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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



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Retiree survivor support group care for area hungry

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo – A Fort Leonard Wood group of spouses of deceased retirees has donated more than 250 pounds of food to local food banks, helping to combat hunger in area communities.

The monthly support group, which falls under the Army Community Service Survivor Outreach Services Program, has taken on the cause as a way to give back to the community that has served them.

"The Fort Leonard Wood community is helping them and now they want to give back to the community themselves," said Jody Carmack, Survivor Outreach Services support coordinator.

Katrinka Good, retiree survivor and volunteer group leader, said the group members decided to direct their resources to fighting hunger rather than pooling their resources for group meeting door prizes.

"The group members thought their money could be used in a better way," Good said.

Survivors began gathering food back in June of 2014 and the response has been big.

"We have a gathering once a month of around 35 survivors, and 90 percent of our widows and widowers take part in this program," Good said.

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The first three months of the program, the survivors donated food to Good Samaritan in Waynesville, but for the past several months, food has been going to the food pantry in Texas County because members saw a greater need in the more rural areas.

"We collect the items once a month and then drop them off," Good said.

Good said anyone can donate to the group's efforts.

"We will probably continue to do this because there is a need for it and it is something they can give back to the community without too much exertion on themselves," Good said.

Carmack said she is thankful for Good's desire to lead a retiree survivor group on Fort Leonard Wood and appreciative of the impact they are having on the area.

"Fort Leonard Wood is one of the only installations that provides a program for the survivors of the retirees," Carmack said. "If it wasn't for Katrinka taking the lead and organizing the group every month, we may not be able to provide that. She volunteers and mentors and they picked up on that and they wanted to start giving back."

Carmack and Good both want retiree survivors to know that there is a place they can go to for support and Fort Leonard Wood is an installation that happens to provide it.

"We want to get them together like any of our support groups so they can meet together and find comfort and they can further the healing process and build their own support networks out of the military," Carmack said.

Good said several of the group members don't have Family in the area or no Family at all so the group helps fill a need in the survivor's lives.

"If they bond with another spouse, it is great because they have that camaraderie," Good said.

For more information on the group, or to donate, contact Carmack at 573.596.0131, ext. 0212.

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

Encl. (1) Photo

Photo Cutline: Katrinka Good, Survivor Outreach Services Retiree Spouses Support Group leader, inventories food items the group gathered to donate to the Texas County Food Bank.

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains about 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. A colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.
