



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

Evans' Behavioral Health debuts kids therapeutic summer program

By: Stacy Neumann, Medical Department Activity Public Affairs

Dr. Jackie Delano didn't start her clinical career thinking she would be a summer camp counselor. But this summer, that's where she is.

"I am so exhausted at the end of the day," she laughed, "but the smiles on the kids faces make it all worth it."

Officially, Delano is the Clinical Director of School Behavioral Health at Evans Army Community Hospital. The program embeds behavioral health providers into five local schools to help address the needs of military students. Between its first and second years, the providers made an observation. Parents and children seemed to have a harder time keeping appointments over the summer and it was evident when they came back to school.

Delano said, "We noticed some of them had lost the therapy skills learned during the school year. We want them to retain and utilize the skills they've learned. We're all passionate about kids and we've built rapport with them."

The first School Behavioral Health summer program was born. The school behavioral health providers designed a summer program to offer to students they worked with at the schools. By teaming up with MWR and the Mountain Post Color Guard Soldiers at Turkey Creek Ranch, they came up with a plan. With a total of three sessions offered for two weeks each in June and July, two providers would oversee a group of 10 students, Monday through Thursday, for three hours a day. Families come together on the last day for a picnic.

"The goal is continuity of care," explained Delano. "All of the activities are therapeutic. We're providing an environment where they apply the therapeutic skills they've learned."

Most of the children are coping with one of five issues: Adjustment difficulties, ADHD, anxiety, depression or Bipolar Disorder. Activities built around music, art, recreational and equine therapies give them opportunities to practice breathing techniques and conflict resolution, learn to identify feelings and put coping strategies into practice.

Delano said, "These are unique kids. They're coming from more chaotic environments with a lot more change."



Delano emphasized that it's been an eye-opening experience for the providers.

"This is a great opportunity for us to see them in another setting. We learn who they are outside of the school environment and we get to watch them overcome obstacles. It's hugely rewarding," she said.

Because the school-based providers were given the option of participating and each one stepped forward for the camp, Delano said it also showed how they feel about the kids.

"Amazing dedication! It's tough and they volunteered," Delano enthused. "They could be up here doing individual therapy in air conditioned rooms. This shows a lot of dedication and caring."

Maj. Charles Weber, Chief of Behavioral Health, added, "Evans and the Army have an intrinsic dedication to service members and their Families. There is a constant vigilance for the Family and it shows in our caring and refinement of all our programs."

Delano hopes to repeat the summer sessions next year. She says officials at higher headquarters are examining the pilot program at Fort Carson-MEDDAC for potential introduction at other military posts.

