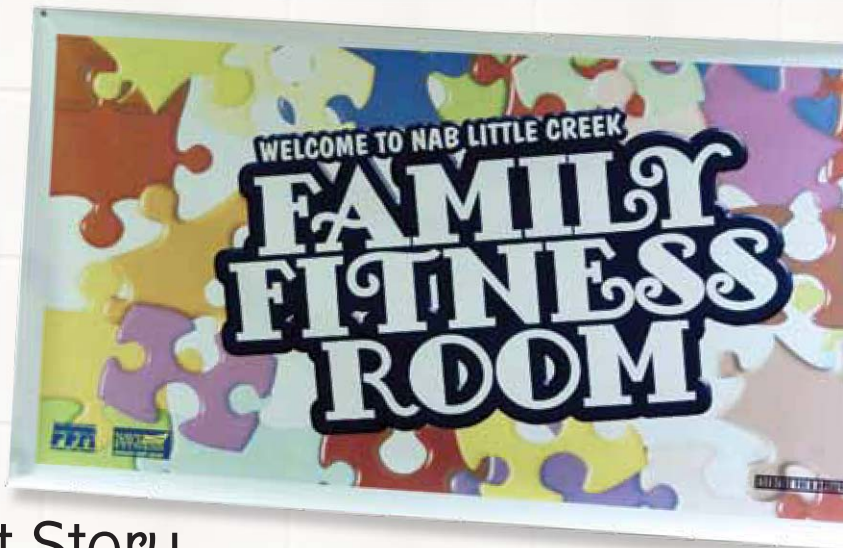


Families In Focus

at JEB Little Creek-Fort Story



The Navy has made great strides in improving support for families, and Navy Fitness continues to support and fund more family-centric programs, and where it is feasible, the creation of family fitness spaces or rooms in existing or new fitness centers.

“What we were seeing in the Navy — and the same can probably be said across the board in the military — is the glaring need when a loved one deploys to have some way for their spouses and family members who are left behind to work out,” says Fitness Director Michael Hillian, JEB Little Creek-Ft. Story, Va.

“Especially now that we are in the ninth year of war, and a lot of people have been deployed multiple times, having a facility and programs dedicated to the needs of families, from spouses with strollers and toddlers to families looking to be active together, is so important.”

Little Creek became the second base (NAS Oceana, Va. was the first) to pilot the Navy’s Family Fitness program, a Navy-wide initiative to get more families active and aware of the importance of living healthier lifestyles through good fitness and nutrition. Over the past few years, Little Creek has established itself

as a model for other bases to follow. In addition to converting a racquetball court into a Family Fitness room — complete with new cardio, strength and aerobic training equipment — the base offers group exercise programs that are open and in some cases, designed for family members, such as Prenatal Yoga, Tae Kwan Do for children and Zumba for the whole family.

The Family Fitness room has come a long way since it opened on Feb. 4, 2008. According to Hillian, the room has gone from 12 customers in its first week of opening to 2,079 adults and 2,878 children who have utilized the room so far in 2010 [as of October 2010].

“The family fitness room really to me is one of the most successful programs for improving quality of life, especially for the spouses of active duty, who have to contend with so many things — the difficult aspects of their home life nowadays when their loved one’s deployed. This family fitness room allows them to focus on their own fitness and wellness needs during these stressful times.”

FAMILIES IN FOCUS

To create the Family Fitness room at Little Creek, the base transformed an existing racquetball court at the Rockwell Hall fitness center, and created a divider to split the room with fitness equipment on one side and a play area for the children on the other.

On the equipment side, the room features new fitness equip-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEB LITTLE CREEK



ment from Life Fitness, including treadmills, ellipticals and bikes, as well as some free weights and smaller, aerobic and functional pieces of fitness equipment. On the other side of the room, and within the sightlines of parents on the machines, the play area is divided into two sections, one for 0-18 months and the other for 18 months and older. The play area for kids has a TV/DVD player, and children can bring their own toys and games.

“It has worked out nicely,” says Hillian. “We have really embraced the ‘Stay Healthy - Stay Fit - Stay Navy’ motto, and are pushing the idea of improving retention and quality of life. We not only take care of the active duty but their families too, and we want them go on their mission knowing that their families are well taken care of.”

Once families come to the fitness center to use the room, they are introduced to all of the different areas and programs available to them.

“The majority of our group exercise programs are family friendly, meaning if the children can follow instructions, they are welcome to join us,” notes Hillian. “A good example is our Zumba class, which is very popular, and we have wives bringing in their children to participate as well. That class is so big that we had to move it down to our gymnasium. Last week we had 78 people in one class.”

The fitness center also runs a lot of incentive programs, such as the Turkey Burnoff the day after Thanksgiving, the Slim Down with Santa program in December, and a 5K Reindeer Run for the holidays.

One trend that Hillian is seeing is parents coming together in pairs to the facility so that one parent can watch the children while the other parent takes advantage of the entire facility, while getting a break from parenting for a spell.

“Another trend that I am seeing is the active duty and spouses coming in together and using the room as a family, which is nice to see,” notes Hillian.

Rockwell Hall is a unique facility as it is set up as one long hall with three basketball courts and two volleyball courts running side by side on the first floor (100x300 feet). Because it is such a big hall the base hosts a lot of big events.

