

South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: pao@sd.ngb.army.mil
Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>
www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard
www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard



March 30, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Workshop highlights programs, resources for military, family success

By Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald
SDNG Service Member and Family Support

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – More than 150 service members, their families and volunteers attended the South Dakota National Guard Family Readiness Volunteer Workshop and Youth Symposium in Sioux Falls, March 24-25.

“What we do at this event is educate our commanders, first sergeants and chiefs, as well as volunteers, and encourage collaboration between them to make their unit successful,” said Nikki Wajer, family programs manager for the 114th Fighter Wing.

Representatives from a wide range of military and family resources answered questions and shared details about their programs that are available to Soldiers, Airmen and their families.

“There are resources available to family members, and they don’t always know about them,” said Sue Giskaas, National Guard Bureau volunteer team member. “The resources can apply to the military member, spouses, children – there are youth camps and events to get involved with – and events like this workshop give people a chance to see those opportunities.”

While the adults were gaining contacts for military and family resources, the children stayed busy participating with team-building activities and listening to motivational speakers. Also, the SDNG Civil Operations team, with the Counterdrug program, brought in a variety of tools and interacted with the youth to teach them about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

“As a part of this event, we try to do some recognition,” said Lt. Col. Bryan Jacobson, director of the Service Member and Family Support branch. “It’s a great time to show appreciation for those putting their own time in to help the program.”

During an awards banquet Saturday night, SMFS recognized service members and families by presenting 13 awards for dedication to the SDNG family programs.

The Family Readiness Workshop is just one of the many events the SMFS branch has going on throughout the year. There are several opportunities for volunteers to get involved at the state level and unit levels.

“If [volunteers] want to get involved, they can contact any of the SMFS staff or talk to the unit or wing leadership,” said Wajer. “We will hook them up and get them a job that fits them best.”

The SMFS branch relies on volunteers to have successful events and makes it a priority to recognize outstanding support. Due to budget constraints, there was no workshop last year, so the awards for 2010-11 were presented during this year’s banquet.

2010 Family Readiness Awards

Army Guard Volunteer of the Year – Angela Jorgenson
Army Guard Family of the Year – Lee and Kathy Severin Family
Air Guard Volunteer of the Year – Pam McDowell
Air Guard Military Member of the Year – Robert Funk
Air Guard Family of the Year – Kevin and Joyce Callies Family

2011 Family Readiness Awards

Army Guard Volunteer of the Year – Rosie Heinert
Army Guard Extra Mile Award – Dave Burr
Army Guard Gold Award – Michael Cartney
Air Guard Volunteer of the Year – Sarah Callies
Air Guard Military Member of the Year – Casey Bullis
Air Guard Family of the Year – Bill and Glenda Kluckman
SDNG Youth Volunteer of the Year – Casey Callies
National Guard Bureau Youth Volunteer of the Year – Casey Callies
Outstanding Support to SDNG Families – Arla Ruiter

-30-

High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard
Additional stories and information are online at www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard



120324-A-WA247-004: Service members, their families and volunteers gather for the opening presentation at the South Dakota National Guard Family Readiness Volunteer Workshop and Youth Symposium at the Regional Training Institute in Sioux Falls, S.D., March 24, 2012. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald)(RELEASED)



120324-A-WA247-005: Bill Zubke, a motivational speaker, talks to a group of youth about choosing to be happy in life, during the South Dakota National Guard Family Readiness Volunteer Workshop and Youth Symposium in Sioux Falls, S.D., March 24, 2012. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald)(RELEASED)



120324-A-WA247-006: Staff Sgt. Matthew Hurney, member of the Counterdrug Civil Operations team, talks to kids about the dangers of alcohol abuse during the South Dakota National Guard Family Readiness Volunteer Workshop and Youth Symposium in Sioux Falls, S.D., March 24, 2012. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald) (RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail pao@sd.ngb.army.mil.