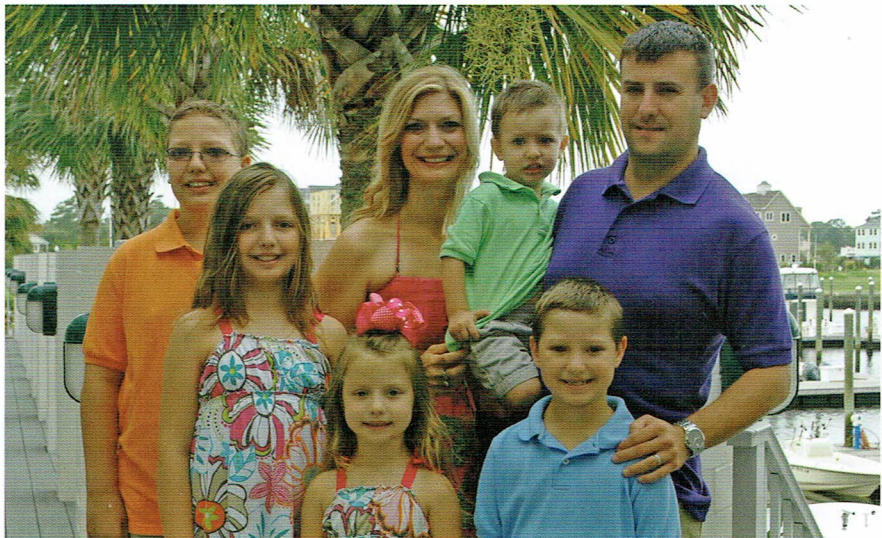




OPERATION AT EASE

JUL
2015



Congratulations, St. James! The patriotic bows that are currently attached to many mailboxes raised approximately \$16,000 for Operation At Ease (OAE). This amount is a new record and goes a long way toward ensuring that our program will continue to provide 50 military families with an all-expense paid two-day vacation in St. James. Not only do these funds provide a condo and a day at the beach, they can include an aquarium visit, breakfast at Tommy's, gas money for the round trip from Ft. Bragg or Lejeune and various other amenities.

But the real intangible value to this program can only be expressed by our military visitors. They are overwhelmed that a community offers such a program with no strings attached, simply to say "thank you" for their service to our country. The fact that they leave here with a feeling that there are still some wonderful people who appreciate what they do says a great deal about our community. Every OAE volunteer and contributor should feel justifiably proud.

Following are just a few comments from these young military families:

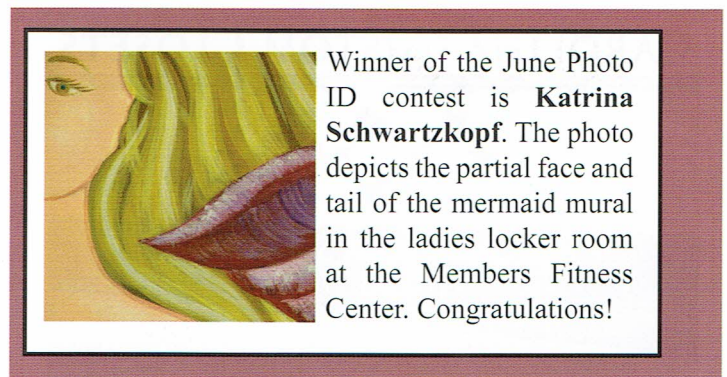
"OAE has been a wonderful experience for our family [a couple with three young children]. We waited six months until my deployment was over. Walking into the condo felt like we were in a home. We could not believe how nice it was and all the good food waiting for us. Breakfast at Tommy's was awesome! The staff was very friendly, and the food was great. After breakfast we met our photographer who was excellent, and having photos of this visit is really nice! We then took the ferry over to the aquarium which the kids truly enjoyed. We explored Southport, and everyone made us feel very welcome. I have served 16 years and have had Americans thank us for our service at airports and welcome home reunions. But we have never seen generosity and caring like what was displayed by OAE, and it makes us proud to be Americans. We cannot thank OAE enough and know that all service members and their families will be taken care of here."

"It's difficult to express how grateful we are to have had the opportunity to spend this weekend together. With each of us working full time and many hectic days ahead (our first baby is due in December), it was a solace we desperately needed. Sometimes, when you're in the thick of military life, it can feel like you're alone and unable to find a friend to make life a little easier. OAE's ranks are full of blessed people we so appreciate and admire for their generosity and selflessness. Thank you all so very much, and may God bless you!"

"A heartfelt thank you to all the OAE volunteers! This was truly more than we could have ever expected. It's wonderful to see how many people appreciate just what our soldiers do. Your kindness will never be forgotten."

So, congratulations again to St. James from the OAE board of directors and our volunteers for your wonderful support.

By Don Hill for the OAE Board
Photo by Tricia Hill



Winner of the June Photo ID contest is **Katrina Schwartzkopf**. The photo depicts the partial face and tail of the mermaid mural in the ladies locker room at the Members Fitness Center. Congratulations!

July - 2015