Military Children to be Honored All Month

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

April is month of the military child in Alaska – a recognition that doesn’t go unnoticed here in Kodiak. The island is home to the largest Coast Guard base in the U.S., but is also home for service men and women, and their families, who are enlisted in the Navy Seals and National Guard.

Velma Vining is a child development services specialist on base and said the month of the military child is meant to honor the children of those families, who are often forced to move around frequently and live in single-parent homes when parents are deployed or on duty.

“It’s really hard for kids to pick up and move away from their family, their friends and really close relationships that they’ve developed and it happens to them – it can happen ever six months to a couple years that they have to say goodbye to really close friends, and it can be hard for any age group. So these are the challenges that military kids have to face. And not only that, not only do they have to pick up and leave and change their home, they also have to say goodbye to a parent when they deploy.”

April 15th was designated as a day to wear purple and show support for military children by Governor Sean Parnell. Vining said this is the third annual purple up for military kids observance.

“There’s something special about the color purple. Purple symbolizes all the branches of the military because all of the different colors come together to make purple – green and blue and red for the Marines – they all come together and make purple. So it’s a visual way to show support for all military children.”

On April 14th, Vining said there will be a parade on the Coast Guard base in the morning.

“And all military children are invited to come. We are going to start at 9:30 a.m. at the Coast Guard Chapel on base, and we’ll be marching up the street – not the main road but the back road. We’ll be marching down the street to the clinic and we’re going to end up at the clinic right in front of the flagpole. The executive officer of base will say a few words, we’ll say a few words and then we’ll head back to the chapel.”

Vining said folks will be wearing purple in that parade, as well. She added that there are other events happening on base all month for military kids.

Likewise, both the Kodiak City Council and Borough Assembly are set to read proclamations during their April meetings recognizing April as month of the military child.