

THE PROSPECTOR

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Serving the Corps since 1943
Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow

December 19, 2024



Trees for Troops

Toys for Tots Campaign 2024

MCLB Barstow's Holiday Activities



Cover photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Santa arrives at the Trees for Troops event in a fire engine alongside firefighters and first responders aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, December 6. Accompanied with the MCCS team, Santa joined in the holiday festivities taking photos with children, handing out gifts, and listening to songs sang by the School Aged Care program.

Wood & Pellet Stove Safety

As the temperature drops outside, wood and pellet stoves may be fired up inside the home. What you may not realize is that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires during the winter months.

- »» Have a QUALIFIED professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys.
- »» Stoves should be listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- »» In wood stoves, burn only DRY, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- »» Have your chimney and stove INSPECTED and cleaned by a certified chimney sweep every fall just before heating season.
- »» CLEAN the inside of your stove periodically using a wire brush.
- »» Allow ashes to COOL before disposing of them. Place ashes in a covered metal container. Keep the container at least 10 feet away from the home and other buildings.
- »» Keep a CLOSE EYE on children whenever a wood or pellet stove is being used. Remind them to stay at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- »» Stoves need SPACE. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- »» INSTALL and maintain **carbon monoxide alarms** (CO) outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection, interconnect the CO alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.

SMOKE ALARM SENSE

Install and maintain smoke alarms on EVERY level of your home, outside each separate sleeping area and inside each bedroom. For the best protection, interconnect the alarms. When one sounds, they all sound. TEST all smoke alarms at least monthly.

Name of Organization

Contact Information Here



Your Source for SAFETY Information
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THE PROSPECTOR

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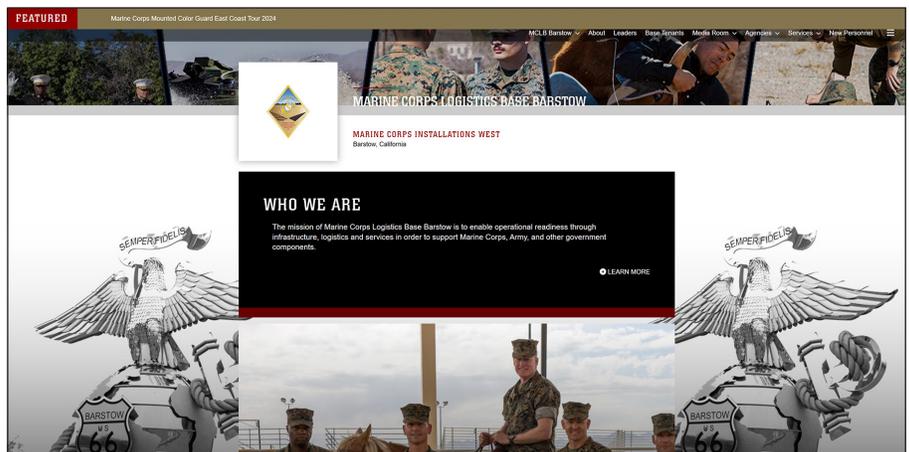




Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

General Christopher Mahoney, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, joined the team of Marine Depot Maintenance Command Production Plant Barstow for a tour at Yermo Annex aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, December 9. During the visit, Gen. Mahoney had the

opportunity to assess the effects of production, evaluate product mission readiness, and observe the assembly of all variants essential to the operations of MDMC. Furthermore, he engaged in discussions regarding rail operations and met with the Marines and horses of the Mounted Color Guard.

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Chaplain's Corner: Celebrating the Essence of the Season

Written by: **Bwabwa Tchombela**
Chaplain: **MCI-WEST MCB CPEN**



As we approach the closing chapter of the year, surrounded by the brisk embrace of winter, December emerges as a month overflowing with joy, warmth, and a deep sense of community. This remarkable period unveils a rich array of customs that honor faith, family, and the essence of unity, transcending cultural divides. Among these cherished traditions, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa illuminate the season, each providing distinct perspectives on love, generosity, and

togetherness across various communities.

Christmas Observances: A Time-Honored Tradition of Faith and Family

Christmas, celebrated on the 25th of December, is firmly rooted in Christian traditions. It honors the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, an event of immense significance for millions around the globe. This time offers a vital opportunity for individuals and families to reflect on compassion, hope, and renewal themes. The festivities encompass many beloved practices that have evolved, such as decorating evergreen trees, hanging bright stockings, attending heartfelt church services, and singing joyous carols that resonate through neighborhoods.

