

Team Flint Hills  
**Home Away From Home Program**  
"Partnership of Caring"

# Hand Book for Host Families



POC: Phyllis Fitzgerald / (785)307-1472  
fitzmiss@yahoo.com  
Team Flint Hills Home Away From Home Program Handbook

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I	THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE	4
SECTION II	SOLDIER RESPONSIBILITIES	5 - 7
SECTION III	YOUR ROLE AS A FAMILY	8 - 10
SECTION IV	OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION	11

## FORWARD

---

### **THE HOME AWAY FROM HOME PROGRAM**

The Home Away From Home Program offers select community leaders a unique and rewarding opportunity to provide Soldiers a home-away-from-home during their first enlistment in the military. It also offers community leaders the opportunity to meet first-hand our fine young Army men and women of Fort Riley. If you have the desire and commitment to make a difference in a young Soldiers life, this is the program for you!

This handbook has been designed to not only encourage your participation in the program, but to aid you as a host family. It provides valuable information on five major areas: Section I outlines the philosophy surrounding the Home Away From Home Program; Section II provides insight into Soldier life and responsibilities at Fort Riley; Section III provides general information on a variety of topics concerning your responsibility as a host family; and Section IV provides information on how and when to contact Soldiers, including a telephone directory for the Garrison Command Sergeant Major and other useful phone numbers.

On behalf of Fort Riley and the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, we wish to express our appreciation to you for your active involvement in the Flint Hills Home Away From Home Program. As a partner in caring, not only will you play a significant role in the life of a Soldier, but you may also find it to be one of life's most rewarding experiences.

## SECTION I

---

### **THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE**

The Home Away From Home Program is designed to provide Soldiers with an avenue to form friendships and gather support beyond the formal work environment. If you can remember leaving behind the comfort and security of your parents' home, then you will understand the needs of the young men and women in the Home Away From Home Program. Rigorous military standards can tax even the best of spirits, producing feelings of great stress to make the grade in some members, and in others, moments of loneliness, homesickness, and doubt. As a host family, you provide a home-away-from-home during a Soldier's first years at Fort Riley. You serve as their mentor, friend, and advisor, providing a caring environment to relax away from the pressures of work and future deployments. You are also in the position to serve as a positive adult role model helping them understand their role as a member of the Armed Services and reinforcing positive social values.

The Flint Hills Home Away From Home Program Office attempts to match host families with Soldiers who share the same basic characteristics. In addition, Soldiers can request "by name" host families. When two families request the same Soldier, we honor the wishes of the Soldier.

The official relationship lasts for the duration of time that the Soldier is stationed at Fort Riley, but we encourage you to become lifelong "family".

### **HOST FAMILY APPLICATIONS**

Call the Flint Hills Home Away From Home Community Lead Coordinator at (785)307-1472 or email [fitzmiss@yahoo.com](mailto:fitzmiss@yahoo.com) for details regarding the application process.

## SECTION II

---

### **SOLDIER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The U.S. Army Core Values

In addition to the academic, physical, and military responsibilities the Soldiers assume, they are also charged with stringent moral responsibilities. Soldiers accept and live by core values. They are:

- Loyalty – Bear true faith and allegiance to the US Constitution, the US Army, your unit, and other soldiers.
- Duty – Fulfill your obligations.
- Respect – Treat people as they should be treated.
- Selfless Service – Put the welfare of the nation, the US Army, and your subordinates before your own.
- Honor – Live up to Army values
- Integrity – Do what’s right, legally and morally
- Personal Courage – Face fear, danger or adversity (physical and moral)

These values, ingrained into the individuals during Basic Training, are based upon the Traditional concept that a Soldier’s word is a bond and that Soldiers must be uncompromising, forthright, and honest in all activities throughout life.

#### **“Why Is the Military So Demanding?”**

The defense of the United States and its concept of deterring war rely heavily upon the ability of the Army to discharge its mission properly. In our modern world, we need Soldiers of great ability, skill, and judgment. These future leaders are the Army Soldiers of today whom you will be encouraging and advising. The self-discipline, mental toughness, knowledge, and leadership skills that our country needs dictate intensive and demanding training. Your efforts and concern as a caring participant can make a big difference in assisting a Soldier who may need an occasional retreat from the dormitory living environment. Your willingness to give Soldiers your time, to listen sympathetically, and to show your genuine concern will one day bear fruit far beyond the smiles you will earn from them today. In short, your involvement is vital to the Soldier’s experience and the shaping of the air and space leaders of tomorrow.

