

INFORMATION PAPER

CFSC-FP
9 September 2003

SUBJECT: Spouse Orientation and Leader Development (SOLD)

1. Purpose: To provide information about SOLD

2. Facts:

a. In February 2002, the Chief of Staff, Army (CSA) conducted a spouse focus group to explore ways to enhance the military spouse's experience in the Army. The concept of Spouse Orientation and Leader Development (SOLD) evolved as a result of the work of this volunteer group. The proponenty for SOLD transferred from the CSA's Wellbeing Office to the Family Programs Directorate, US Army Community and Family Support Center in December 2002.

b. Spouse Orientation and Leader Development (SOLD) is not a program, but a structured, integrated methodology for providing services to Army spouses in their journey through Army life (much the like the current soldier system) – helping connect them to the Army, to grow through better education and training, to develop as community leaders and encourage them to contribute back to their Army communities – while providing proof of tangible, marketable experiences.

c. Spouse Orientation and Leader Development (SOLD) leverages existing services, systems and internet technologies to connect Army constituents, especially spouses, to the Army while providing a mechanism users can use to catalog and manage their own portfolio of skills and experiences. The "virtual" SOLD Personal Development System (PDS) contains various components and will be released iteratively:

(1) The Life Skills Matrix is a comprehensive database web-based application that contains referral to sources of service to provide information, training, and awareness related to specific knowledge and skills at progressive levels.

(2) The Personal Portfolio provides a management tool to record and capture a spouse's (or other authorized users) training and education, volunteer and paid employment experiences, and personal contributions for future reference or to develop an individual resume.

(3) Integral to the success of the system in its outreach and partnering aspects, The Volunteer Component, through which Ambassadors, Lifeline Coaches, and Mentors, all spouses (or authorized constituents) themselves, are accessible "virtually" to provide information, advice, support, and guidance as requested by spouses utilizing the system.

d. Significant Milestones

(1) Recruitment for volunteer SOLD Ambassadors kicked off in June 2003. The first SOLD Ambassador Orientation was conducted in conjunction with the Army Community Service (ACS) Conference in August 2003. Nineteen volunteers attended representing a number of Regions and MACOMs. These volunteers are empowered to return to their home stations and conduct SOLD briefings for a variety of groups and to train additional SOLD Ambassadors for their area.

(2) The ongoing Marketing strategy will establish an Identity Package to make the initiative recognizable across various media platforms, print ads, short video tape, brochures, public service announcements, nationwide print advertisement, press and public relations kits and web service as an introduction to SOLD and the PDS. Brochures targeted to Spouses and other Constituents/Users, Commanders, Volunteers and Service Providers were distributed at the Army Community Service conference in August 2003.

(3) Phase I of the SOLD PDS, which includes the comprehensive Life Skills Matrix web-based Application, an extensive list of service providers, and the homepage, MyArmyLifeToo.com was field tested at the Army Community Services Conference in August 2003. A number of user comments were gathered and the data will be used to enhance the system.

e. The Way Ahead

(1) A total Systems Requirement Document will be developed in October that outlines the entire requirements for the SOLD PDS.

(2) SOLD LifeLine Coach and SOLD Mentor recruitment will began in Jan 04.

(3) Phase I of the SOLD Personal Development System consisting of the home page, MyArmyLifeToo.com, the Life Skills Matrix, and an extensive list of service providers will be unveiled at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Conference in October 2003 and accessed virtually through www.MyArmyLifeToo.com.

(4) Phase II of the PDS will include Tailored Access for the various constituent groups (i.e. Spouses, soldiers, strategic partners, etc), the Portfolio component and "virtual" volunteer connection. Development and release dates contingent upon funding.

(5) Future iterations of the SOLD Personal Development System will be developed and released based on participant feedback and recommendations to enhance the system.

f. All of the components of the PDS work together to provide an integrated system that allows users to improve their life skills, enhance their self-reliance and understanding of the Army, gain access to resources for employment and career development, build connections with others throughout the military, manage their personal accomplishments, and grow as contributors and leaders within the Army community.

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