

OPERATION AT EASE



Operation at Ease (OAE) kicked off its eighth year of operation with its annual Meet & Greet function held at the St. James Community Center January 14.

More than 80 people, both new and returning participants, were introduced to our board members and listened to a brief description of what we're planning for 2015 as well as a short presentation on how OAE operates.

As in past years, they were treated to a video montage of the many families that had participated in the program. A big "thank you" goes to Ken Haubrich for putting together the video and to all our volunteer photographers who supplied Ken with the great pictures he used. The board is very happy to report that 15 new volunteers signed up to help out this year, and we were able to fill the two available monthly coordinator slots.

We are hoping to get some families from the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Camp Lejeune involved in OAE this year. Almost all these individuals have either physical problems, PTSD or both and are really in need of the

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quality rest and relaxation that OAE can provide here in St. James. To supplement these visits we are exploring the offer of a newly formed equestrian therapy group in Bolivia that might be able to help with marines and soldiers like the ones assigned to the Lejeune battalion.

As in years past, we are planning to entertain approximately 50 families in 2015. Starting in March we will have three families during both the second and fourth weekends of the month continuing through October. Please be on the lookout for them and extend a big "hello and thank you" if you do happen to see them.

OAE would like to sincerely thank the St. James community for supporting the Patriotic Bow/Flag Campaign. This is one of our largest fundraisers and the monies collected enable OAE to treat our military families to these R & R weekends. If you have not already purchased your patriotic bow and flag, you may use the order form on page 18. You may also call Vickie Johnson at 253-9801 or email her at vickiej50@msn.com with questions.

By Don Hill and Vickie Johnson
Photo by John Muuss



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