#### **Daily Soldier Life**

Daily life in the U.S. Army can vary from each of our outstanding service members. Below you will find information that will help you to understand the basics that our men and women of the 1<sup>st</sup> ID live each and every day, and strive to work towards. For more detailed information please visit <https://www.goarmy.com/soldier-life/being-a-soldier.html>

## **Being a Soldier**

As a Soldier in the U.S. Army, you're tasked with upholding the Constitution and protecting America's freedoms. But it's not always work — Soldiers have free time just like everyone else to spend with friends and family, or take part in sports or hobbies. Soldiers continually strengthen themselves mentally and physically through Ongoing Training. And most important — Soldiers live the Seven Core Army Values every day.

## **Ongoing Training**

As a Soldier, one of the most important things you can do is make sure your soldiering skills are finely tuned. And if you're a Soldier interested in promotion, you'll want to take part in ongoing training opportunities. There's a wide variety of training to choose from, including tactical, technical, physical and leadership development. Many of these opportunities allow you to practice your skills in the field as an individual and as part of a team.

## **Army Leadership Training**

Leadership is crucial to the success of the U.S. Army. The most effective leaders are those who lead from the front — this means they lead by example in thought, word and deed. Soldiers who choose Leadership Training are making it clear that they wish to take on more responsibility and thus rise in rank. The Army provides many opportunities for Soldiers to learn how to improve their leadership and teamwork skills.

One path for enlisted Soldiers to move up in rank is through the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES). The NCOES is a series of leadership training courses and classes that train Soldiers how to lead at varying levels from sergeant to command sergeant major. Each course is specifically designed for each level of increased responsibility and accountability, and you leave each course with leadership skills that only the U.S. Army can provide.

## **Single Soldier Living**

The Army's single Soldier barracks have been renovated or newly constructed with the needs of the Soldier in mind. Usually a Soldier will find general purpose wash rooms somewhere in the barracks for washing boots, backpacks, and other muddy items so they don't have to clean their equipment in their bathrooms. He or she will also find the Army has built living accommodations that Soldiers don't have to share with each other. Today's living quarters are generally attached to a bathroom and an apartment-style kitchen area that two Soldiers share, and some rooms are built with walk-in closets that even have industrial hooks mounted on the wall for military issue gear.

Want to experience life on an actual Army base? [Take the goarmy.com virtual tour](https://www.goarmy.com/virtual-tour), which will give you a first-person view of the locations you will visit every day as a Soldier on post.

## **Specialized Schools**

For those Soldiers who want to advance even further in their Army careers, Specialized Schools are available to those who meet the right criteria. These schools will develop you personally and professionally, providing the skills to help you in your Army career and beyond. From language and management training to leadership and survival skills, the knowledge you receive at these schools will help prepare you for nearly any mission in life.

## SECTION III

---

### **YOUR ROLE AS A HOST FAMILY**

Soldiers from Fort Riley are held to a very high standard as professionals who are responsible for multi-million dollar pieces of equipment. It is imperative that you understand these standards and help set the Soldier up for success. While the Soldiers you interact with will typically be the age of an average college student, their responsibilities are generally far greater. Failure to live up to their professional responsibilities will have the potential to seriously injure fellow service members and can have career-ending effects.

#### **Alcohol and the Soldier**

Kansas Law- Providing Alcohol to Minors -- Alcohol use as it relates to the Soldier is in accordance with Kansas laws; the individual must be 21 years of age or older to buy or consume alcohol. While those over the age of 21 may drink alcoholic beverages, it is not encouraged. Remember, alcohol use has been linked to sexual assaults. Do not condone situations where alcohol use can lead to criminal activity.

#### **Host Family Activities**

Soldiers do not expect to be entertained or taken out to expensive meals or events. On the contrary, they are looking for the warmth and friendship of your family in their home-away-from-home. Letting them become part of your family is the greatest gift you can give. They may want to use your phone to call parents or friends, but you are not required to overextend yourself financially. If the Soldier does not have a cell phone, you should suggest that Soldier acquire a calling card in order to pay their own bills. Ultimately, the freedom to make a sandwich, drink a soda, sleep, watch TV, or just hang out combined with your willingness to listen and your concern for them as individuals are the most precious gifts these service members can receive.

