

Mr. Hines and Mr. Kerslake,

My name is Michael and I am currently assigned in one of the Rescue Squadrons here at Davis-Monthan. I was deployed over much of the fall and my wife caught an email flyer detailing Operation Cope. We agreed it looked interesting and signed up with the Chapel, largely not knowing what to expect.

I returned in late December, so the timing could not have been more perfect for our participation. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to spend some time together as a family reconnecting, with the Chapel staff there to help with some sessions giving us tools to better reconnect. The whole experience was very memorable.

When I asked the Chapel staff how the event was funded, I was surprised. Chaplain Butler detailed that it was largely funded through grants from your organizations and I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your support. As an Air Force member who has deployed multiple times, I have often felt support from our great country, but never in a more tangible way. The thought that there are organizations that would work to raise the funds to do nothing but let a group of Air Force members relax and reconnect with their families, while providing them with the tools to better deal with the stresses of deployment, really left me speechless.

To give you a concrete example of how the event helped me - the staff briefers brought up some thoughts on reintegrating with a teen age son who has taken on a "man of the house" role. I had been having trouble with my 14 year old which I could not characterize - the staff description fit exactly into his behavior and they gave me some tools to better bring my family back together. My wife and I each could share other examples - in addition to the invaluable time just being in a secluded setting, being together as a family.

Please pass on my thanks to your organizations and your donors. It is humbling knowing that there are good folks like you out there who care so much about the service members on Davis-Monthan to contribute so generously financially. My family was richly blessed by your gift.

Thanks again

Michael