

UMUC PARTNERS WITH BLEWITT FOUNDATION TO SERVE AMERICA'S MILITARY FAMILIES

BY CHIP CASSANO

University of Maryland University College has partnered with The Blewitt Foundation—and its founder and CEO, former UMUC Alumnus of the Year Richard F. Blewitt—in a unique program, titled Destination R&R, that seeks to bring hope to the families of U.S. military personnel who lost their lives or were injured in service to their country. More than 100 military family members are scheduled to attend the first all-expenses-paid retreat, August 5-9, 2007, at the Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City, Maryland.

"Many of these brave men and women have experienced catastrophic loss and sustained severe injuries on active duty," said Blewitt. "Destination R&R is designed to give these brave warriors and their families an exciting, fun-filled family escape from the grim and difficult realities of life. We intend to provide participating adults and children the experience of a lifetime and convey—on behalf of our country—our profound gratitude for the sacrifices they have all made to ensure and protect the many benefits of freedom that we all enjoy."

The five-day retreat will emphasize fun, featuring a concert by the Fabulous Hubcaps, an outing to Baltimore's Camden Yards to see the Baltimore Orioles



play, a visit to the Baltimore Aquarium, and more. But Destination R&R offers more than simple recreation. Another co-sponsor, the Josephson Institute of Ethics, will present its acclaimed

Character Counts! program, and UMUC will provide computer training, personal financial management instruction, and volunteer support to families facing loss and change.

"UMUC is pleased to support The Blewitt Foundation's efforts to provide special comfort, enjoyment, and enrichment opportunities for U.S. military families, especially those who have suffered the loss or serious injury of a family member," said UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge. "Since its inception in 1947, UMUC has enjoyed a very special relationship with the U.S. Armed Forces. We were the first, and continue to be the principal, provider of voluntary higher education services to U.S. military personnel and their families stationed overseas. . . . We welcome the opportunity to work with The Blewitt Foundation to provide a different type of service to our military families."

Destination R&R is The Blewitt Foundation's charter program, and Blewitt is optimistic about its future. It has already drawn praise from the U.S. Department of Defense and been called "one of a kind" by the National Military Family Association, which manages the selection process for Destination R&R and also co-sponsors the program.

For more information about Destination R&R and how you can help, visit www.theblewittfoundation.org.