

Carlisle Barracks salutes educators making a difference in the lives of military kids

By Thomas Zimmerman 01 May 2018



Members of the Carlisle Area School District pose for a photo at the Excellence in Education reception hosted by Maj. Gen. and Mrs John Kem, USAWC Commandant, April 30.



Kem speaks to the honorees, invited guests and superintendents of Carlisle, Big Spring, Cumberland Valley, Mechanicsburg and South Middleton school districts, Grace Baptist School, and Saint Patrick's School.



Medhavari (Annie) Singh, a graduating senior at Carlisle High School and daughter of Indian Brig. Shrinjay Pratap Singh, served as the guest speaker for the event.

Sometimes when everything in life is different a simple act of not being treated differently by others can make all of the difference.

Local educators, administrators and support staff of five local school districts, Grace Baptist School and Saint Patrick's School, were recognized for their actions, words and understanding of military children at the Excellence in Education event at Quarters One on April 30.

Hosted by Maj. Gen. and Mrs. John Kem, Army War College Commandant, the event shined a light on those who ease the transition and enable military children to be successful, even if they are only here for one school year.

“The work you do to help the students and their families and get them settled in is amazing,” said Kem during the ceremony. “We are lucky to have you as partners.”

One of those children is Medhavari (Annie) Singh, a graduating senior at Carlisle High School and daughter of Indian Brig. Shrinjay Pratap Singh, who served as the guest speaker for the event.

“In India I had a plan, and I knew exactly where I was going,” she said. “When my father was nominated to come here as a student I was happy and excited for him, but I became filled with apprehension and had to make a choice. This was going to be my senior year, and I was going to leave friends and teachers I loved. One year is a long time to lose a lot, but it’s also a long time to gain a lot.”

Singh ultimately decided to come to Carlisle with her family and complete her last year at Carlisle High School.

“I was nervous because I was different and everything here was different and I wasn’t sure how people would treat me,” she said. “My teachers and counselors helped me feel comfortable right away. They didn’t make me feel different because they didn’t treat me any differently, they treated me like any other 17 year old girl. This helped me to realize that people will see you for who you are.

Nobody has a perfect life,” she continued. “We all have challenges we face and it’s the successes and failures that make us who we are.”

The next step in the plan is clear for Singh as she will enroll in Penn State University in the fall.

In addition to the staff at the high school, Singh said the actions of one person at Carlisle Barracks helped her feel more confident about heading into a new challenge.

“The very first person I spoke to here was Mrs. Kristy Cormier who filled me with confidence, she said. “She gave me the confidence to develop a new plan and new goals.”

For Cormier, the event was her last as a school liaison officer at Carlisle Barracks as she and her family will leave the area this summer. She organized the Excellence in Education event for the last few years in addition to working closely with local schools to ensure a smooth transition for children and the districts. Cormier understood the additional challenges

facing the children of international students and made it a point to work with the districts and families for a smoother transition.

The exceptional principals, teachers, and counselors who educate military children were identified for honors by the superintendents of Carlisle, Big Spring, Cumberland Valley, Mechanicsburg and South Middleton school districts, Grace Baptist School, and Saint Patrick's School.

List of honorees:

- **Big Spring School District** selected Heather Housel, Lindsay Graham, Sherri Mains and Lisa Black.
- **Carlisle Area School District** selected Melinda Mix, Julianne Milligan, Mimi Frohman, Barbara McMullin, Peggy Howland, Linda Fitzpatrick, Laurie Echevarria and April Green.
- **Cumberland Valley School District** selected Shawn Marshall, Erica Zeigler, Gaynella Angelo, Lauren Whiteko and Peter Mashinski.
- **Grace Baptist School** selected Sue Gorton and Melanie Endres.
- **Mechanicsburg Area School District** selected Dana Padfield, Nicholas Sadvari, and Jessica Bock.
- **Saint Patrick School** selected Amy Sullivan and Lisa Farley.
- **South Middleton School District** selected Lindsey Graybill, Joan Smith, Kimberly Herman and Erin Rech.
- **Tieman Child Development Center** at Letterkenney Army Depot selected Karmen Matheney and Barbara Newcomer.
- **Moore Child Development Center** at Carlisle Barracks selected Ashley Diehl and Catherine Broniec-Kessinger.
- **Youth Services** at Carlisle Barracks selected Christa Siggia and David Myers.