

NETPDC NEWS

Public Affairs Office
6490 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32509

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850-473-6103

Contact: Katrina Gergely

katrina.gergely@navy.mil

Beulah Elementary Students Compose Letters of Support to Navy Recruits

Story by Katrina Gergely, Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC)

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Beulah Elementary, a local Pensacola, Fla. school, recently participated in a writing project to promote individual student support focused on creating happiness and motivation within U.S. Navy recruits beginning basic training in Great Lakes, Ill.

The writing project was established last year after being proposed by one of the students as an idea for an assignment. Other Beulah students eagerly supported the idea and wanted to help by providing emotional support to the recruits, while also learning the formalities of writing letters.

The writing project was administered by one of Beulah’s instructors, Krystal Gibson, to her 5th grade class. The assignment consisted of the student sharing information about themselves, transitioning into words of support for those who serve their country, followed by questions about the recruits' life and goals. Each letter closed with at least two jokes to make the recruits smile and boost morale.

Captain Kertreck Brooks, Commanding Officer of the Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC), accompanied by Command Master Chief Gregory Prichard, paid a visit to the class supporting the project at Beulah Elementary School on January 25th. “My visit is motivated by my devotion to helping Navy recruits adapt to the sudden life changes they’ll experience in boot camp” said Brooks. “It’s important for me to express my appreciation to the students for their participation and thoughtfulness towards the Navy recruits.” Prior to transferring to NETPDC, Brooks previously served as the Executive Officer of Recruit Training Command at Great Lakes, Ill., from February 2013 to June 2015.

The classroom visit opened with descriptions of the recruits’ daily routine in boot camp. As the former executive officer, Brooks was able to provide details about recruit life, explaining that all 80 recruits must sleep together within one large shared room. He also shared that recruits begin their day at 6 a.m. with continuous training lasting until 10 p.m. each day, seven days a week. He also shared how exhausting Navy recruit training is physically and mentally, especially

with the lack of emotional support from friends and family.

One of the descriptive points Brooks emphasized was the procedure that takes place when the new recruit arrives at the Great Lakes basic training facility. “Upon arrival, all of the recruits are allowed to make one final phone call home to their family, then all of their personal belongings, including their cell phones, are boxed up and mailed home,” he explained. “The only form of communication left is by mail, which has made Mail Call a special event for the recruits.”

Brooks went on to tell the students how their letters would now become a welcomed addition to that special event and add greatly to the emotional support of the recruits. The students were then invited to read their letters to the class, followed by a question and answer session. The student’s letters will be mailed along with letters from NETPDC employees in early February to the Navy recruits in Great Lakes, Ill.

For more information on NETPDC visit: <https://www.netc.navy.mil/netc/netpdc/Default.htm>

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PENSACOLA, Fla. (Jan. 25, 2019) Captain Kertreck Brooks, Commanding Officer of Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC), standing left, accompanied by Command Master Chief Gregory Prichard, standing right, visited Beulah Elementary School students to thank them

for the personal letters they wrote to recruits currently going through Navy basic training at Great Lakes, Ill. (U.S. Navy photo by Julian Huff/released)