

Message from the Club President

Our son, Andrew, was always a student of flight. Even as a toddler everything he played with was some sort of flying machine. As he grew and learned to read, he read about flying. Like a sponge he soaked up all he could about planes. So, when he reached middle school he started putting two and two together. Flying, school. School, flying. The Air Force Academy! Done! That is where he would go.

He spent the next 6 years gearing his academics and extra curricular activities towards acceptance into the Academy. He worked hard. He would check his on line application status daily and in March of his senior year, his dream came true! Appointment granted! To say we were happy, proud, and, yes, a little scared would be an understatement. There was no doubt in his mind. This would be the place for him. He was going and he was going to fly for the United States Air Force.

So now, as parents, we were faced with his decision. We supported him in everything he did, but this one was a doozy! We were invited by the Parents Club to a luncheon to honor the recent graduates and welcome the new appointees. It was a wonderful event and the Board and its members couldn't have been more gracious. We were feeling a little bit better about the whole thing. Then we come to his departure.

It was the most difficult day of our lives. The emotions are incredible. Again, the pride and fear are mixed together. This is not like sending your child off to some regular university. Not even close. Your friends may be sending their children off, but not in June...just 10 days after they graduated from high school. It's an experience only military academy parents will know about. Hence the Parent's Club.

Because this experience is like no other, you need a group of people who will reassure you that things are okay and that you and your cadet will be fine. We were once again invited to a club event, a potluck, while our son was in the middle of basic training. Again, the get together was fantastic. Our questions were answered and our fears were eased by the parents who had "been there and done that!" To know that what you are feeling and experiencing is universal to cadet parents is reassuring. We were not alone. We were with families like ours.

Joining the USAFA Parent's Club of Los Angeles County is important way to keep in touch with what was going on with the Academy. Several events are held throughout the year. Along with the Graduate/Appointee luncheon and Potluck, we have Saturday coffees where we meet at someone's home and just visit and talk about what each cadet is doing. This is a great time to meet the other families and hear stories from all different points of view. There is an All Academies Ball in December; a formal dinner/dance with cadets and midshipmen from all five of the service academies. We've even had tailgate parties at the home football game during Parent's Weekend on Labor Weekend.

The club is a warm and gracious group of people who share a common interest: a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy. We hope if you haven't done so already, that you will join the Parent's Club. You will be a part of a great group of people. We are all so very proud of our sons and daughters for their choice and for their commitment to our country.

We, our son as well as us, have survived basic training; survived that Doolie year. We thrive now and we look forward to the incredible words, "Class of 2010, dismissed!"

Warm regards,
Dan & Geri Novak
President, USAFA Parent's Club of Southern California
C2C Andrew Novak