



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
330 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD
LATHAM, NY 12110

DHFT-CH

1 October 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution

SUBJECT: New York National Guard Strong Bonds Guidance for FY11

1. The New York National Guard Chaplaincy is the proponent for the Strong Bonds Program (SBP). The SBP is a Department of Defense initiative to assist in Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness. The SBP is designed to assist Service Members and their Families in relationship building by developing healthy communication skills, demonstrate problem solving, practice stress reduction, and learn effective listening.
2. The SBP is designed to be an 8 to 10 hour program divided into two days of training. The training is conducted by a certified chaplain to no more than 30 couples, 30 Families or 60 Service Members. Though this is designed to be conducted in an off site venue over a weekend, the SBP materials can be taught to smaller groups on a weekly basis or be available through the chaplains for those wishing to learn the skills. These other events cannot use strong bonds funds but can be unit sponsored and beneficial.
3. Service Members and Family members are encouraged to attend the SBP. Service Members will inform their chain of command of their attendance and get prior approval for attendance if the SBP event conflicts with their normal training. Once registered, a Service Members place of duty will be the event. Service Members may attend training on IDT, AT days, ADOS orders or retirement point's only orders. Attending Family members will be placed on travel orders and required to participate. Though this is a voluntary program, once a Service Member has committed to attending they enter into an obligation and expectation of attendance. Failure to attend and complete the training shall be considered a violation of integrity and they shall be considered a "No Show". This will be reported back to their commander. Cancellation of attendance must be made 72 hours prior to the event. Mileage to and from the event will have one reimbursement per family. No per diem pay is authorized.
4. Service Members, Family members and Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are encouraged to be involved in recommending both the sites and best suited SBP curriculum for their units. They are encouraged to read and thoroughly understand the SBP Standard Operating Procedures prior to attending an event.

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Strong Bond events will be open to all on a first come, first served basis. Attached for your information is a sample strong bond agenda and travel criteria.

5. The operating procedures for all strong bonds events are in accordance with and can be found in the Army National Guard Strong Bonds Battle book located on the Family Programs website.

6. Registration is available by contacting Chaplain Andrew Ayres 315-438-3360 or Andrew.Ayres@us.army.mil



Chaplain (Col) Eric W. Olsen
New York National Guard
Chaplain Joint Forces

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Appendix A

Sample Strong Bonds Agenda

Day 1 (Saturday)

1000 Arrival and Registration

1100 Program I

1200 Lunch

1300 Program II

1500 Break

1515 Program III

1700 Dinner

Day 2 (Sunday)

0730 Breakfast

0830 Worship (Optional)

0900 Program IV

1030 Break (Clear Rooms)

1045 Program V

1215 Lunch

1315 Rap up

1400 Released

Appendix B

Travel Criteria

1. Service Members and Family members traveling to a Strong Bonds Event will be placed on travel orders for the duration of the event.
2. Strong Bonds Programs are limited to a 150 mile limit from the program site. Service Members and Families are encouraged to attend those events that maximize the experience and fall within the 150 mile radius.
3. The Strong Bonds Program pays for one nights stay at an event. If a couple wishes to arrive early or remain longer they may do so at their own expense. Couple Strong Bond Events are designed to be held without children to offer the participant's time to focus on their relationship. There are Family Strong Bonds Programs held throughout the state and are designed for the whole Military Family to explore the dynamics of family life. Families need to make certain they specify their size and specific needs prior to a Family event.
4. Strong Bonds will provide 4 meals for an event. This is designed to maximize time together and foster growth in our military Family. We expect participants to take part in the meals provided and make the staff aware of any specific nutritional or observance needs at the time of registration.