



**WWW.WOOD.ARMY.MIL / MSCoE**

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



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE  
FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473  
VOICE: 573-563-4145  
FAX: 573-563-4012  
BY: Matt Decker  
EMAIL: [cheryl.a.nygaard.civ@mail.mil](mailto:cheryl.a.nygaard.civ@mail.mil)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Release No. 15-050

March 31, 2015

**Post, off-post youth sports programs team up to kick off spring seasons**

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – “This is something a little different,” Jamal Verdell said. “We have a ton of youth in our house tonight!”

Verdell, Fort Leonard Wood’s Youth Sports and Fitness staff director, welcomed nearly 350 young athletes between the ages of 4 and 15 and their parents to the post’s annual Spring Youth Sports opening ceremony. For the first time, the ceremony included athletes from both Fort Leonard Wood’s Child, Youth and School Services program and the Waynesville/St. Robert youth sports program.

Antoine Toran, director of the Waynesville-St. Robert program, said that several joint games are scheduled throughout the season this year, giving athletes in both programs a chance to play in Waynesville, St. Robert or on post.

“Our athletes will have the opportunity to play in all three communities,” he said.

“We are a transient town. We have permanent residents here, of course, but we also have military residents who are passing through our community,” Toran said. “What we want to do is bring the community together as a whole, no matter if you’re permanent or just passing by. We think its very important that we join the communities together as one, and have one opening ceremony.”

Athletes made up 24 soccer teams and three track-and-field teams. Members of each team and their coaches were recognized during the opening ceremony.

- more -

Col. Andrew Herbst, Garrison commander, thanked all players and coaches for participating, and especially thanked parents for setting a healthy example through their support of the youth sports programs.

“It’s a great opportunity to get out here and visit with all the parents and all the kids,” Herbst said. “The parents are setting a great example for their kids — they’re putting their health ahead of things like junk food or video games. They’re focusing on good health.”

Herbst invited all attendees to take part in the upcoming 5k for Fun series, which begins at 8 a.m. April 11. The free 5k series was started by Herbst last year as a way to promote the Army Performance Triad, which stresses healthy activity, nutrition and sleep, and the Soldier for Life Program, which aims to prepare service members for a lifetime of healthy living.

“Last year we decided we wanted to provide an additional opportunity to parents and kids — for free — to come out and run,” Herbst said. “It’s a guarded 5k route, so they don’t have to worry about traffic. They can walk it; they can run it, bring their dogs out on leashes or push their kids in strollers. It’s just another opportunity to get active.”

The free 5ks are scheduled the second Saturday of every month, starting at Davidson Fitness Center.

- 30 -

Encl. (1) Photo

Photo Cutline: Hundreds of soccer and track-and-field athletes from the Fort Leonard Wood and Waynesville/St. Robert youth sports programs applaud after their teams are introduced during the Spring Youth Sports opening ceremony held March 24 at Davidson Fitness Center.

### *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.*

---