



News Release

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ECBC Workforce Dedicate Professional, Personal Lives to Being Good Global Citizens, Neighbors

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. — As the premier national resource for chemical and biological defense, the leadership and workforce of the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) protect the Nation, the warfighter and the world from lethal threats every day. But employees' drive to make the world a better and safer place is not limited to their work at ECBC — they make the same effort in their personal lives.

ECBC has been recognized for numerous volunteer efforts with accolades such as the Harford County Good Neighbor award, a certificate of appreciation from Cecil County for "service and commitment to the success of young people" and recognition from the Armed Services Blood Program for five successful blood drives, benefiting soldiers with more than 300 units of blood.

Without the high level of support and encouragement from the Center's leaders, employees like Ray Mastnjak wouldn't be able to dedicate so much of themselves to volunteerism.

"I am very appreciative that my leadership has allowed me to continually take a six-month sabbatical to travel to Namibia, Africa where my wife, Debra, and I volunteer at the Children of Zion Orphanage," Mastnjak said.

While in Namibia, Mastnjak and his wife support more than 50 AIDS-infected orphans between the ages of one and 15 by administering medication, teaching them agriculture, constructing schools for them and organizing computer labs for their use.

"We're grateful we've had the opportunity to see the orphanage grow in facilities and capabilities over time," Mastnjak said. "I am certain this would not be possible in many other organizations."

In addition to supporting employees with a desire to volunteer, many of ECBC's senior leaders have taken it upon themselves to put their boots to the pavement and volunteer their own time.

In the spring of 2009 ECBC Technical Director Rick Decker was nominated for Gov. Martin O'Malley's "Volunteer of the Year" award and was presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for his hard work and dedication in maintaining trails at Gunpowder Falls State Park in Kingsville, Md.

"I felt that I couldn't stand in front of 1,700 employees and encourage them to volunteer their time

if I was not doing the same,” Decker said.

Recently, Decker’s engineering background was put to good use when, with the help of other volunteers, he created a new three-mile trail to a forgotten area of the park where falls are now enjoyed by Harford Country’s horse riders, mountain bikers and runners.

“ECBC employees really have a unique set of skills to contribute in their volunteer efforts,” said Mary Doak, the Center’s program manager for community and educational outreach. “From participation in science fairs and mentoring programs to bird banding — which enables scientists to learn about the movement and habitat needs of different species of birds — the workforce is eager to share their knowledge, talent and generosity.”

Combining the opportunity to mentor local students and apply technical expertise outside of the lab, Mike Simini, Ph.D., ECBC research biological scientist, supports Forest Hill Elementary School’s Environmental Club on Earth Day by conducting a presentation focused on potential sources of pollution for local water supplies. Other employees dedicate their time to scout leadership, lecturing at high school-level science technology engineering and mathematics programs or participating as judges at local science fairs.

“By volunteering, ECBC leadership and employees reinforce the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage,” said Doak.

For more information about ECBC’s community and educational outreach initiatives, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

ECBC is the Army’s principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a US Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our Web site at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil> or call (410) 436-3610.

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