

Contact Information

Tammy Spencer
YMCA of Columbia-Willamette
Senior Director of Communications and Marketing
tspencer@ymca-portland.org
503.382.4394

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Military Families Will Receive Child Care Respite Services from the YMCA of Columbia-Willamette
Armed Services YMCA and Department of Defense partnership supports child care needs of eligible military families
President Obama proclaims November 2009 as Military Family Month

Portland, Oregon—October 11, 2009—In a continued effort to meet the growing needs of military service members, the YMCA of Columbia-Willamette will provide respite child care services to deployed National Guard/Reservists and select military personnel. Underwritten by the Department of Defense (DoD), respite child care services are designed to provide licensed child care for children of deployed military personnel.

Recently President Obama proclaimed November 2009 as Military Family Month and called on, “all Americans to honor military families through private actions and public service.” This proclamation will further engage military families in their communities and gives the YMCA the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to supporting our nation’s service members.

“Our YMCA is happy to support military families and the child care needs of deployed military personnel,” said Jennie Sowder, YMCA Child Care executive director. “Providing a nurturing environment for families and children is integral to the YMCA’s mission. Again this year we are also working with Armed Services YMCA to get toys for the deployed soldiers’ children. Every little bit helps.”

Respite child care provides part-time, occasional and licensed child care for children whose parent or guardian needs temporary respite from their role as primary caregiver in the absence of a deployed spouse. The care is intended for children who are infants up to 12 years of age.

With respite child care services, parents/guardians have the opportunity to focus on their own personal health and well-being, which is essential when one is facing hardship and uncertainty of military deployment.

This new service is part of a \$31.0 million initiative launched in October 2008 with the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) and the DoD to provide military families with access to youth development, family strengthening and health and well-being programs at community YMCAs nationwide. Included in this contract is \$5.0 million earmarked to underwrite respite child care in 10 states across the country, including Oregon and Washington.

This outreach initiative responds to a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which requires the Secretary of Defense to develop a plan to support military family readiness and to ensure that military family readiness programs and activities are available to all deployed National Guard and Reserve families and select military personnel.

Military personnel who are eligible to receive the respite care benefits include:

1. Families of joint deployed Army National Guard and Reservists of all military branches;
2. Families of Active Duty Independent Duty personnel;
3. Relocated spouses and family members of deployed Active Duty personnel; and
4. Families of deployed Active Duty personnel, who are geographically dispersed outside a 30-mile radius from a military installation.

Nationally, YMCA has a distinguished record of supporting military service members and their families. Locally, our YMCA continues that commitment to military members and their families.

Families interested in respite child care should contact local child care centers by visiting www.ymca-portland.org, choosing Child Care and selecting Child Development Centers.

YMCA of Columbia-Willamette

Our local YMCA builds strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Since 1868 the local YMCA has offered people of all ages, faiths, backgrounds, abilities and income levels the ability to lead healthier lives and now reaches 86,000 people annually throughout the Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington five-county regional area. The mission of the YMCA propels the Y to reach out in our local communities to help build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact Tammy Spencer, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing at 503.382.4394 or tspencer@ymca-portland.org.