

Family and Community Covenant By CSM Fourhman

The Army has long been built on the idea of internal strength. Not only strength hardened on the battlefield, but strength harnessed from loved ones at home. The strength of ARCENT relies significantly on the strength of our families.

Across the Army, you will find strong Family Readiness Groups set up to provide guidance, aid and inform Soldiers and Family members.

In the past year, the Army has taken huge strides in continuing to provide Soldiers and Family members the best living conditions and quality of life. They have done this with the creation of two new programs aimed at helping Soldiers and spouses deployed and at home.

The first program is the Army Community Covenant, which is designed to develop and foster effective state and community partnerships with the Army in improving the quality of life for Soldiers and their Families, both at their current duty stations and as they transfer from state to state.

The Army Community Covenant recognizes the strength of Soldiers along with their Family members and the support of their local community. Currently both state and local leaders are participating in covenant signings across the globe signifying their commitment to supporting Soldiers.

There are numerous ACC support programs aimed to help the different needs of Soldiers and Families looking for assistance. Some of the programs are: employment, financial, educational, and surviving spouse, to name a few. These programs can be found and utilized at the state or local levels.

The second program is the Army Family Covenant. The Army surveyed Families across the force and overwhelmingly Families made it clear that they don't want new programs, but voiced the need to properly fund existing ones. The Army has committed to this by putting 1.4 billion towards funding these programs. The AFC as introduced by the Secretary of the Army; the Honourable Pete Geren is as follows:

We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our Families are making every day.

We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

We are committed to providing Soldiers and Families a quality of life that is commensurate with their service.

We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

We are committed to building a partnership with Army Families that enhance their strength and resilience.

We are committed to improving Family readiness by:

- Standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services.
- Increasing accessibility and quality of health care.
- Improving Soldier and Family housing.
- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and child care.
- Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members.

ARCENT has a monthly news letter published, the Yellow Ribbon, for its Family members and can be found online at <http://www.arcent.army.mil/> and follow the FRG link. It is a forum where USARCENT's geographically dispersed Families can share information, embrace newcomers and come together to support each other. More information about the Family and community covenants may be found at <http://www.armymwr.com/portal/family/>.

Patton's Own!