

promise

October
November
December 2011

SOS Promise is a quarterly newsletter published quarterly by the Fort Bliss SOS Office to inform Survivor Families about news, activities, and upcoming events in our area.

Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) Fort Bliss, Texas



Please send us your updated contact information.

Dearest Families,

Welcome to this issue of the SOS Promise . The SOS Promise newsletter serves as a way to keep our Survivor Families informed about programs, events, activities, and news that applies to the Families of Fallen Soldiers.

We are committed to compassionate and determined outreach. We want to be intentional yet non-invasive in extending the hand of support to our Survivor Families at their point of need with meaningful programs and caring counsel.

Above all, we want our Families to know that they have a team of dedicated supporters concerned for their well being during their journey through grief.

If we can assist you in any way, please call or come by so that we can get to know you and you can get to know us. Your SOS staff consists of Janeth Lopez, Program Manager, Lew Lewis, Support Coordinator, and Michelle Jones, Financial Counselor.

We will begin offering Self Care classes covering a variety of topics. The first one will be Stress Management scheduled for Thursday, October 20th, 10:00am at the ACS Building. We also will be hosting a potluck the week of Thanksgiving and a holiday reception in December. We look forward to meeting you all soon.

Legislation Updates

Expansion of Survivor Eligibility Under the TRI-CARE Dental Program (TDP)

The 2011 amendment to the legislation entitles the surviving spouse and child(ren) continuation of eligibility for the TDP regardless of whether they were previously enrolled in the TDP.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Drops 2 year time limit for Surviving spouses.

Husbands and wives of service members disabled or killed in the line of duty soon will have indefinite noncompetitive eligibility for government jobs.



Upcoming Events

October 2011

SOS Self Care
"Stress Management"
Thursday, October 20
10am ACS

ACS Open House
Thursday, October 20
3:00-5:00 pm
FRC, Bldg 250

Halloween Monster Bash
Friday October 28
5:00-9:00 p.m. at Biggs Park



November 2011

Military Appreciation Day
Saturday, November 5
White Sands Missile Range

Veteran's Day Ceremony
Thursday, November 10
Memorial Circle, Fort Bliss

Veteran's Day Parade
Saturday, November 12
City of El Paso

SOS Thanksgiving Potluck
Tuesday, November 22
4:00pm-7:00pm
Location TBD



THANKSGIVING DAY
November 24
SOS Office CLOSED

December 2011

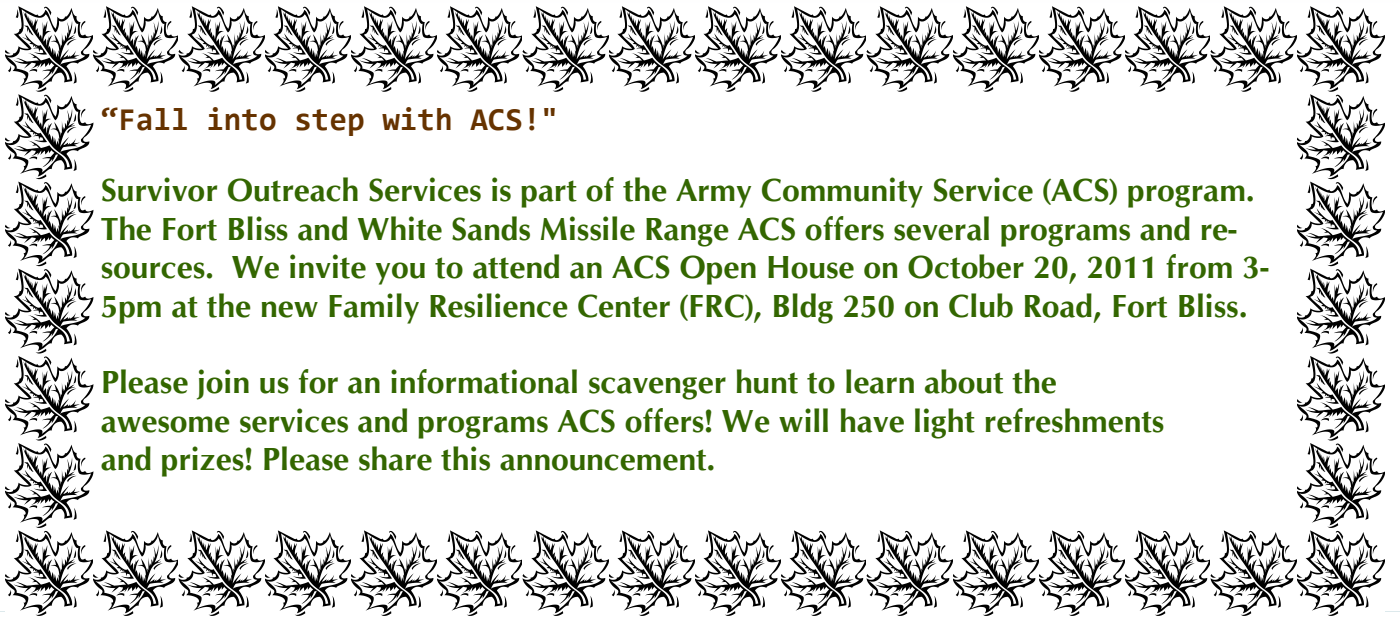
Snowball Express
Friday-Tuesday,
December 9-13
Dallas Texas



