

NMCRS needs volunteers to make a difference

Contributed by Lance Cpl. Michael Atchue , Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton
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The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society continues to aid and assist the financial needs of service members across the Navy and Marine Corps, but Camp Pendleton's branch needs help.

Base's NMCRS is looking for at least 30 new volunteers between now and May to continue to meet and surpass their goals.

The NMCRS is a worldwide, private, non-profit charitable organization whose sole purpose is to help Marines, sailors and their family members with immediate emergency needs.

Since 1904, the Society has provided services, to eligible members of the Naval Services, such as interest-free loans, grants, scholarships, budget counseling, food assistance, home nursing services and thrift shops.

"To accomplish this important work, the Society recognizes that volunteers provide great energy to accomplishing our mission," said Michael Hire, director, NMCRS, Camp Pendleton. "Without sufficient volunteers the Society cannot meet the demand for services."

Currently the base's NMCRS has two offices and a thrift shop. The offices are located in Mainside and the School of Infantry, and the thrift shop is located near the Naval Hospital.

The 82 volunteer work-force contributes to the society as receptionists, case workers, budget counselors, teachers and they also work at the thrift shops, sorting donations, stocking shelves and working the registers.

The volunteer workforce of the NMCRS is in constant fluctuation because of the demands of the military that include permanent change of station moves, deployments and other life obligations such as work or school.

“Our volunteer staff is comprised of approximately 60 percent military spouses” said Megan Hartwell, chair of volunteers, NMCRS, Camp Pendleton. “We will lose about a third of our volunteers starting in May.”

Volunteers of the NMCRS can give as much time as they find appropriate while continuing their everyday lives, said Hire. The base’s average volunteer gives four hours, twice a week.

The benefits of volunteering include helping those in need, developing new skills, improving existing talents and making a difference for Marines and sailors.

For those unable to donate time to the Society, the NMCRS is holding its annual fund drive in the coming months to help fund the program. To donate funds, visit their Web site at www.nmcrs.org or by visiting the nearest Society location.

Base occupants interested in volunteering their time can either all of visit the Mainside office at 760-725-5337 or the SOI office at 760-725-7497.