FAMILY READINESS GROUP
TIPS FOR
AVOIDING BURNOUT

- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FIRST.**
- Stick to caring, and let the Guard do its part in delivering specific services.
- Stop and take a breath.
- Evaluate what you are doing and set priorities.
- Consider using a telephone answering machine.
- **Do not try to be “all to all.”**
- Mutual support goes both ways. **Ask for help!**
- Look for your own support in friends, Family and church.
- **Do not overextend yourself.**
- Know your limits.
- Make sure you eat and sleep as regularly as possible.
- Dysfunctional Families will devour you. Refer them to professional organizations.
- Understand and stick to the role assigned to you.
- **Learn resources for referring problems.**
- Do not judge success in “thank you's.”
- **Do not compare your group to others; this is not a competition.**
- Seek advice from senior spouses; they have been where you are now.
- **Learn ways to delegate.**
- Leadership is a risk; do not try to please everyone.
- Don’t reinvent the wheel; use systems in place.
- Do not be afraid to try something new.
- Be yourself!
FRG Meeting Ideas

FRG meetings are meant to be a time for spouses to get together to get to know one another, and build camaraderie. Coming up with meeting ideas can sometimes be a challenge with the wide range of demographics present in FRGs. Here are some meeting ideas to help entice spouses to attend.

**Themed meetings:**

- **MASH party** – dress as your favorite character. Set up a tent outside for everyone to walk through with shots, a still, etc. Invites could look like dogtags.

- **Tacky party** – stick toilet paper on your shoe, ride there with friend on the back of a bike, wear robe/curlers. Serve drinks in mason jars, chips in a bag with canned dip.

- **Ice Cream Social** – build the world's largest sundae in a 10ft. gutter from the hardware store.

- **Chinese Auction** – Everyone brings a white elephant (or pick a theme) placed in a brown grocery bag. Bring Nickels! Have a small lunch bag for each white elephant.

The lunch bag is placed on the floor; people toss nickels at the bag until the timer goes off. Last person to get a nickel in the bag wins the white elephant item!

- **Company Feud** – Questions are prepared and presented to teams. Similar to Family Feud! BN S-1 can help with questions.

- **Men's Poduck** – Men do the cooking, women do the judging.

The idea is to make it FUN!!!

Recruiting Volunteers

When it comes to recruiting volunteers for your FRG events, the same rules apply that you learned from your mom as a child. Say, “please” and “thank you,” show appreciation for what others have done, and always take responsibility for your own commitments.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Military spouses are in no way obligated to volunteer.
- Realize and appreciate that Families have other priorities. Every Family has a life outside the military.

- Accept that it's okay if spouses choose not to volunteer.
- Always remain positive about volunteerism.
- Express the need for volunteers at functions. Be specific about what you need. Give limited times and dates for volunteering.
- Maintain the role of encourager, facilitator, and role model.

- If you don't hear "No" once in a while, you aren't asking enough!
- Assign new FRG members a mentor to help create a cohesive team.
- Book more volunteers by sounding exclusive. “We only have a few more slots left...”
- Advertise the need for volunteers well in advance.
Best Practices for Recruiting and Retention of Volunteers

- Offer training
- Praise the volunteers—recognize them with an award in front of Families and Service Members
- Match the volunteers with the work that they want to do
- Contact local VFW for potential volunteers
- Recruit retirees
- Host "meet and greets" for units
- Volunteer recognition: April
- Offer food to the volunteers
- Remember birthdays, anniversaries, kids’ graduations
- Let the volunteers help make decisions in regards to conference planning, training, etc...
- Recruit volunteers on a one-on-one basis
- Provide units with a volunteer orientation packet that includes sample position descriptions, volunteer agreement forms and some general information about the Guard and FRG
- Educate Families so they understand the role of the volunteers and approximately how much time they should expect to give when exploring the option of volunteering
- Visit a unit during a Family Day (this could potentially be a hard time to recruit but it is worth trying)
- People are hesitant to volunteer in a group environment, but many times will share one-on-one with someone in the unit once they have a better idea what they are supposed to do and how much time they are expected to give
- Encourage Commanders to appoint his/her leaders rather than to have some type of election—Family Members rarely know each other well enough to nominate someone for a volunteer position
Celebrating Volunteerism!

Here are creative and inexpensive ideas to show others how much you care. From your FRG volunteers to your deployed Service Member; from the new parents in your unit, to your own children, every FRG Leader can find something useful here.

Everyday Recipes to Celebrate Volunteerism:

Thanks For Raisin' The Tough Standard - Mini box of raisins
No One Holds A Candle To You! - scented votive candle, b/d candles
You Are A Lifesaver! - Package of lifesavers with a note
Your Vision Is Our Guiding Light! - mini-flashlight
You Take The Cake! - cupcakes
Thanks For Working Your Buns Off! - hot cinnamon buns
A Noteworthy Accomplishment! - package of post-it notes
You Are Berry Special! - fresh berries or jam
Hugs and Kisses! - Hershey's candies
I'll Stick With You! - stick of gum
You're Worth a Mint! - package of peppermints

Thanks for the Great Ideas That You Have Planted! - Seed packet
Thanks For Holding Things Together! - Paper clip
Thanks For Stretching Your Limits! - Rubber band
You Can Soar to the Greatest Heights! - Kite string
Thanks for Not Letting Things Fall Apart! - Safety pin
You Licked the Challenge! - Lollipop
You Keep Us on an Upward Roll to Success! - Tootsie roll
You Measure Up to a Fantastic Leader! - Ruler or measuring tape
Here's The Scoop, You're Doing a Wonderful Job! - Ice cream scoop
We Are So Fortunate To Have You as a Volunteer! - Fortune cookie
No One Matches Your Volunteer Contribution! - Book of matches
You're #1 In Our Book! - Book

You're Worth a 100 Grand to Our Organization! - 100 Grand® bar
Your Creative Juices Really Made a Big Difference! - Box of juice
Thanks for Energizing our Organization! - Electric wire or a battery