



MG William L. Freeman, Jr., The Adjutant General, Mississippi, participates with attendees at the Yellow Ribbon Program Conference.

Yellow Ribbon Personnel Gather for First Yellow Ribbon Program Conference

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Senior Department of Defense officials and 600 Yellow Ribbon Program Managers and Event Planners from across the nation gathered for the first Yellow Ribbon Program Conference from September 14 - 16, 2010 in central Florida. The conference allowed the attendees to learn and share innovative ideas for enhancing the Yellow Ribbon Event experience for Service members and their Families.

“The process of mobilization frequently begins with demobilization,” explained Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Mr. Dennis McCarthy, who addressed the crowd at the conference kick-off. “What we do in the reintegration process; how the Service members return to their homes and Families, and the way they think about their service, influence others who serve in uniform,” he said.

The conference theme, *Good to GREAT*, placed emphasis on future Joint events and created a Joint environment to discuss the different strategies and successes across the Program. The three-day conference also gave participants the opportunity to develop a network of Yellow Ribbon contacts to better collaborate and enhance Yellow Ribbon efforts in their states and regions.

Coming in November 2010: Dynamic Speakers on Demand!

The Yellow Ribbon Program Office is reacting to a recurring theme heard throughout the Yellow Ribbon Conference: finding individuals who are skilled at conducting interactive and engaging presentations is a challenge. The Yellow Ribbon Program Office is providing a talent pool of individuals available *at no cost to your Service* to deliver dynamic sessions at Yellow Ribbon Events. This group, known as the Cadre of Speakers, will be available for use in November 2010. We anticipate that this initiative will positively impact the Service and Family members who attend Yellow Ribbon Events.



The DoD Yellow Ribbon Program Office launched a pilot during the summer with one speaker, and the demand was overwhelming for his time. As a result, we're filling this Cadre of Speakers with individuals that can be requested by Event Planners through the Yellow Ribbon web site to meet the Event's needs. We introduced the Cadre of Speakers at the Yellow Ribbon Program Conference in September, and received several questions from attendees concerning the process for identifying, selecting, and requesting speakers.

- Our goal is to offer 50 speakers to Yellow Ribbon Event Planners
- Requests for speakers will be first-come, first-served and based on the speaker's availability and/or the date of the Event
- The "core curriculum" area can be specified (e.g. anger management) in the request, and the DoD Yellow Ribbon Program Office will match the speaker to the need
- By-name requests will be made available

Partner Spotlight : The Warrior Gateway



Warrior Gateway.org

The [Warrior Gateway](#) is your one-stop-shop for finding, mapping, rating, and sharing the services and programs you seek in your area.

From deployed to veteran to civilian, the Warrior Gateway was created to serve as a trusted and reliable resource for all members of the military community at any stage of service, and is available *free-of-charge*. Launched publically in March 2010, this non-profit program was designed to be user-friendly: its Directory format is familiar and intuitive, and its faceted search presents streamlined results for a wide array of services such as counseling, financial assistance, youth programs, physical therapy, and more.

The Warrior Gateway is interactive and dynamic: About 30,000 public, private, non-profit, faith-based programs and organizations can be found in the Directory today, with more being included all the time. We encourage users to add helpful comments, as well as add any program, organization, or service that benefits the military community. The feedback you leave and the providers you add help others in the community make more informed decisions.

Taken together, you and other users are building a "living" online collection of relevant and experienced "word-of-mouth" recommendations. That's what makes this Directory your directory. It is truly the voice of the veteran and the entire military community. Visit us at www.WarriorGateway.org and see for yourself.

ABOUT YELLOW RIBBON

The Yellow Ribbon Program (YRP) is a Department of Defense-wide effort to help National Guard and Reserve Service members and their Families connect with local resources before, during, and after deployments. Commanders and leaders play a critical role in assuring that Reserve Service members and their Families attend Yellow Ribbon Events where they can access information topics such as employment, health care, education/training opportunities, financial, and legal benefits. The Yellow Ribbon Program works in conjunction with Department of Defense and Federal partners, such as the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to provide up-to-date and relevant information to the members of the all-volunteer force and their Families.

The Yellow Ribbon Program is part of the Family and Employer Policy & Programs Directorate within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. For more information or to locate a Yellow Ribbon Event, visit www.yellowribbon.mil.