DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALL SQUADRON COMMANDERS AND FIRST SERGEANTS

SUBJECT: Key Spouse Program

I believe squadrons are the backbone of our Air Force. While you lead and connect with your Airmen, also remember you have something in your tool kit that joins you to their families—key spouses. I believe spouses' incredible breadth of experience and enduring influence are invaluable to you as a commander during this pivotal time of great change. With this smart, talented, engaged group of spouses who represent the bedrock of our Airmen, key spouses are bridging a gap to ensure that you know of any concerns that would impact morale and readiness.

Building community capacity is commanders' business—and it is vital. The success of this program is based on how it's implemented in YOUR unit. I expect you to sit down within the first 30 days of command and determine what your unit needs. What is your deployment rate? How many people do you have working 12 hour shifts? Have you appointed a Key Spouse? Is he or she a visible part of your leadership team? All questions I may ask you during future base visits and I hope your Wing and Group commanders are asking too.

Our military services are under a great amount of stress. We have experienced the longest sustained combat operations in history. As our Nation works through each crisis, we will need to focus on communication and leadership challenges. Your active involvement in the Key Spouse program encourages a stronger sense of community through spouse-to-spouse support networks and helps us build a more resilient force. But, I expect you to do the job your way, with your personality, and with your ideas. The bottom line is that Airmen have to be really good at what they do. And we need to be really good at taking care of their families. When that happens, we win. This is a team sport--make sure communication never stops. We recruit Airmen but retain families and have a sacred commitment to care for both.

Thanks for leading 'em!

Mark A. Welsh III

MARK A. WELSH III
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

cc: Wing Commanders
Command Chiefs