



HEARTLIGHTS

from Friends of SCMFO

San Clemente Military Family Outreach 2001 Calle Frontera San Clemente CA 92673

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This is getting Personal! Yes, almost all the efforts to aid needy military families are very personal. When you're hurting and in crisis, no one likes to ask for help. But when crippling emergencies arise, there are no easy alternatives.

This isn't a handout, but a hand up. When a call comes in to San Clemente Military Family Outreach-- whether from a Camp Pendleton family in distress, referral from an on-base unit or Family Readiness, or from a partnering agency or assistance league-- the Outreach deals with the immediate need and interacts with other service organizations to implement a course of action. Many are channeled to Navy and Marine Corps Relief to set up a family budget for those nearing the brink. Applicants who are at a critical stage, however, and cannot qualify for other assistance, find a lifeline with SCMFO. That includes providing help to pay for groceries, gas, diapers, clothing, car repair, dental work for dependents and other unexpected expenses. Gift cards for the base commissary, Walmart, and Target also come into play. Most bolster strong but struggling families, helping moms and kids navigate extreme times and reinforce the family unit. A few, though, provide humanitarian assistance when a family unit has fractured. In one extreme example, a young Marine, just transferred from Camp LeJeune, found his wife had abandoned him and left him with a 9-month-old child who had a hydrocephalic condition and serious needs. Understandably in a state of shock when interviewed by SCMFO, the Marine had the baby in the barracks with him, was without money after medical bills, had inadequate baby clothing and only two blankets. In a matter of hours, he was provided assistance and guidance, financial and legal counseling, clothing and baby supplies, commissary and gas gift cards, and blankets and toys for the baby. Meanwhile, his unit commander expedited the mechanics to get base housing for the two, and what had been an impossible situation was pointed toward resolution. It's a tall order for an all-volunteer organization, but the work gets done. The difficult challenges are addressed immediately. The impossible take a little longer.