During this festive period, families unite to bake many delightful treats, crafting cookies, pies, and other seasonal delicacies that fill their homes with enchanting and nostalgic scents. Baking for loved ones has transformed into a cherished tradition, symbolizing warmth, affection, and connection among family members. In addition, churches and community organizations often engage in various charitable endeavors this season, providing meals, gifts, and support to those in need. This embodies the spirit of generosity that Christmas inspires and nurtures within society.

Hanukkah: The Festival of Lights

Concurrently, the Jewish community joyfully celebrates Hanukkah, affectionately known as the Festival of Lights. This eight-day celebration, typically occurring in December, commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the miraculous event of the oil that lasted for eight days rather than just one. Families gather each evening to light the menorah, reciting blessings and singing traditional songs that foster unity and remembrance within their homes and communities.

Modern Hanukkah celebrations often include exchanging gifts, playing the classic game of dreidel, and indulging in delicious dishes such as latkes (crispy potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly-filled doughnuts). Hanukkah is a powerful symbol of resilience, faith, and cultural identity as families honor their heritage and share inspiring stories of perseverance passed down through generations.

Kwanzaa: Honoring African American Culture

Kwanzaa, observed from December 26th to January 1st, is a vibrant celebration that pays homage to the rich cultural heritage of African Americans. Initiated by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, Kwanzaa emphasizes the importance of family, community, and cultural identity through seven guiding principles: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and

Imani (Faith).

Each day of Kwanzaa highlights one of these principles: families come together to light the kinara (a unique candle holder) and engage in storytelling, singing, and enjoying traditional dishes that celebrate their African roots and heritage. This meaningful observance nurtures a profound sense of pride among participants and encourages individuals to contribute positively to their communities while fostering a greater understanding of their cultural backgrounds.

A Moment for Togetherness

As families throughout the United States engage in these diverse holiday customs, the common thread that unites them is the spirit of togetherness. December transforms into a month where the hustle and bustle of shopping for baking supplies, decorating homes with festive decorations, and preparing special meals strengthen bonds within communities. Schools, local businesses, and various organizations frequently host events celebrating these varied traditions, allowing individuals from all walks of life to unite and share in the joy and appreciation of one another's customs.

Unique Experiences of Service Members and Their Families

The holiday season is distinct and significant for service members and their families. Many take immense pride in serving the American public through volunteering, viewing it as one of life's greatest honors and responsibilities. However, holidays can also evoke complex emotions, particularly for those deployed or separated from loved ones during this meaningful time.

To bridge this emotional divide, military communities often come together to celebrate in ways that honor their service and the rich traditions of the season. Events such as festive gatherings, community celebrations, and volunteer opportunities foster connections among service members and their families, creating a supportive environment that encourages camaraderie. These gatherings provide a sense of belonging and togetherness, allowing participants to share their experiences, joys, and challenges while immersing themselves in the uplifting spirit of the holidays.

A Shared Narrative of Hope and Unity

A compelling collective narrative resonates as we embrace Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa celebrations during December and January. It is a story intricately woven from the threads of faith, culture, and service, reflecting the beauty of diversity and the strength that comes from unity.

As families gather around tables adorned with festive delicacies, menorahs glow with radiant candles, and kinara candles are lit to signify hope and resilience, the essence of the season becomes vividly clear: it is a time to celebrate love, share joy, and forge connections that transcend differences while promoting understanding.

As we navigate this holiday season, let us embrace the traditions that enrich our lives and recognize the significance of community, compassion, and service. By doing so, we honor our shared stories and the intricate tapestry of humanity that binds us all in this beautiful celebration of life.

To our dedicated service members, we profoundly appreciate your unwavering commitment to our nation. May the Lord watch over you and your family during this particular time. Happy holidays!



MCLB Barstow's Holiday Activities

Photos by: Kristyn Galvan & Anthony Plummer
Multimedia Specialists

Marine Corps Community Services Behavioral Health Department along with the Child Development Center organized multiple holiday activities for families aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, throughout the month of December. Behavioral Health hosted a holiday family game night, along with Christmas limbo and ornament making with the School Aged Care program, while the CDC put on a winter performance for parents, family, and friends to enjoy.



