

***The Florida BrAlve Fund Conference  
Gaining Wisdom; Building Strength  
Jacksonville, FL  
March 16, 2010***



Captain Amy Moore, Family Programs Director, FL National Guard; Stacy Bayton, MSCCN; Ericka Stokes, Panelist, MSCCN; Michelle Mitchell, Zero to Three



Kate Midden, Lisa Blevins, Stacy Bayton

**Overview**

This was an extremely well organized event and a wonderful opportunity to meet and network with the other BRAIVE grant recipients. We started off with a welcome, color guard, and the

goals for the day. Then we did an exercise where we able to meet some of the other attendees. Tia Christopher was the keynote speaker and gave a wonderful presentation about the Coalition for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans (CIAV) and their vast network of resources. The CIAV is a national non-partisan partnership of organizations that offer services to support the military. They provided us with their resource list, and it is an impressive group of organizations. Stacy has made contact for information about joining the CIAV.

During the breakout sessions we worked on case studies involving military members and what services would be of use to them. This was a great opportunity to begin thinking about the different organizations' services and how to best use them together to help a candidate. During lunch Ericka participated in a panel of spouses and veterans. The discussion was very frank about the difficulties of deploying and transitioning back to civilian life.

Finally we had roundtable discussions about outreach challenges and opportunities, underserved communities, and serving our military populations better. This was a valuable opportunity to hear what other organizations are doing for outreach. For instance, Workforce realizes that military spouses are often underserved so they have created a coin with their logo that is designed by and given to military spouses only. Other organizations shared that their most successful outreach results came from face-to-face contact with groups and word of mouth.

### **Contacts**

The agencies in attendance were:

- American Red Cross, Capital Area Chapter
- American Red Cross, Northeast Florida Chapter
- American Red Cross, Northwest Florida Chapter
- Eglin AFB Support Center Activities Council
- Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Specialists
- FL State College of Jacksonville
- FL National Guard Foundation
- USO, Jacksonville
- Hulbert Field Airman and Family Readiness
- Jacksonville Community Council
- Jewish Family & Community Services
- Legal Services for North Florida
- Life Management Center
- Marion County Veterans Helping Veterans
- MSCCN
- Milton Elks Lodge
- Santa Fe College
- United Way of Volusia-Flagler Counties
- University of North FL
- Vets4Vets
- Vets Helping Vets

- Workforce Board of Okaloosa/Walton
- Workforce Plus
- Zero to Three

We met and interacted with each agency, as well as the keynote speakers and other honored guests:

- VA, Jean Grant
- Veterans Healthcare System, Dr. Sharon Gerlach
- Coalition for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans, Tia Christopher
- Jacksonville Community Foundation Board Members, and staff

For Stacy, Lisa, and Kate the most key relationships formed of the day were:

- Tia Christopher from the CIAV
- Jerry Kindle the CEO of Northwest Florida Red Cross
- 1LT Amy Moore, the Family Programs Director for the FL National Guard
- Debby Lundblad, Director of Airman and Family Readiness at Hulbert Field
- Tamara Kiss from JobsPlus/Workforce
- Topi Henderson, American Red Cross Tallahassee
- Rick Castillo, Workforce Plus Tallahassee
- Kristine West, Director of Disability Resource Center UNF
- John Rose, Veterans Helping Veterans
- John Shockley, Executive Director Jacksonville USO
- Jane McDaniel, Florida National Guard
- Terry Swanson, United Way of Northeast Florida
- Sharon Gerlach, Dept of Veterans Affairs
- John Gebhardt, Veterans Advocate, University of Florida

### **Outcome**

We are pleased that because of our personal knowledge and experience of the military lifestyle, MSCCN found ourselves helping the other grantees, leading discussions on how to improve outreach within military communities, and learning from other organization's successes.

We all made many connections with organizations that can help or benefit from MSCCN's services and we connected with those who can assist us. Several key things came from this training:

- The BrAlve Fund hotline and other networking tools and resources for grantees to utilize to work together
- CIAV network of organizations
- An immediate network to tap into for outreach
- New ideas for outreach
- Discussion of underserved communities – we have previously identified the Coast Guard but this brought light to the National Guard as well