



## **eXtension – Military Families Monthly Report**

**Reporting Period: 16 August 2011 – 15 September 2011**

### *1. Significant Activities:*

- **NEAFCS Webinar:** A webinar (*What's Your Name, Rank and Cereal Number? Raisin' the Level and Quality of FCS Engagement with Military Service Members and Their Families!*) was conducted on 17 August for the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences members. Brent Elrod, Anne Adrian, and Kyle Kostelecky hosted and presented the webinar.
- **Military Families Learning Network planning with eXtension leadership:** A full day meeting was held in Lincoln, NE on 24 August that included the Director of eXtension, Dan Cotton, and Office of Sponsored Programs staff at UNL. The agenda included updates on CoP activity, Military Families Learning Network (MFLN) leadership staff activity, relationships with our Partners, expected timelines/future of the project, and the budget (final allocation of original funding).
- **DoD Webinar:** A webinar (*We Want You! For the Military Families Learning Network*) was conducted on 26 August for the DoD MC&FP staff. Anne Adrian, Sarah Baughman, and Kyle Kostelecky hosted and presented the webinar.
- **Network Literacy Face-to-Face Meeting:** A face-to-face meeting of the Network Literacy CoP steering committee and the MFLN leadership was held in Charlotte, NC from 29-31 August (11 members present). Work teams and responsibilities were established, an intended soft launch of the eXtension site is slated for 1 October, 2012 with all content licensed using Creative Commons – Attribution only license.
- **Growth and Maintenance of the Military Families Learning Network:** Active work continues across the MFLN as weekly Concentration Leader meetings provide opportunities to share progress, exchange ideas, and explore new opportunities to engage and grow in the social media efforts tied to the project.

Blog postings increase and are announced and distributed to a number of appropriate audiences. Content continues to grow as it is created and repurposed in each of the Concentration Areas.

- **Evaluation:** The map of CES military family programming continues to be updated and developed to increase usability. Individual work with Concentration Areas continues to ensure proper evaluation techniques and approaches to the work they are doing. A Theory of Change was identified as a guiding approach to overall project evaluation during the Network Literacy face-to-face meeting. A post-webinar evaluation was created and used during this reporting period and will continue to be implemented as webinars are offered in the future associated with the MFLN.

## 2. Current deliverable(s), activity, goals/objectives:

- **Network Literacy CoP:** An overall report on the activity, goals and objectives for the Network Literacy CoP can be found in the summary: <http://create.extension.org/node/87343>. Highlights include the development of a value system for the CoP, a discussion of the deliverables that are to be produced, the design for the marketing windowshade which includes the below word cloud, creating an evaluation plan, discussed peer review editing, copyright/licensing, developed an early persona (AleX NetLit) to help tell the “story” of working in the networked environment, discussed the eXtension tool Ask and Expert and how the CoP will participate in this work, and conducted a “pre-mortem” exercise to identify potential roadblocks and challenges to success.

