



*Mainland BC*

# **Military Family Resource Centre**

## **News release**

Oct. 16, 2017

### **BCMFRC puts families first with emergency preparedness training for loved ones of military and first responders**

Kelowna, BC – In times of crisis and natural disasters such as the recent spate of wildfires, we rely on the help of military members and first responders to keep us safe. But while they're looking after us, who's looking after their loved ones?

The Mainland BC Military Family Resource Centre (BCMFRC) is putting families first and mustering the first ever emergency preparedness session in Kelowna designed to meet the specific needs of families of military members and first responders in emergency situations.

"During a crisis, the natural reaction for families is to gather together as quickly as possible. However, for families of military members and first responders, that instinct often must be temporarily set aside so service can be given to others. BCMFRC is presenting this session to ensure family members are equally prepared when they become the ones left behind," said Tracy Cromwell, executive director of BCMFRC.

The lives of military and first responder families are unique in light of the combination of stressors they face that may include frequent relocations, persistent short and long-term separation, and the constant risk involved in training and deployed operations. In a thesis examining how military and first responders endeavour to balance professional and personal duties, author Joseph Shorrocks concluded that personal and family disaster preparedness and planning was found to significantly reduce the professional's perceived role strain and conflict.

Captain Jeffrey Daley, an adjutant/operations officer stationed in Kelowna with the Canadian Armed Forces British Columbia Dragoons, is a living example of the impact of being separated from family while serving country and community. Deployed five times internationally and three times domestically, he has also been the force generator for the local reserve unit and sent troops to assist with the BC forest fires. Over the course of his career, he has missed his children's births and supported from overseas his wife's transition to leading the household and making command decisions on her own without her spouse.

For him personally and professionally, the upcoming emergency preparedness session is vital in enabling him to serve his country and community to the fullest capacity.

"Self-sufficiency is the key takeaway of this important session. If our families cannot be self-sufficient, then it makes us less effective," said Captain Daley. "To explain, a soldier will want to take care of his or her family if he or she knows they cannot support themselves and will not want to deploy. We have to know our families are safe so we can help others. If I know my family is good, then my country knows it can count on me 24/7 doing what needs to be done."

The emergency preparedness session for families of military members and first responders takes place in Kelowna on Oct. 28, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Okanagan Regional Library – Kelowna Branch at 1380 Ellis Street. To find out more and/or sign up, go to [www.bcmfrc.com](http://www.bcmfrc.com).

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