SOS HOLIDAY RECEPTION
Friday, December 16
Time and location -TBD

OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS
ACS CLOSED
December 26





“Fall into step with ACS!”

Survivor Outreach Services is part of the Army Community Service (ACS) program. The Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range ACS offers several programs and resources. We invite you to attend an ACS Open House on October 20, 2011 from 3-5pm at the new Family Resilience Center (FRC), Bldg 250 on Club Road, Fort Bliss.

Please join us for an informational scavenger hunt to learn about the awesome services and programs ACS offers! We will have light refreshments and prizes! Please share this announcement.

Shopping On a Budget for the Holidays



The holiday season can be the most stressful time of the year, especially financially. Often times we become overwhelmed with meals, parties, gifts, and decorations. It is easy during holidays to put aside the idea of costs involved. Costs that could possibly take months or even until the next holiday season to pay off. We tend to abide by our checklists to get everything just right for our holiday celebrations. So why not use a financial checklist to help you budget for the perfect holiday season?



Take for instance these costs involved; food, wrapping paper, bows, Christmas cards, postage, phone calls, gifts, decorations, gas, lodging, invitations, clothes and not to mention normal everyday household expenses. This all tends to add up quickly! Starting a holiday budget early and sticking to it throughout the holiday season can definitely help with any financial burden you may encounter.

First, and maybe the most important holiday budgeting tip, is to start planning early! Check how much money you have after paying bills each month and setup a savings plan. Find ways to stop spending money on unnecessary things and you will see your money starting to add up quickly. Use this towards your gifts. Most of all avoid using credit cards!

Write an expense checklist so you have a visual account of the money you will spend. Draft a list of gifts you would like to buy and can afford for family, co-workers, neighbors, etc. Be realistic of whom you can buy for and how much money you can afford to spend. Trim down to immediate Family members if need be. Don't forget to factor in the costs of gift wrap, bows, tape, and postage if they need to be mailed. Make sure you write down expenses accurately. Write a complete grocery list to make sure you have all items needed and how much all of it will cost for that perfect holiday meal. Add in the costs of eating out, baking items, and drinks too!

Take into consideration your miscellaneous costs as well. Don't forget entertainment costs such as invitations, clothing, and activities. Also, the decoration costs for the season like your lights, garland, candles, wreaths, and trees to name a few. Reuse decorations as much as possible. If traveling for the holidays, then other costs should also be considered while on the road; lodging, gas, phone calls, and meals. Remember with a dedicated budget you can have a stress free and memorable holiday season.