Also available on the first floor are

racquetball courts; locker rooms with sauna and steam room; a free weight room; and selectorized strength-training equipment. The second floor features a full cardio room with a variety of new equipment, including cross trainers, treadmills and bikes from Life Fitness and Precor, ARC machines from

Cybex, Schwinn spin bikes and Matrix steppers. The facility also has new free weight equipment from Life Fitness, new selectorized equipment from Cybex, Matrix and Freemotion Fitness, a VLT Rope Trainer Marpo, and aerobic/functional equipment, such as fit balls, bands and steps, from MF Athletic/Perform Better. The base is also about to purchase about a dozen TRX suspension training systems from Fitness Anywhere and a big S frame to attach them to, as well as have an instructor come to the base to provide training for staff.

“With the help and support of CNIC, we have invested approximately \$500,000 into new fitness equipment,” says Hillian. “The Family Fitness room has been such a success that we are now adding it to the remodeling going on at the fitness center at Fort Story, which opened in December 2010.”

As a joint base, JEB Little Creek and Fort Story are working together to provide the best programs and facilities possible.

“The joint-base situation has worked out well,” notes Hillian. “We are in the process of joining our efforts together and collaborating on programs to ensure that both sides are utilizing the programs and facilities while not duplicating efforts. On our group-exercise side we offer 20 classes a week, and now that remodeling is done at Fort Story we will begin classes there as well.”

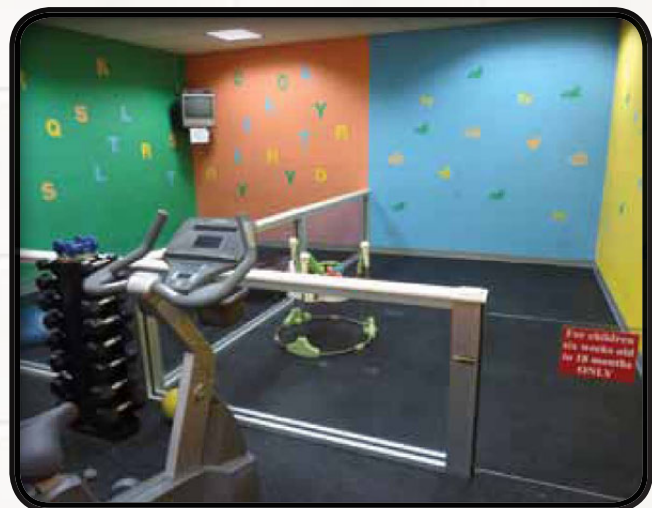


ACTIVE DUTY SUPPORT

Although the Navy has focused more on improving the quality of life for families on base, it has not forgotten about active-duty member needs.

“Our fitness professionals continue to increase their focus on the needs of our active duty,” Hillian points out. “So we are offering and providing classes for their physical training (PT), in the early mornings, during lunches, and after work, and we are really stepping it up in meeting their needs as far as providing different types of exercise classes. So instead of just doing basic calisthenics every morning, we are providing them with yoga, circuit training, kick boxing, cycling — anything that we offer in our group exercise classes we can bring down to the active duty command.”

JEB Little Creek is also stepping up in support of the Fitness Enhancement Program (FEP), which is designed for the active duty members who need additional help in getting fit and passing their Physical Readiness Test (PRT). The base uses the MicroFit fitness assessment

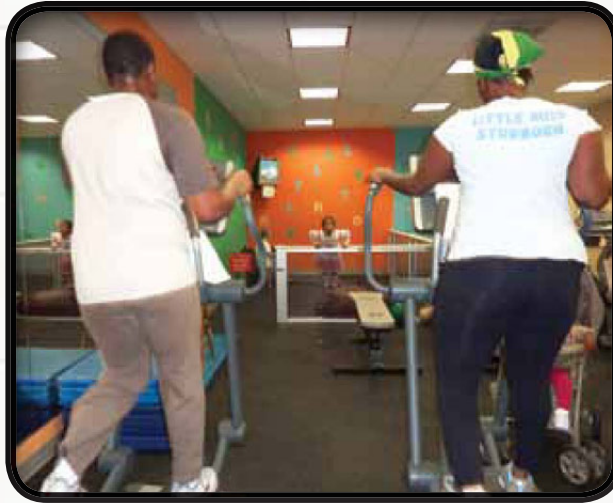


Family Fitness

system to help with assessing fitness levels for both active duty and dependents, and to help in the design of a program to help them to reach their goals.

“Once they have been assessed, they can sit down with a fitness professional and discuss their goals, what they want to accomplish, what they need to work on, and then build a program to meet those needs,” Hillian explains.

Combat-specific training is also growing at Little Creek, as the Navy continues to put an emphasis on improving and developing what is available in this area. “We have a lot of training coming down from CNIC that we are doing here such as the Command Fitness Leader (CFL) course and the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Series (NOFFS) program, which has combat-specific exercises and a nutrition component as well. Our fitness coordinator



Jennifer Slater is a trained CFL instructor, and MWR is now responsible for teaching this course. Our aquatic director Katie Burn is also CFL-trained as well.”

Physical therapy and Health Promotion, which fall under the medical department, are also located at Rockwell

Hall. “By being in our facility we have great access to each other and we can coordinate efforts,” notes Hillian. “This facility is very unique and we put 500,000 people through here a year. And they will tell you that this is the best gym in the Navy.”

Hillian points out that the facility is so successful because of the great staff. “Our staff really is number one, and that is what helps to keep people coming back here,” he notes.

The fitness center also has its own ambassador — Kirkland “KJ” Johnson — an 82-year-old fitness enthusiast who has 32 years of active duty service and 34 years of civil service. “He really does inspire people to Stay Healthy – Stay Fit – Stay Navy!”

—GRF