

The Luke Air Force Base Thunderbolt

Train The World's Greatest F-16 Fighter Pilots and Maintainers, While Deploying Mission Ready Warfighters

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Fighter Country Partnership gives back to Luke community

by Senior Airman
TONG DUONG

Thunderbolt staff writer

Over the last 14 years a local, nonprofit organization has played a vital part in helping give back to Airmen and their families at Luke Air Force Base in more ways than one.

Fighter Country Partnership is an organization founded in 1997 by a group of concerned civic, business and elected community members who wanted to ensure Luke's future in Arizona.

That mission to protect Luke remains strong today, according to Nancy Arreola, FCP office manager.

"Our goal is to provide a high level of support for the men, women and families of Luke while protecting and enhancing the base's mission to train the world's greatest F-16 Fighting Falcon pilots and maintainers," Ms. Arreola said.

FCP has raised community awareness of the importance of Luke to the local and state economy as well as the base's important role in national security. Ongoing partnerships with citizens, local employers and municipal leaders are critical to keeping the Luke mission a priority in the minds of decision-makers and all Arizonans, she said.

With more than 300 members ranging from business professionals, elected officials, military veterans and retirees, as well as a diverse group of other local citizens, FCP provides funding for many pro-

grams that help Luke Thunderbolts such as Operation Thunderbox, Luke Airman Fund and the Unit Spouse and Family Fund.

"Many of these important programs might not otherwise be funded due to the drastic budget cutbacks the Air Force has recently experienced," Ms. Arreola said. "FCP also provides financial and manpower support at events such as the Luke Day's Open House, the Air Force Ball, Airmen of the year awards ceremony and other community outreach programs."

According to Steve Yamamori, FCP CEO and executive director, the Fighter Country Foundation was founded in 2006 to honor, serve and support the men and women of Luke with programs designed to aid, educate and integrate them for the duration of their stay in the community. The foundation has recently been added to the Combined Federal Campaign as a benefactor in the program.

FCP's programs have been very effective in meeting the needs of Luke families and are finding new and strategic ways to be more successful every day, Ms. Arreola said. FCP has joined forces with 13 West Valley municipalities and Maricopa County to launch Luke Forward, a community-based effort to show support for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter as a follow on mission to the F-16. More information about Luke Forward is available at www.LukeForward.com.

For more information about FCP, call (623) 882-2191 or visit www.FighterCountry.org.