

# Unique movie experience offered for special needs children

**Carlisle Barracks offering unique movie experience for special needs children**



*Cassie Villalobos, Emily Brown, Samantha Villalobos and Carsten Bridges pose for a photo during a recent sensory free movie showing at Reynolds Theater. Lights are kept on, the sound is lowered, and kids are free to get up and move around and talk, which is helpful for children with special needs.*

A new program at Carlisle

Barracks has opened the doors for children with special needs in the community to enjoy a movie going experienced designed just for them.

Reynolds Theater has hosted two “sensory friendly” showing of new kids movies to allow children with special needs to enjoy watching a movie in the theater with their friends and family.

“Parents have come to me and said that they wished they could take their kids to the movies but it just wasn’t possible,” said Kelly Villalobos, director of the post Exceptional Family Member Program. “I thought it would be a great idea to offer something here for the kids and their families.” She has partnered with AAFES to hold two sensory free movie experiences in the last few months.

“Carsten enjoyed the experience,” said Lt. Col. Chad Bridges, an Army War College student whose son attended a recent screening of *Moana*. “The staff was terrific. The sensory friendly atmosphere provided an environment where he could watch a movie in a theater where in traditional theaters, he could not.”

The program has been a great success, with 78 people attending the first movie, a showing of *Trolls* and a recent showing of *Moana* brought 91 people to Reynolds Theater, from as far away as York, Pa.

“The event is sensory friendly to meet the diverse needs of this population,” said Villalobos. “Lights are kept on, the sound is lowered, and kids are free to get up and move around and talk.”

When movies are scheduled, email invitations are sent to each family with a special needs child. Movies are held on Saturdays on a quarterly basis at noon. Villalobos also provides the information to local agencies who work with special needs children to make the event available to them as well.

Plans are being developed for the next movie, for more information contact Kelly Villalobos at 717-245-3775.

### **Eagle View Middle School offering sensory free showing**

Eagle View Middle School will present a dress rehearsal of Beauty and the Beast for our Exceptional Family Members on April 27. The show will begin at 6:00 PM and run until 9:00 PM. This showing will provide two roped off sections in the rear of the auditorium one of these sections will have the lights turned up. Children will be free to move around and talk during this showing.

Prior to the showing there will be a meet and greet for families to meet the lead characters in the show. Families should be advised that because this is a dress rehearsal that there may be times where the production stops and restarts, however the ultimate goal will be to run the show in it's entirety on this evening. Eagle View Middle School will collect a \$5.00 admission fee per person upon entry.

This event is not sponsored or endorsed by the United States Army. All money collected will go to the Eagle View Middle School. This information is provided solely for the consideration of military families of EMFPs who have limited opportunities for their children to enjoy the arts.