

Rebecca (Wood) Callahan lives in Iwakuni, Japan, where her husband is stationed with the Marine Corps. During a tour of duty in Arizona, Callahan “became a mentor for the Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) program. I conducted classes for new Marine Corps (and some Navy) spouses on this ‘strange’ and unique lifestyle. In Japan, I am still a MCFTB trainer, but I do not have as much hands on work with the local team. Instead, I am one of ten trainers who go to various bases and sites to train new mentors and team leaders. This has been a very rewarding job.”

She has taken her volunteer opportunities seriously. “I am now also the key volunteer coordinator for Marine Air Group 12 in Iwakuni—the official liaison between the commanding officer and families and spouses of the group. I ensure that families are taken care of and that vital information is passed to them.”

This is in addition to her own family responsibilities. “Since my children are now in school full-time, I have become a substitute teacher for the elementary school here. I would like to continue my higher education, but my husband has not been stationed in areas that are conducive to obtaining the graduate degree I would like. Internet schools are becoming more numerous and with higher quality degree programs, so perhaps someday I will be able to do most of my graduate work in that manner,” said Callahan.

She received her degree in international relations from the Kennedy Center in 1987. “My degree opened the door at Syscon. However, because it was not a technical degree, I could not expect to be paid very well at that type of company. I did receive great experiences while there though, so it was worth it.

“I worked on the defense contract side of the company where I began as test information manager in support of integration and certification testing, conducted at the Land Based Evaluation Facility (LBEF) at TRICCSMA in Newport, Rhode Island (no longer active due to downsizing). I then served as a project manager and contract liaison for the Central Data Repository. Eventually, the contract I was assigned to was converted to government positions. I moved to offices in Middletown, where I served in several management positions.

“In 1996, my husband was transferred to Virginia. I had every intention of staying home during this time, but Syscon asked if I would telecommute from my home. I was thrilled to be able to continue working and yet stay home to be with our children during my husband’s many absences,” explained Callahan.

Her education continues to serve her in unexpected ways. “My degree has actually helped me more in supporting my husband’s career. I participated in ROTC at BYU, which now helps me understand when my husband has to be gone so often. I also

understand the regional conflicts and dynamics that affect where we go, when he will be gone, and why he is gone. Additionally, I find that I am open to new cultures and excited to go places that some military spouses are not excited about. I am more accepting of the cultural differences because of my educational background, and because of how my parents raised me—my father has a degree in foreign affairs,” Callahan concluded. (Robert S. Wood has been a lecturer at the center.)

No Events