USO & MCCS Tre

Photos by: Kristyn Galvan
Multimedia Specialist

Marine Corps Community Services Barstow organized the annual Trees for Troops event at the Base Housing Community Center aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, December 6. Military and civilian personnel, together with their families and friends, participated in the celebrations by decorating cookies, making Christmas crafts, selecting trees and wrapping paper, along with visiting Santa. Community supporters, including the High Desert Marines, were in attendance distributing toys and gifts to children of all ages. The evening ended with a special performance of holiday carols sang by the children from the School Aged Care program.



es for Troops 2024



HIV/AIDS Awareness: Be Informed, Be Active

Story by: Kristyn Galvan
Multimedia Specialist

Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome continue to be a global health challenge. Understanding HIV and AIDS, their transmission, prevention, and the importance of testing and treatment, is critical to reducing the spread of the virus and supporting those living with it.

What is HIV?

The HIV virus attacks the immune system, specifically the CD4 cells, which are also known as helper T cells, or T_H cells, and are crucial in defending the body against infections, as reported on the Center for Disease Control website. If left untreated, HIV can lead to AIDS, which is the final stage of the infection. At this stage, the immune system is severely damaged, and the body becomes vulnerable to opportunistic infections and certain cancers.

The World Health Organization states, "WHO recommends that every person who may be at risk of HIV should access testing. People at increased risk of acquiring HIV should seek comprehensive and effective HIV prevention, testing and treatment services. HIV infection can be diagnosed using simple and affordable rapid diagnostic tests, as well as self-tests. It is important that HIV testing services follow the 5Cs: consent, confidentiality, counselling, correct results and connection with treatment and other services."

It's important to note that while HIV is a lifelong infection, it can be managed effectively with antiretroviral therapy. Research performed by the Cleveland Clinic states that ART helps reduce the viral load, keeping the immune system strong and preventing the progression to AIDS. With proper treatment, people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives.

What is AIDS?

As the most severe phase of HIV infection, AIDS prevents the immune system from being able to protect the body from infections or diseases. Not everyone who contracts HIV will develop AIDS, especially if they receive early and consistent treatment with ART.

More simply put, per medical experts via Healthline, HIV is a virus that has the potential to cause an infection, whereas AIDS is classified as a condition. However, without treatment, the immune system becomes increasingly weakened, making the body vulnerable to infections like tuberculosis, pneumonia, and certain cancers, which are considered AIDS-defining illnesses.

"HIV needs to be treated by a medical provider and the person living with HIV needs to take their medical and self-care very seriously," said Michelle Wolfe, registered nurse working with Occupational Health Detachment Barstow. "People can still live a thriving life with an HIV diagnosis but the steps to do this are much more complex and sometimes difficult."

How is HIV Transmitted?

According to HIV.gov, HIV is primarily transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, and breast milk. It's important to note that HIV is not transmitted through casual contact like hugging, kissing, sharing utensils, or through insect bites. The most common ways the virus spreads are:

- Unprotected sexual contact: Engaging in vaginal, anal, or oral sex without a condom or pre-exposure prophylaxis can lead to HIV transmission.
- Sharing needles or syringes: Individuals who inject drugs and share needles are at high risk of acquiring HIV.
- From mother to child: HIV can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.
- Blood transfusions and organ transplants: While rare in countries with rigorous blood screening, HIV transmission can still occur via infected blood products.

Prevention of HIV

While there is no cure for HIV, there are several ways to prevent the transmission of the virus:

1. Condom use: Consistently and correctly using condoms during sexual activity can significantly reduce the risk of HIV transmission.
2. Pre-exposure prophylaxis: PrEP is a medication that people at high risk of HIV can take to prevent infection. When taken as prescribed, it's highly effective at preventing HIV.
3. Post-exposure prophylaxis: PEP is a course of HIV medicine taken within 72 hours after potential exposure to HIV to reduce the risk of infection.
4. Regular HIV testing: Knowing your HIV status and that of your partners can help reduce the spread of the virus. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to managing the infection and reducing transmission.
5. Needle exchange programs: These programs provide clean needles to individuals who inject drugs, reducing the risk of HIV transmission through shared needles.

NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY 2022–2025

This Strategy, updated for 2022–2025, builds on the lessons learned and progress of previous iterations and seeks to leverage opportunities and address the challenges that remain. It provides a national roadmap for continuing the coordinated response to HIV and puts the country on the path to end the HIV epidemic in the United States by 2030. The Strategy is guided by this vision statement:

The United States will be a place where new HIV infections are prevented, every person knows their status, and every person with HIV has high-quality care and treatment, lives free from stigma and discrimination, and can achieve their full potential for health and well-being across the lifespan.

This vision includes all people, regardless of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, geographic location, or socioeconomic circumstance.

Michael Washington, Hospital Corpsman Petty Officer First Class. "Bi-annual tests is a way to know when exposure is viable or not. If there is word of an exposure, both active duty and civilians should get tested immediately."