Registration is now open for Snowball Express VI December 9 - 13

If you have not already registered and are interested in attending or need additional information, please go to www.snowballexpress.org.

Pull down the "Families" tab and click on Family registration. If you have previously registered with Snowball Express, enter your e-mail address and password, click on the small arrow. When your data appears, click on your id # and then on edit. In the "plan to attend box" click on Snowball VI and save. Please repeat the process for each of your children.

If you are registering as a new Family, instead of clicking on the arrow, click on register a Fallen Hero and follow the forms.



We had a nice time together during Survivor Family Day.

Hope to see you at our next event!

Spring 2012 Hope for the Warrior Spouses Scholarship

Hope for the Warriors will be awarding five scholarships to the legal spouse or caregiver of a U.S. military Service Member who was wounded/injured or killed in the line of duty between 2001 and the present. Completed applications and supporting documentation must be Submitted by October 13, 2011. Please visit www.hopeforthewarriors.org/scholarelig.html to download the application, review the eligibility requirements, and receive additional information.

SAVE THE DATE

Join us for a Thanksgiving Potluck on Tuesday, November 22, 2011 from 4:00—7:00pm at the Family Resilience Center (FRC). We know that the holidays can be an emotional time and we invite you to a Thanksgiving Potluck to share with your new Survivor Families. Come share your recipes and holiday ideas!



We will host a SOS Holiday reception Friday, December 16th. We are in the planning phase and we welcome your ideas. Please give us a call or email us to share your thoughts. As soon as the details have been confirmed we will send you a personal invitation in the mail.

We hope to hear from you and see you all in November and December!

Christmas Holiday Trivia

1. What are the popular Christmas colors after red and green?
2. Which country was the first to use the tradition of Christmas trees?
3. Where is the world's largest Christmas tree?
4. Which popular Christmas food was an American discovery?
5. How many Christmas cards, on an average, are sent in the US each year?
6. Which was the last US state to declare an official holiday for Christmas?
7. Who helps Santa Claus in making his gifts?
8. Which is the only Santa's reindeer that is named after another animal?
9. What is the first name of Scrooge?
10. Which popular Christmas song was penned by James Pierpoint?



Gold Star Dads of America

Gold Star Dads of America
Edmund "Ed" Martin, Texas State Captain

The Gold Star Dads organization was created to bring together the "Gold Star Fathers" in a single community enabling them to honor and remember their son's or daughter's, and to support one another in their loss. First and foremost they are a Gold Star Family Support Organization.

"Fathers Standing United for Faith, Family & Freedom"

texas@goldstardads.org



If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, would like to suggest or contribute information for future publications, or simply desire to talk to one of our staff, please contact us by calling 915-568-5970. Your opinions, interest, and well-being are important to us. We look forward to hearing from you.

SOS Office Information:

Building #2494
Ricker Road
Fort Bliss, TX 799

Phone:
915-568-5970
915-569-5287

After hours:
915-203-6749

Fax:
915-568-4357

Office Hours:
7:30am-4:30pm
Monday-Friday

Survivor Outreach Services (SOS)

Mailing Address:

Army Community Service—SOS
1733 Pleasonton Road
Fort Bliss, TX 79916-6812

On the web at:

<http://www.blissmwr.com/sos>

Email:

sos.ftbliss.distro@mail.mil

Army Community Service (ACS) White Sands Missile Range (WSMR)

For general information at White Sands about programs and events provided by ACS, please call 575.678.6767 or visit the Moral Welfare and Recreation website at

www.wsmrmwr.com

Janeth Lopez

Program Manager, 915-569-5287

Lew Lewis,

Support Coordinator, 915-568-5970

Michelle Jones

Financial Counselor, 915-568-4706

Sam Rollason

National Guard Support Coordinator, New Mexico
505-474-1251

Karla Sanchez

Benefits Coordinator, 915-568-2903