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DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

NEWS RELEASE



The Masters Workshop, located at 2525 Lipscomb Street in Melbourne, recently visited DEOMI and other units located on Patrick Air Force Base. Children attending the Workshop gain much in character development from community involvement in the program. SGM April Ivory, far left, DEOMI's Senior Enlisted Advisor, was the first of several joint-service members from the Institute to interact with the students on a very personal basis. (Photo by Michael Marks, DEOMI).

SGM Ivory: 'You can get here from there'

DEOMI, 45th Space Wing partner to spread positive messaging

**BY Christopher Calkins
DEOMI Public Affairs**

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE. Fla.—

- The power of positive thinking.

- Don't ever give up.
- Respect yourself and those around you.
- The only one who can keep you from achieving your life's dreams and goals is ... you.
- A solid education is the key to your future success.

Time and again, first here in the DEOMI Auditorium, then during visits and back-and-forth interactions with personnel from the 45th Space Wing's Chaplain's Office, Fire Department and the K-9 Demonstration Team, these Master's Workshop students listened to a non-stop litany of positive messaging and the sharing of some very personal stories of "overcoming."



Army SGM April Ivory, DEOMI Senior Enlisted Advisor, was the first to speak.

"First off, let me give a big thanks and a salute to all the people who helped arrange this tour and to the 45th Space Wing personnel who helped make this a very special day. The Space Coast truly embraces our military presence and it's our pleasure to give back when we can," she said.

She then got personal about what it was like for her growing up in Richmond, Va. And it seemed to hit home.

"I'll be honest, there were many roads I could've taken that wouldn't have been successful in the long run. Thankfully, I had folks in my life who kept me focused on doing the right things. I had many friends who didn't make that decision, or have those kind of people in their corner and they're still paying for it today," she said.

"Probably in my wildest dreams did I ever think I'd be where I am right here and now.

"I'm living proof that you can get here from there," she added. "It's on you to control how temporary your "there" is. Just know you're surrounded by folks who will do everything they can to make you successful. Please take advantage of your opportunities and if you can't change the people around you ... *change* the people around you," she said with emphasis.

Next stop on the agenda was a visit to the Wing K-9 Demonstration Team at their state-of-the-art facility, where the group was met and briefed by Tech. Sgt. Robert Ford.

There, Ford and his team patiently answered question after question and asked if anyone in the crowd wanted to put on the "protective suit."

When none of the visitors "volunteered," Army Staff Sgt. Thierry Kenge, (right) a DEOMI personnel Soldier, raised his hand and in a very controlled situation, with K-9 Airman in charge, he donned the suit to the delight of the kids watching.



"I was a little apprehensive but I knew the Air Force Security folks were there and that gave me confidence and I trusted them. Trust is exactly how the military works and that's what we wanted these kids to see," he said.

After lunch, the tour continued at the Chapel's office, and the Fire Department on Base.



Once again, the Masters Workshop visitors were allowed to interact with their hosts in a wide variety of topics and planning for their future.

None of these efforts, from every stop they made, was lost on Ms. Janet Marks, the Masters Workshop director who requested the tour.

“There is no way I can put into words how impressed and grateful we are for what all these people did for these children today,” said Ms. Marks.

“We can all watch videos and see things on line but when you factor in the human element, and personally hear the testimonials of how these professionals (PO1 Lydia Moore, right) overcame obstacles in their own lives, it’s just a whole new experience for many of our kids,” she said.

“I have two words for everyone who took part in this visit. THANK YOU!”



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