

WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD — J9 DIRECTORATE

STAKEHOLDER

Volume 1, Number 2 | March 2010

*Serving Soldiers, Airmen, Veterans
and their Families*

Employment Facts You Should Know

And what you can do to help

Employment Transition Coaches to the Rescue

Connecting Employers and
Veterans is only the first part.

Help Through the Holidays

How the success of the Holiday Basket
Drive exceeded every expectation.



FROM THE J9 DIRECTOR'S DESK

As you read through this edition of the Stakeholder, you will see many changes to the layout, content and even the name of the J9's official publication, now titled **STAKEHOLDER**. These changes reflect the growth of the J9, and our vision for the future of the organization. The **STAKEHOLDER** isn't the only new development here at the J9.



Over the past six years, we have watched suicides rates among our serving and Veteran population rise to epidemic rates.

FACT: As we crossed the threshold of January 2010, our suicide rates had once again exceeded the previous years metrics.

FACT: The Washington National Guard lost SEVEN Guardsmen last year, to what Major General Lowenberg has termed "the irreversible tragedy" of suicide.

Those numbers should quickly dissuade any ideas that the Washington Guard is somehow immune to this threat.

Suicide prevention is a large, seemingly impossible undertaking. The Washington Guard is no stranger to big challenges. We've been trailblazers many times before, and once again we will lead the way as we find programs, strategies and techniques to begin turning the tide on this adversary.

Already, we are taking major steps, beginning with the widest possible dissemination of the National Suicide HelpLine, 1-800-273-TALK (8255). That number will be available on a cut-out wallet card towards the back of this publication- please take the time to tuck it into your wallet or purse; a few seconds could save someone's life.

Additionally, the Buddy-to-Buddy program, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and the J9's newly formed Crisis Intervention Teams are being moved into action, to provide personalized outreach, education and support.

Month after month the Washington Guard continues to meet the challenge of protecting our Nation and our State. Month after month, the J9 will be alongside, waging an aggressive battle to eliminate suicide and keep our Guard Resilient, Stable and Available for duty.

Mike Johnson

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This state-funded magazine is an authorized publication for members of the Washington National Guard, their families, and friends of the Guard.

We encourage the submission of stories, editorials or news of interest regarding Soldier, Airman, Veteran and Family care.

The editor reserves the right to edit all input based on industry-accepted style guide procedures, grammar, space limitations and command policy. You should address your letters and inquiries to:

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Washington National Guard's ETC Team to the Rescue

By Morgan Zantua and SSG Aaron McCarthy, Employment Transitions Coaches

When Bill Halberson of Brand Company won a Federal contract to build scaffolding, he quickly learned the meaning of "be careful what you ask for."

This was a quick turn around for his rapidly growing company. Finding union carpenters wasn't the challenge. Finding 60 carpenters with secret security clearance to work in the Bremerton Naval Shipyards and restricted areas was the issue. They didn't exist in Western Washington's pool of carpenters and getting people through secret security clearance is a lengthy and expensive process.

Then Bill was given Staff Sergeant Aaron McCarthy's business card. Aaron is a member of the newly formed Employment Transition Services team with the Washington National Guard's Warrior Veteran Family Readiness Service Support Directorate. For brevity's sake, the unit is called the J-9. Aaron and his other 11 team members came together and searched the ranks of the Washington Air and Army National Guard to find 61 candidates with secret

security clearance and an interest in, and aptitude for, carpentry. In a one day hiring event, Bill selected the first 15 candidates, who began work on January 11th.

Bill is identifying another 15 National Guard members to begin work on January 23 and will be coming back to the

"Sergeant McCarthy jumped right in and not only acted as an outside source, he became a valuable team member to Brand in making this happen. It was through us working together we came out shining at the end of the day. That's a rarity", said Bill Halberson, of Brand Company

ETS team for another 30 positions to be filled in the next three months.

But the ETS team's work wasn't done yet. Every candidate needed carpentry tools. Fortunately some of the first round of hires had steel-toed boots from their forest fire training. The remaining supplies cost \$150 per person plus another \$100 per pair of boots. Most of these Citizen Soldiers and Airmen had returned from deployment in Iraq and had been receiving

unemployment insurance benefits. They didn't have available funds to buy these supplies. Aaron and Morgan Zantua reached out to partners like Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WADVA) and Apprenticeship Opportunity Project run by Johanna Chestnutt, Director.

She identified additional funding sources that are designed to help pre-apprentices begin a new career. Bill said, "Aaron introduced me to Angela Taylor from WADVA today at Lowe's. She was buying the required hand tools for these Veterans – and Friday is her day off. If that is the kind of teamwork and support you have to offer, other companies would be fools not to capitalize on these services!"

Bill and Brand are counting their blessings and their savings. According to Bill, "Because I was able to effectively hire people with secret security clearances in place, I just finished quoting four more jobs! What your program has provided me is a means to hire people, put them to work, grow my busi-

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