

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- How kids can learn about military life.
- Acts of kindness in our everyday lives.
- Offering kids comfort with imagination.
- How to stay neutral as an educator.
- What are the roles of each military branch?

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

- A Personal Account 2
- Operation Military Kids 2
- Focus on Kindness 2
- The Comfort Kit 3
- What should educators say? 3
- Understanding the Military Branches 3
- Resources & Information 4

Our Troops and Their Families

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A Personal Account

I met Trevor Romain in 1992 at a local elementary school. After speaking to a group of educators, parents and students, Trevor was autographing books. As I observed Trevor's interactions with kids, I noticed that he had an uncanny ability to speak to students on their level and in a way that they understood. As an educator, this impressed me. Less than a year later I asked Trevor to visit my campus and the rest, as they say, is history. For over ten years I've witnessed the special relationship that develops between Trevor and the students who are lucky enough to hear him speak. This in and of itself has been a remarkable experience, but

there was one event in particular that truly touched and motivated me to work with Trevor.



“Express to your child the sacrifices some great men and women have made in the name of our country and

She was in fourth grade. Her mother had died of cancer

months ago. She would not talk about her mom's death to teachers or the school counselor. After Trevor finished speaking to the group of students, I noticed her lingering back obviously hoping for a private moment with Trevor. When she had that quiet moment alone, she said three words: “My mom died.” In a clear and determined voice, she went on to describe her mom's battle with cancer, her thoughts and feelings, and how she perceived others to be treating her.

What is it about Trevor's personality that draws students to him?

(continued on page 2)

When Students Are Concerned

The National Association of School Psychologists has identified key areas in which adults can help students. (1) Acknowledge how a student feels, (2) help students feel safe, (3) maintain a level of control by taking action (support our military and those working in public

safety), (4) plan activities for students who have a loved one serving in the military, (5) if a new student moves due to relocation, make sure he does not feel alone or isolated, (6) expect and be prepared to respond in changes of behavior, (7) students do not need to focus on adult

issues, and (8) communicate and coordinate between school and home. For more psychological references when helping students and their families “cope with the stress of war, terrorism or other crisis,” visit www.nasponline.org.



“The war is a difficult thing to try to explain to your children, and it takes patience and some concerted effort to do so effectively.”
(ehow.com, 2009)

“It was a great experience.”
(DC Military, 2009)

Kindness has the unique capability of turning things around.



A Personal Account (continued)

What makes a child want to share their deepest secrets or fears with Trevor? Honestly, I don't know. My eyes still fill with tears when I observe Trevor's unique connection with a hurting student. In these moments there is only one word that is appropriate: *magical*.

Trevor has been working with the Department of Defense and traveling internationally, speaking to chil-

dren whose parents are serving in our military. His message has been made available through books and videos that military personnel can access on the www.militaryonesource.com web page. He is touching lives; he is making a difference.

While Trevor frequently speaks on military bases, there are many students from military families that attend our public schools. It

is for this purpose that I write this month's newsletter. It is beneficial for students to have some understanding of military service and the special burdens it can place on children from those families.

Operation Military Kids

How can those who are not part of the military understand the challenges our military and their families face? In July, 2009, the Army collaborated with Virginia communities in Operation Military Kids, “a week-long camp that helps youth better understand military life” (DC Military, 2009). Local marines visited to help run stations famil-

iarizing 9-14 year olds with marching, saluting, physical training and other basic drill movements. The camp also included nonmilitary activities like woodworking, outdoor living skills, and archery. Twenty-five of the 300 students were from families who had a family member deployed within the last year. With the outreach program, “the camp helped

children from military families bond with those from nonmilitary families (DC Military, 2009). The program manager and the Virginia 4-H military liaison, Clyde F. Jackson, said “one of the reasons the pilot camp was held in Virginia is because the state has the largest percentage of children from military families” (DC Military, 2009).

Focus on Kindness

Let's face it, we live in a world where complaints are many and compliments are few. Ask your students, or school to focus on acts of kindness. Create a bulletin board titled, “Caught Ya!” and

ask students to write down an act that demonstrates consideration of another, or others. Regardless of how individuals feel about the war, we have Americans located internationally working for our government. These families have children just like the students in our schools. Let's remember them when

writing letters of Thanksgiving and wishing others a happy holiday season, or New Year. When you are determined to find the good around you and to do good for others, you feel better about the world around you and a rejuvenated spirit always brings a smile.

The Comfort Kit



The Trevor Romain Foundation is a non-profit organization that has created a Grief Comfort Kit for kids, centered on the Parents Choice Gold Award winning animated DVD, *What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?* Despite the serious subject matter, kids of all ages are enlightened and encouraged as Trevor's characters learn how to move to-

wards grief instead of running away from it.

Trevor has worked with hundreds of kids experiencing difficult circumstances.

The Grief Comfort Kit is a comprehensive set of resources that are informative and comforting for children and families. Each kit in-

cludes:

- Award-winning **DVD**, *What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?*
- Award-winning **book**, *What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?*

- A **journal** for self expression with original artwork and writing prompts.
- **Coco™**, a plush animal offering comfort and companionship.
- An insightful **booklet** for caregivers, *Helping Children Cope With Loss*.
- A **letter** from Coco and set of colored pencils.
- A **memory box** to protect treasured keepsakes.

If you know of a child that is grieving over the death of a loved one, please visit <http://trevorromainfoundation.org> for more information.

What should educators say?

Children come to school with many of the same beliefs displayed in their home. As educators, it is our job to help students feel secure, not persuade them to feel one way or another. Our personal opinion is just that: an opinion. Here are a few suggestions when discussing the war:

(1) The "other side" does not have to be the "enemy." Dis-

cuss bad actions as opposed to "bad people" (Purple Wagon, 2009). Students understand that some people make bad decisions but often these decisions can be made right in the future. (2) The United States is not angry with the people living in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran or Korea. "Leaders of our country are upset with the decisions of other governments" (Purple

Wagon, 2009).

(3) Although the origins of many conflicts are rooted in religion, it is important for educators to make children understand that any particular religion is not inherently bad.

When educators have a supporting and caring attitude, students will feel comfortable discussing war and peace.

Studies

demonstrate that "children care about people in other countries in addition to those in their own country." (Purple Wagon, 2009)

Understanding the Military Branches

The United States military is comprised of several branches, each having a unique role in defending our country. The branches may work independently or in concert depending upon the mission. The **Navy** is composed of seaborne forces that include ships, submarines and aircraft carriers. The **Marine Corps**, which operates under the department of the Navy, is a fighting force com-

prised of combat infantry, armor, and air power. The **Coast Guard** is tasked with protecting our shores. The **Air Force** is the primary source of air defense and global supply of our forces abroad. The largest branch of the U.S. armed forces is the **Army**, whose mission includes all land-based efforts with infantry, armor and airborne troops. It is important to remember that the **United**

States Army Reserve and the **Army National Guard** are frequently called upon to deploy in times of national emergency.

To learn more about the military or an individual branch, visit www.military.com.



"Many parents have had to explain the war in Iraq to their children." (Psychology Today, 2009)

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Please tell us how our newsletter is
benefiting you.

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**Promoting social & emotional fitness
for kids.**

Daphne Morris, M.Ed., met Trevor Romain in 1992 when he visited a school as a guest speaker. Impressed by Trevor's profound and meaningful impact on students and educators, Daphne joined The Trevor Romain Company in 2006. A former elementary school principal, Daphne holds two Master's degrees in education.



Resources:

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