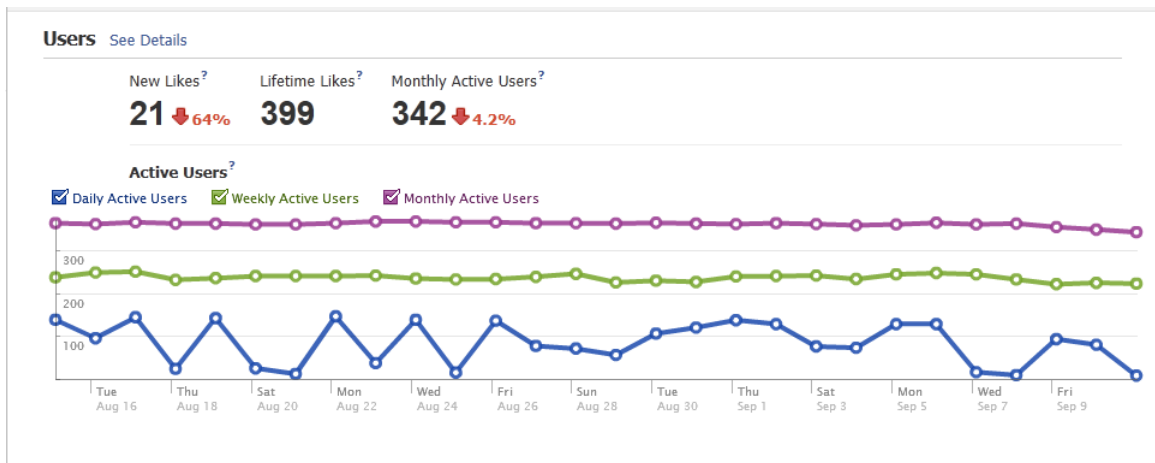


- **Child Care Concentration Area:** This CA has been moving forward in their social media efforts at a quick pace. They have been active in social spaces, posted blogs, and educating themselves on best practices. They have initiated efforts to gather information about working in the network from child care professionals (engaging in social media spaces is a *deliverable*). They now have a literacy specialist assisting them on creating a searchable list of children’s books (*deliverable*) and have explored existing databases and search terms. Current content at eXtension.org associated with child care is under continued review for appropriate re-purposing and re-tagging (*deliverable*). The Child Care CA is working with eXtension staff to begin creating an online course (*deliverable*).

Webinar topics have been identified and are awaiting approval from DoD. They have already created a report of online state training approval requirements and have begun to identify modifications to this training and web conferences to meet those requirements (*deliverable*).

- Growth and Maintenance of the Military Families Learning Network:** Each CA has created the design for a windowshade/banner for marketing purposes. After the content, graphics, and other materials are organized, these rough designs will be submitted to WSU and their Communications and Marketing staff through the Resource Site for their input and final drafts and ultimately the creation of these banners. They continue to work on creating content (FAQs, articles, social media pieces, etc.) as well as webinar/web conference topics and schedules for these events. The Concentration Leaders continue to work in a variety of areas including “listening” in various DoD/branch service online spaces to inform their own work.
- Evaluation:** Sarah has spent a significant amount of time developing and fine-tuning the evaluation plan and model to implement it. She has been given considerable latitude to develop this plan, with the encouragement of the MFLN and eXtension leadership, and it is quite comprehensive. It will be shared at the appropriate time when completed.

Facebook activity has increased since the last reporting period.



Interactions on the Facebook page, a better measure of relationship building than users or views, included 20 posts with 20 comments/likes between 15AUG-11SEP, with 16,890 post views, a 57% increase from the previous month. There has been a steady increase in interactions on the facebook page, so efforts to increase interactions and ultimately engagement are beginning to show results. Feedback is increasing, although slight, as the CLs are more active.

The eXtension MFLN site (<http://www.extension.org/militaryfamilies>) continues to show dramatic increases in pageviews (up 236% over last month). A total of 77 pages were viewed a total of 2,663 times during this reporting period.

### *3. Action still needed to complete the current deliverable(s)*

- **Overall Assessment of Action Still Needed:** The most significant action still needed to complete the deliverables is in the planning stages as this report is being drafted. Web conferences with key DoD staff are being scheduled with each of the Concentration Areas and the Network Literacy CoP to open up two-way communication to inform the plans to implement each plan of work associated with *Personal Finance, Child Care, Family & Youth Development, and Network Literacy*. Research continues in each area related to technology use, working in the networked environment, subject matter needs for military family service professionals, re-purposing of content. The coming months will provide much needed information now that staff are onboard and communication is active with DoD and NIFA.

### *4. Relevant challenges that need attention from DoD/NIFA*

- Scheduling is underway for the follow-up web conferences with Program Mangers and military staff and will be reported to DoD as they are confirmed. As previously stated, there will be a need to identify DoD/branch service staff that may participate with the various CAs as they plan for individual webinars/web conferences as articulated in their Plans of Work. As topics for these presentations have been identified for some of the CAs, this process can begin. As others formulate, conversations with DoD subject matter experts will be necessary.

### *5. Success stories that would be of interest to USDA and or DoD Leadership*

- A total of 8 blogs have been posted as of 15 September (since the site went live). The following are titles of those posts:
  - Network Literacy Critical in New Information Era
  - Military Family Caregiving
  - Reflections of 9/11
  - Safe Online Banking for Military Families
  - From Chaos to Community
  - New Free Personal Finance App from Army OneSource and Military Saves!
  - What Do Military Families Say They Need for Family Education and Support?

- What is the Military Families Learning Network?

Forthcoming blogs include topics such as the power of online networks, parental deployment and implications for military family service workers, deployment as seen from a youth perspective, special pay issues, and a family service career perspective on how it all fits (family, military, service professional).