

EPC desperately needs volunteers

By Julie Gowel
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In the United States, when a child is removed from his or her home due to maltreatment they are placed with a foster family until the parent or legal guardian is found to be capable of assuming the responsibilities of parenting. Here in Baumholder, there is no federally mandated foster care program so where do our children go?

The Army Community Service office offers a program similar to that of the foster care systems in the States to ensure the children of the Baumholder Army community are cared for in emergency situations.

The Emergency Placement Care program is a voluntary, short-term program designed to give children a safe haven when their family is suffering hardships. An EPC provider is someone who volunteers to provide an environment filled with nurturing, attention and structure in their home for children who have been removed from their family's care. Children are either voluntarily or court-mandated to be placed with EPC providers in emergency situations usually involving child neglect and abuse, but placement can involve other reasons such as parental illness, injury or general inability to care for the child.

Emergency Placement Care is short-term. Placements generally range from two days to two weeks and do not usually exceed 90 days. The program is designed to give families in emergency situations time to work on the problems or conditions that made emergency placement necessary. EPC is not foster care and does not result in the possibility of adopting a child.

The EPC program needs your help. The Baumholder community at this time has only one certified EPC provider who will be leaving our community within the next few months to return to the United States. If no volunteer home is available to children in the Baumholder area who must be placed outside of their parent or legal guardian's care, they could be transferred to other military installations such as those in the Kaiserslautern area.

"People are usually so overwhelmed at the thought of foster care, they think 'I can't do this.' There is a lot of support. Whenever I needed anything I was able to call right up to ACS and I was able to talk with the Emergency Placement Care program and I never had any problems," said Baumholder's lone EPC provider. Her name cannot be revealed for security purposes, but she had a great deal to say about the program.

"I could see a change in the children's faces and attitudes from the time they got here and left, they were very happy. I just made it as comfortable and loving as possible for them. Some advice I would give is just be ready to be patient, loving and be very understanding. These children are going through a hard time. You have to be understanding that they are not going to come into your home 100 percent happy, perfect, no problems. You have to be there for that child no matter what. Know that you are making a difference for that child in the time you are there."

The Baumholder community is lucky to have such a wonderful Emergency Placement Care provider but we need more. As our sole EPC provider said, "We need to have more people involved. Luckily there was never another case while I was doing one because I am the only one."

What does it take to be an EPC provider? For starters it takes a loving and patient person willing to take the time to make a difference in the lives of children in difficult situations.

Secondly it takes some training. Requirements for EPC providers include:

- ☐ Volunteer orientation
- ☐ Basic foster care provider training
- ☐ First aid and CPR
- ☐ In-service training including topics such as child development, stress management, cultural awareness and communication skills.

For more information on becoming an Emergency Placement Care provider contact Jenny Gerber, the EPC coordinator in the Army Community Service office, at mil 485-8188 or civ (06783)6-8188.



Halloween brings out the spooks

The winners of the 22nd Base Support Battalion Halloween costume contest show off their costumes. Above left — Bianca Bowen and Bill Kalavsky, second and first place winners, respectively. Bowen's costume was titled "Hell-Air 666" and Kalavsky billed himself as a "Mysterious Woman." At left is Gene Wintree, fourth place winner who weighed in as "Ton-bolina" and above is Dennis Peterson, your basic run of the mill "Armor Dragon Guy" and third place winner.

Photos by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