#### **Soldier-Host Family Relationships**

Soldiers will strive to please you by good behavior to earn a return invitation. They are expected to be courteous guests and to express their gratitude. They are taught to address military superiors and their elders as “Sir” or “Ma’am”. Relations between host family and the Soldier need **not** be excessively formal, and we rely on your good judgment in this area. However, if you experience problems with your Soldier, please contact the Garrison Command Sergeant Major immediately (phone number is available at the end of this handbook).

#### **Host Family Dividends**

Aside from the personal satisfaction you receive in hosting a Soldier, you may be asking yourself what you get in return. Soldiers will normally invite you to events as their

guests. This might include traditionally military events, such as promotion ceremonies, to show their appreciation. They will also volunteer to help you with tasks or projects as they are genuinely grateful for your caring and seek to find ways to demonstrate their gratitude. While the Home Away From Home Program provides many dividends, participants often gain their most satisfying moments merely by interacting with their Soldier. By sharing a family atmosphere, these family ties can continue for years.

### **Soldiers and Cars**

While many Soldiers have their own vehicle, this is not the case with all of them. Lending your vehicle is not a responsibility or a requirement. If you choose to do so, you must realize that you do so at your own risk with possible negative outcomes in terms of damage to property belonging to others. Safe alternatives to borrowing are commercial transportation, carpooling, and prior coordination of rides with host families. Any host family member may pick up the Soldiers. Host families who do not have regular access to Fort Riley may be sponsored through the HAFH Program Office or be provided a pass to allow for access by having their Soldier contact the Fort Riley Visitor Control Center just outside of the Henry Gate Access Control Point at (785) 239-2982.

### **The Host Family's Role in Correcting the Soldier**

Soldiers need to learn from their mistakes... that's part of their ongoing training. Overlooking an error or mistake will only encourage them to continue the behavior. We recommend establishing house rules for Soldiers visiting your home. This helps the Soldier to understand the boundaries, and it is unfair to expect Soldiers to follow your rules if you don't tell them what the rules are. Perhaps the most important thing you want to remember about house rules are that the rules must clearly and accurately reflect your expectations of the Soldier's behavior in your home.

### **Suggested house rules you may want to address include the following:**

- We each have a right to our own opinions and the right to disagree with the opinions of others.
- If I request a phone call to let me know if you're coming over for the weekend, then please call me early so I may adjust my plans accordingly.
- If you are unable to visit for an extended length of time, a courtesy call or e-mail from time to time is required to let me know how you're doing.

Other areas you may want to address from the start include:

- Your policy on bringing additional Soldiers to your home
- Cleaning up after themselves while visiting your home (this may include a list of duties, such as making the bed if they slept over)
- Putting things back where they found them
- Address your feelings on picking up the Soldier at the base and how you feel about last minute phone calls requesting an off-day visit
- Your policies on the Soldier arriving unexpectedly for a meal or bringing a friend

for a meal.

### **Helpful Hints**

- Be a sounding board.
- Communicate your house rules and expectations.
- Give Soldiers responsibilities as a family member.
- Expect the same courtesy from a Soldier as you would a family member.
- Teach your Soldier, and learn together.
- If possible, have an open house to meet the Soldier's parents if they visit.
- Take pictures for the Soldier's family and future reunions.
- Be patient. Your Soldier is sometimes very busy, and there may be periods in which your Soldier cannot visit.
- Treat your Soldier like an adult, not a child. Mentor them, but don't baby them.
- Enjoy your time together; Soldiers feel host families are influential and positively impact their future.
- We ask that you not buy alcohol for Soldiers, and remember that, if they consume alcohol in your home (not recommended), they must be 21 years of age or older

## SECTION IV

---

### **OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION:**

If you have any issues, please contact the Garrison Command Sergeant Major (785) 239-6245

NOTE: The Fort Riley Command Post has contact information for ALL leadership on the base. If you are unable to reach someone in an emergency, contact the Fort Riley Telephone Directory Assistance at (785) 239-3911 and they will be able to connect you to appropriate leadership to handle the issue.