Living with HIV

Support plays a crucial role for individuals living with HIV and AIDS. Within Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, the Behavioral Health Department offers counseling services that are accessible at all times.

"We have free counseling services available for service members, retirees and their families to take advantage of to help support those in need of a licensed professional to talk to for any issues that they might be facing or impacted by in some way so they don't have to face it alone," said Michelle Adams, Behavioral Health officer manager and victim advocate. "Anyone interested in counseling services with Behavioral Health can call our main office at 760-577-6533 to schedule an appointment."

The presence of the HIV virus does not signify the end of service for active duty personnel either.

"Being positive for HIV is not a career ender," explained Washington. "Marines can still serve depending on their levels. Before, there was no way to be operational but now there is a way to monitor whether the levels go too high or stay moderate to allow for active duty to remain active. That is why getting annual or bi-annual PHA's is so important."

The Role of Awareness

Awareness of HIV and AIDS is crucial in the fight against the virus. By embracing education, promoting preventive measures, and supporting those affected by the virus, we can create a more informed and compassionate society.

"MCLB's role is to encourage everyone to have frank conversations with their people groups about responsible lifestyle choices and why it matters," Wolfe said. "Too many people are still approaching their life as if no bad outcomes will ever happen to them. Not wearing seat belts, dabbling in drugs or alcohol, unsafe sex, unsafe relationships – no amount of awareness campaigns by MCLBB leadership will take the place of frank conversations and deep insight into where you choose to draw your boundaries in life. We are more careful with our credit cards than we are with our life sometimes and we need to all think about what we value and are we living a life in alignment with those values."

Education plays a pivotal role in dispelling myths, reducing stigma, and empowering individuals to take preventive measures. This includes:

- Community outreach: Local organizations, healthcare providers, and educational institutions can collaborate to spread accurate information about HIV, how it is transmitted, and how it can be prevented.
- Public campaign: Awareness campaigns through media outlets, social platforms, and events like World AIDS Day (December 1) can remind people of the importance of HIV testing and prevention.
- Support networks: Creating inclusive environments where people living with HIV can share their experiences and receive emotional support is vital to improving their mental and physical health.

While significant strides have been made in the treatment and prevention of HIV, the virus remains a global pandemic according to the WHO, that reports over thirty-nine million people worldwide are living with HIV, and millions of others continue to face barriers to accessing prevention, care, and treatment. Even numerous Federal agencies have established public awareness and educational initiatives focused on HIV prevention, treatment, and care, providing tools and resources that can be utilized and disseminated such as HIV.gov and their awareness campaigns.

What is Toys For Tots?

Story by: Laurie Pearson
COMMSTRAT Officer

Another successful year of toy collections and distributions is underway with Toys for Tots aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow.

“We are leading the charge share holiday joy throughout the High Desert, to ensure children in need experience the magic of Christmas,” said Sgt. Maj. Miller Daceus, base sergeant major. “This heartwarming mission is being fueled by the collective effort of local organizations, businesses, and dedicated volunteers, all working together to collect and distribute thousands of toys to less fortunate children in our community.”

“We have had several events to fill a bus this year,” said Staff Sgt. Ariana Martinez, Toys for Tots coordinator for MCLB Barstow. “First Student has partnered with us for these events, and collected a ton of toys for the program this year.”



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Pictured from left to right: Cpl. Crystal Bonillarios, LCpl. Kerlos Khalel, SSgt. Ariana Martinez, LCpl. Isaiah Gomez, Anthony Sanchez, Katie Naron, Cory Moya, Bessy Duque-Sanchez, Miguel Reyes, Jose Rivera, Tony Melendez, Ian Langmaid, and Jerry Rojo. (Not pictured Tiree Deering).

“This spirit of generosity, combined with ongoing toy collection drives at local businesses, has made this year’s campaign an extraordinary success, bringing hope and happiness to so many families,” Daceus said.

In addition, Marines and firefighters collected toys and money at the entrance gates to both Nebo and the Yermo Annex, Tuesday mornings through November and December.

“We are really grateful to the volunteers who have helped us this year, Kim Owens, Esmeralda Savatt and Bobby Young,” said Martinez. “We couldn’t have done this without them, and Cpl. Crystal Bonillarios.”

