

## Job hunting for volunteers

*by Joe Parrino, Courier staff*

Volunteer your way to a career and other rewards. That's the message of an upcoming seminar designed for men and women who donate time and talent to Fort Campbell.

"My goal is to help [volunteers] realize they've done a lot by volunteering," said longtime Army volunteer Maria McConville. "They've acquired a great skill set."

McConville helped organize the Sept. 5 event called "Volunteering: Stepping Stones to Your Future" along with the Army Volunteer Corps and Military Spouses Corporate Career Network.

The day-long seminar at Cole Park Commons features sessions on resume building, self-marketing, corporate etiquette, networking, federal job placement, home-based business and even body language.

All of Fort Campbell's 1,800 registered volunteers are welcome, said Army Volunteer Corps coordinator Becki Mastrian.

"They will learn to be empowered," Mastrian said. McConville, whose husband Brig Gen. James McConville is deployed to Afghanistan, envisioned the event with a dual purpose.

First, she hopes volunteers will feel appreciated.

An Army volunteer herself during 21 years of married life, McConville said it's easy to burn out. Commitments to spouse clubs, family readiness groups, schools and post activities can stretch a volunteer to the limit.

The seminar, with free food and free career coaching, is meant as a thank-you.

McConville also wants to break volunteers out of the attitude that civilian careers can't be built in the Army.

"A pattern that I see is women say, 'I haven't done anything; all I've been is a volunteer,'" McConville said.

The truth is that volunteers at Fort Campbell pick up valuable skills such as fundraising, management, teaching, medical assistance and public relations. In the civilian world, employers pay for those skills, McConville said.

McConville tells her own story of struggling to reconcile career aspirations with military life. She had a degree in nutrition and had worked as a professional fitness trainer. But she felt it was difficult to follow a career path while moving more than a dozen times and juggling the volunteer responsibilities that come with a high ranking spouse and three children in

school.

Eventually, McConville began to view her volunteer years as an asset. She rewrote her resume and began pursuing careers that combined her background in health with the leadership and promotion skills she learned as a volunteer.

Currently, McConville is working on a master's degree in community and public health at Austin Peay State University.

Mastrian also leveraged her volunteer experience. After working as an FRG leader for six years, Mastrian obtained a paid position in family readiness support. This spring she landed the coordinator job.

Mastrian said the seminar's organizers and speakers have strived to make each session useful to someone trying to launch a career or even take their volunteering to a higher level.

One high profile presenter is Deb Kloeppe, president of MSCCN. Kloeppe is being flown in to lead a workshop about effective body language.

Defense contractor Lockheed Martin is sponsoring the event.

There are 200 seats available, Mastrian said. Those interested should RSVP by Aug. 22 by calling (270) 956-2934 or e-mailing [rebecca.mastrian@us.army.mil](mailto:rebecca.mastrian@us.army.mil).

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