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MHCC feeds families through community collaborative efforts



PHOTO BY BOBBY JONES

More than 100 volunteers served residents by providing a helping hand in distributing more than 600 turkeys with fixings during the Sixth Annual Turkey Giveaway at the Marlow Heights Community Center Nov. 19.

By **BOBBY JONES**
Staff Photojournalist

On Nov. 19, William Dunn, Marlow Heights Community Center (MHCC) facility director accomplished the objective of feeding the community during his Annual Turkey Giveaway through the collaborative efforts of family services, local businesses, non-profit organizations, police departments, churches, local radio stations, recording artists and individual donations.

Dunn's vision, which started after

see **GIVEAWAY**, page 8

Warrior CARE week shows strength through teamwork

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS GABRIELLE SPALDING**
11th Wing Public Affairs

Team Andrews partnered with the U.S. Air Force Wounded Warrior Program for the North East Warrior CARE Event, held at Joint Base Andrews and Oxon Hill, Maryland, Nov. 13 through 17.

CARE events provide service to seriously wounded, ill and injured Airmen as well as veterans and their caregivers through caregiver support training, adaptive and rehabilitative sports events, recovering Airman mentorship training, and employment and career readiness classes.

"These events are meant to show warriors new ways to cope and give them tools to help with their recovery," said Marsha Gonzales, Warrior Care Support branch chief. "They will find out that the issues they deal with are being experienced by others and learn new ways to [handle] with them."

The week began with an opening ceremony during which Gen. David L. Goldfein, U.S. Air Force chief of staff, and his spouse, Dawn Goldfein, stood alongside wounded warriors and members of the JBA community in a show



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER HURD

Air Force wounded warriors practice bumps and sets during a volleyball training session at Joint Base Andrews Nov. 14. The training session was part of North East Warrior Care Week which provided attendees with mental, physical and emotional recovery services.

of support.

Following the ceremony, warriors joined together to train in various sports such as wheelchair basketball, golf, sitting volleyball and archery across JBA. For Warrior athletes, the physical aspect of healing coincides with the mental.

"The adaptive sports altogether allow

me to take my mind off all of the stressors that are going on in my life," said Frederic Rosario, AFW2 sports mentor and athlete. "They allow me to relax as well as help with physical conditioning. When we win, it helps me with my morale."

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PHOTO BY ARTHUR MONDALE

From left, Houston Pirrung and Jack Kirkbride, became the 21st and 22nd "Pilot for a Day" honorees at Joint Base Andrews on Nov. 17. They were honored for their determination, friendship and remarkable brotherhood while undergoing leukemia treatments at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

Childhood cancer survivors turned 'battle buddies' earn wings at JBA

By **ARTHUR MONDALE**
DC Military Staff Writer

Houston Pirrung and Jack Kirkbride are two six year olds who acquired a warrior spirit very early. Pirrung was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in July 2016; Kirkbride was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia in August 2015. Their paths would cross while undergoing leukemia treatments at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. The kid warriors became wingmen and "battle buddies," fighting cancer together.

"(Undergoing treatment) is a journey — it's got its up and its downs — but they found a lot of strength from each other," said Staff Sgt. Zachary Pirrung, father of Houston, who is stationed at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. "And I as a parent found strength in their journey."

"You see adults wither because of similar circumstances, but that's not how kids are — kids are very resilient and bounce back," added Matt Kirkbride, father of Jack.

They have a rejuvenation to teach parents and adults. And a focus on what's next in life. On Nov. 17, Houston and Jack became the 21st and 22nd "Pilot for a Day" honorees at Joint Base Andrews. Honored for their determination, friendship and remarkable brotherhood in the face of life-threatening adversity. Currently, Houston is in the maintenance phase of treatment whereas Jack, after undergoing bone marrow transplants and other treatments, is still battling leukemia.

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