“In addition to these local heroes, several major organizations have stepped forward to contribute, including Amazon, Walmart, and Yaamava’ Resort & Casino at San Manuel, who

have helped by collecting toys or providing financial support” Daceus said. “The generosity doesn’t stop there—numerous non-profit groups in the High Desert have joined in, picking up truckloads of toys from the MCLB Barstow warehouse to ensure that every child has a gift to open this Christmas. Local businesses have also played a crucial role, setting up toy collection boxes in their stores and encouraging customers to give back to the community.

“The deadline for toy donations is December 22, after which Marines and volunteers will begin the joyful task of sorting and distributing the toys,” said Daceus. “The mission is simple yet powerful: to collect new, unwrapped toys and deliver them as Christmas gifts to children in need. Founded by Marine Corps Reserve Major Bill Hendricks in 1947, the Toys for Tots program has grown from a local initiative into a nationwide campaign, touching the lives of millions of children every holiday season.”

Though the High Desert does not have an active Marine Corps Reserve unit, MCLB Barstow has taken the lead in ensuring that thousands of toys are collected and distributed to those who need them most.

“Toys for Tots isn’t just about giving toys—it’s about delivering hope and joy to children and reminding them that they are valued and cared for, he said. “This mission instills the values of responsibility, community, and patriotism, helping children grow into kind, compassionate, and productive citizens. Thanks to the continued generosity of individuals, organizations, and volunteers, the Toys for Tots program has become an essential part of the holiday season, bringing light to the lives of children and families in need across the country. It’s a powerful reminder that when we come together, we can create something truly extraordinary—a holiday season filled with love, hope, and the spirit of giving.”



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Marines assist organizations with loading bags of donated toys into vans, trucks, and trailers for distribution to the community.

Toys for Tots C

Photos by: Kristyn Galvan & Kim Owens
Multimedia Specialist Volunteer

Marine and civilian volunteers joined together to support the Toys for Tots campaign in Victorville and Barstow, California, November 19 to December 17. Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow participated in the Fill the Bus events alongside First Student, Inc., American Cruisers, Harley Davidson, and numerous other supporters across the High Desert. The campaign received contributions of toys, cash donations, and complimentary tattoos, while volunteers assisted with the sorting, packing, and distribution of toys to the community. Additionally, every Tuesday from November to December, firefighters and first responders collected donations at both Nebo and Yermo entrances.



Campaign 2024





TWELVE HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

1 Keep decorations at least three feet away from heat sources – especially those with an open flame, like fireplaces and candles.



3 If you have a natural Christmas tree water it to keep it fresh and safe.



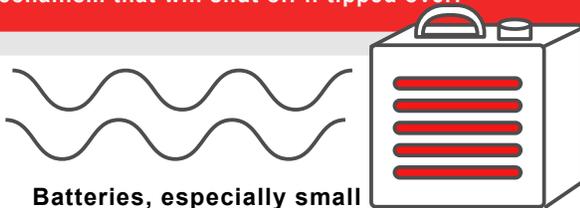
5 If you're using extension cords or adapters that add receptacles, consider having a qualified electrician add more outlets to your home



7 Ensure outside outlets are GFCI protected and you are using outside extension cords.



9 If you're using a space heater, switch it off before leaving the room. Use heaters that have the tipping mechanism that will shut off if tipped over.



11 Batteries, especially small batteries, should be kept away from children and pets because if ingested, they can cause serious injuries or even be life-threatening.



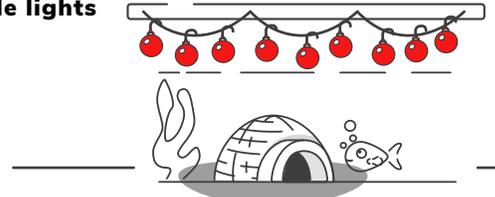
2 The best decorations are safe decorations, so when you're decorating, make sure not to run cords under rugs or furniture.



4 Always turn off your decorations when you leave your home and when you're sleeping.



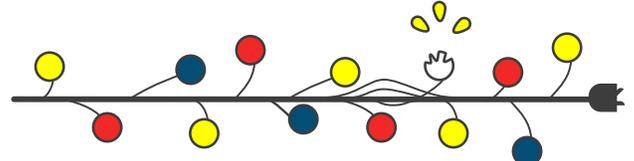
6 Only use electronics in dry areas. As tempting as it is, you just can't decorate your aquarium with icicle lights



8 Every home needs a working smoke alarm in each bedroom, outside sleeping areas and on every level, including the basement.



10 Inspect your decorations and discard any that are damaged or worn out.



12 The best gift you can give to your family is an Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter breakers or outlets. Many electrical fires that occur very year could be prevented by AFCIs.



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