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FOR ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMERICAN GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION PROVIDES A “THE SKY’S THE LIMIT” CAMP GALAXY DAY FOR CHILDREN OF DEPLOYED AIR NATIONAL GUARD

NEW YORK, September 6, 2012 – Members of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) once again provided a Camp Galaxy Resiliency Day “The Sky’s the Limit” on August 14, 2012 for the children of deployed Guard members at the 106th Air National Guard Wing at Gabreski Air Force base in Westhampton Beach N.Y. as well as children from military parents in any of the services in the New York area.

This multiple-award winning program, which received the 2012 Social Responsibility Award through the New York Society of Association Executives and was recognized by the American Society of Association Executive’s Associations Advance America program, was adapted from the GOALS (Going On After Loss) support program used with families after 9/11, to a Going On During War one-day program for military children. It is part of ongoing efforts to translate effective 9/11 programs to the needs of military families.

The goal of “The Sky’s the Limit” AGPA Camp Galaxy Day was to foster resiliency, connection and coping through the use of metaphor, interesting activities, competitions and fun exercises. The program invited celebration of individual strengths as well as the value and potential of working as a group, family and large military family. In keeping with the Navy/Air theme, the children, ranging in ages from 8 to 16 were divided into squadrons named Alpha, Bravo, Delta, Echo, etc. Throughout the day, activities were provided as “missions” with briefings to set the stage, tasks for problem solving, connecting and strategizing and follow-up debriefings to discuss what happened, tally scores, and compare results with other squadrons – all of which were doing different missions at different times.

50 children enjoyed the day of activities with the AGPA team working side by side with military personnel from the 106th as well as a team of 14 Junior Counselors. The involvement of the Junior Counselors was particularly special as they were known to the AGPA team from previous Camp Galaxy Days and were now helping for the day as well as receiving their own advanced training in leadership skills.

“The children, the AGPA Leaders and the 106th military helpers were clearly a group on a mission to prove “The Sky’s the Limit,” said Dr. Suzanne Phillips, Co-Chair of AGPA’s Community Outreach Task Force and leader of the team that coordinated the day’s activities. “The enthusiasm of the children, the response of the parents in military fatigues picking them up, and the Base Commander’s visit at 5 PM to personally thank us for returning again this year, show that when supported to work together as a group, children can reach pretty far!”

Dr. Phillips was joined in coordinating the day's activities by Marney Rhoda, Art and Program Director and Lisa D'Agostino, Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager at Gabreski Air Force Base. Additional team members included Michael Crisci, Melissa Defalco, Gila Fishman, Jessica Koblenz, Aynsia Leonardo, Meredith Pierson, and Konata Stallings.

This program was supported in part by the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health to continue the valuable community outreach work being carried out by AGPA members nationally and internationally to a variety of communities in need. To support this work and to find out more about AGPA programs and services, please visit our website at www.agpa.org or contact Diane Feirman at the association office at 877-668-AGPA (2472).

About AGPA

The American Group Psychotherapy Association is the foremost professional association dedicated to the field of group psychotherapy, operating through a tri-partite structure: AGPA, a professional and educational organization; the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, its philanthropic arm; and the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists, a standard setting and certifying body. This multidisciplinary association has over 3,000 members, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, clinical mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, pastoral counselors and creative arts therapists, many of whom have been recognized as specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential. The association has 31 local and regional societies located across the country. Its members are experienced mental health professionals who lead psychotherapy groups and various non-clinical groups. Many are organizational specialists who work with businesses, not-for-profit organizations, communities and other "natural" groups to help them improve their functioning.

About the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

The Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health is a philanthropic organization dedicated to changing lives through therapeutic group work by advancing the most effective and innovative approaches to group therapy education, training, research and community outreach. Among the Foundation's most vital roles is the recognition of excellence, promise, and vision by honoring those individuals and groups who have demonstrated these qualities with awards and scholarships.

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