebrate teachers that I know ... have made an impact and influence in their community.



Pedro Rivera, Pa. Acting Secretary of Education, was the guest speaker for the event.

“You are educators that have made a difference in the lives of children.”

Leadership and parents alike attended the ceremony to show their appreciation for the districts’ work with their children.

Air Force Lt. Col. Casey Cooley talked about the reception his three kids in South Middleton School District received.

“They were very accommodating in making sure that [the kids] got the classes they needed while they were here,

since they were going back to another high school,” he said. “Great people to work with, all the way from the superintendent, Dr. Moyer, down to the teachers in the classroom.”

The educators, along with a team of school liaison officers here at Carlisle Barracks, work together to ensure a smooth transition and work through any challenges that may arise during the year.

“We came from overseas and have navigated schools on three continents,” said Christie Cormier, one of the post’s school liaison officers who has two kids in the Carlisle School District. “Because of that experience, I really can identify with the international students on how different our school system are. My job as a school liaison officer is to help international families transition over the summer – everything from dress codes and attendance policies to clubs and school sports.”

Programs including Herd 100 at Carlisle High School, that the district sponsors to help new kids – both international and U.S. -- adjust to life in Carlisle.

“This is a great transition program for the kids ... it really helps acclimate them to the district.”

One of those international students, Norwegian Col. Eirik Kristoffersen, has five children attending local schools.

“The teachers here are so professional and understanding,” he said. “They help them with the language, mathematics, including algebra. Everything is new for the kids. It’s just been a great experience here.”

Kristofferson’s wife, Liv, pointed out that the first few months are the toughest for the kids but they become more comfortable and by the time the year is over, they don’t want to go back to Norway.

“As the months have gone by they’ve become more confident, learned the language, thanks to the great teachers,” she said.

Also honored were employees of the Carlisle Barracks and Letterkenny Army Depot Child, Youth, and School Services for their close collaboration with parents and schools in providing educational summer and after-school programs.

List of honorees:

Carlisle Area School District

Mr. Chuck Roeder, Social Studies Teacher, Carlisle High School

Ms. Diana Cody, ESL Teacher, Carlisle High School

Ms. Stephanie Weimer, Librarian, Lamberton Middle

Mrs. Dawn Durham, Literacy Coach, LeTort Elementary

Mrs. Mary Ann Evans, Counselor, Bellaire Elementary

Mrs. Ann Gerras, LeTort Elementary School Guidance Counselor

Ms. Jane Schmeck, Registrar for Carlisle Area School District

Mrs. Bethany Bratten, Wilson Middle School, ESL Teacher

Mrs. Leigh Hamilton, Carlisle High School Junior Varsity Cheerleading Coach

Mrs. Julie Brent, Carlisle High School Varsity Cheerleading Coach

Cumberland Valley School District

Mrs. Sandy Arena, District Office Central Registration Registrar

Mr. Jeff Thompson, Eagle View Middle School Guidance Counselor

Mrs. Diane Otto, Middlesex Elementary School ESL Paraprofessional

Mr. John Gallagher, Eagle View Middle School Principal

Mrs. Christina Stoshack, ESL Supervisor, Cumberland Valley School District

South Middleton School District

Mr. Brandon Deitch, Social Studies Yellow Breeches Middle School

Mrs. Joetta Sunday, Iron Forge Educational Center 4th grade teacher

Mrs. Kimberly Spisak, Assistant Principal Rice Elementary

Ms. Charlene D'Amore, ESL Teacher

Ms. Sandra Slifko, Guidance Counselor Boiling Springs High School

Big Spring School District

Mr. Karen Ward, Principal, Mt. Rock Elementary School

Mr. Timothy Kireta, Social Studies Teacher, Big Spring High School

Mr. Shawn Britcher, Social Studies Teacher, Big Spring Middle School

Mrs. Anne Fulker, Guidance Counselor, Big Spring Middle School

Mechanicsburg School District

Mr. William Richie, Mechanicsburg Senior High School, Technology Education Teacher

Mr. Clay McAllister, Social Studies Teacher

Mrs. Kelly Newell, Grade 5 Teacher

Mr. Tim Bianchi, Social Studies Teacher

Saint Patrick School

Mrs. Judy Mullery, Saint Patrick School 7th grade teacher

Mrs. Guyer, Saint Patrick School 4th grade teacher

Trinity High School

Mrs. Karen McDermott, Director of Admissions

Tieman Child Development Center – Letterkenny Army Depot

Ms. Samantha Harding, Infant Room Caregiver

Mrs. Ruby Cardona, Pre-Toddler Teacher

Moore Child Development Center – Carlisle Barracks

Ms. Barbara Barnes, CDC Nutritionist

Ms. Tiffany Kruger, CDC Admin Assistant

Youth Services – Carlisle Barracks

Ms. Kathy Yekatherina, Training and Curriculum Specialist for Child, Youth & School Services

Ms. Kara Durgin, School Age Center Program Lead.