

American Red Cross helps families with deployments

Written by Staff Sgt. Jason McCasland
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BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE — The American Red Cross in Shreveport works with service members and their families to learn to cope with the stresses of deployments and extended temporary duty assignments.

For the past five years the Red Cross has worked with Barksdale Air Force Base's Airmen and Family Readiness Center to make the transitions back to normal everyday life.

"The Coping with Deployments workshop helps spouses learn how to deal with the stress of becoming a dual-rolled parent," said Laurie Dilulio, Red Cross emergency services director. "We also have a Reconnection Workshop that helps the service member to 'reconnect' with their families after returning from the deployment or TDY."

The Coping with Deployments and Reconnection Workshops are custom built classes to help all in attendance.

"With everyone's problems different we have to make everything fit to the families going through the workshop," said Dilulio. "Whether it's a one-on-one workshop or in a group environment to get encouragement and support from others in similar situations, we strive to ensure everyone gets the help and support that they need."

These two programs sponsored by the Red Cross sent a hand-picked counselor to the American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington D.C., for specialized training in to equip them with the tools to assist the different needs that are so unique to the military.

The Red Cross and the A&FRC work together to get help for each family, and to work through the different stresses that happen during long separations unique to military members.

"Our staff wants to help those that are serving and protecting the country, and of course that means making sure that the families that are here are taken care of," said Dilulio. "We work with the A&FRC to help those family members in those unique situations; if something comes up that we may not know how to handle, we talk to the A&FRC to find the family the help they need."

For more information on the Coping with Deployments and Reconnection Workshops or general information contact Laurie Dilulio at (318) 865-9545 or the Airmen and Family Readiness

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Center at 456-8400.