



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2015**

By Senior Airman Francine St. Laurent,
168th ARW Public Affairs

168th ARW launches mentorship matchmaking program

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska — Airmen in the 168th Air Refueling Wing are strengthening one another through a new program that seeks to develop career and personal growth.

A mentorship program, called Air wing Mentoring Professionals for Education and Development, or AMPED, was launched in March 2015 and offers a kind of matchmaking service for Airmen of all ranks who would like mentors.

“The goal is to ensure that our members have the opportunity to seek mentorship,” said Capt. Jonilynn Reyes, 168th ARW equal opportunity officer.

Mentors can help Airmen grow professionally and personally, Reyes said.

“You don’t have to stay within your chain of command to help you,” Reyes said. “Whether you’re mentored through difficult situations, personal issues or maybe you just don’t know what opportunities you have to advance in your career.”

Airmen fill out a form identifying short- and long-term goals and aspirations, what they feel mentors could help them with and what skills they would like to develop.

The mentors also fill out a biography form.

Mentors, ranging from junior to senior noncommissioned officers to officers, are nominated and go through one hour of training before being matched with mentees, said 1st Lt. Sara Kerr, 168th ARW executive officer.

“The training lays a foundation for what the vision of the program is and some good ideas and tools for mentoring,” Kerr said.

Based on the Airman’s goals, the mentorship program committee matches mentors’ skills with mentee’s aspirations. The committee gives the mentee three recommendations for a mentor.

Once the mentee selects a mentor, they decide when and how often to meet and build their relationship independent of the program.

"The formal part is organizing people and just getting them together," Kerr said.

Available worksheets help the mentor and mentee establish measurable goals and gauge progress.

Currently 30 mentors are trained and four Airmen have requested mentors.

Tech. Sgt. Sandra Murphy, 168th Comptroller Flight customer services non-commissioned officer in charge, hopes to gain guidance and new perspective from her mentor.

"I'm not the first one who is faced with these situations and they may have a different perspective or angle from their experience than the way I'm looking at it," Murphy said.

While she has looked at online mentors through Military One Source, Murphy said she wants one-on-one, in-person mentorship. She has been matched with three potential mentors.

Kerr says she wouldn't be an officer today if not for one of her mentors.

"I was at a point in my career where I had become comfortable and was going to ride out my time as an enlisted member," Kerr said. "I had someone who challenged me."

After six years as a crew chief, her mentor encouraged her to apply for a job they saw her succeeding in and she did just that.

"It changed the course of my professional career indelibly," Kerr said.

Kerr said she hopes the mentorship opportunities groom and develop future leaders of the 168th ARW.

"I want people to join this organization and excel," Kerr said. "I don't want someone from another state or another organization to apply for a job in our wing and outcompete one of our members. I want our members to be the best of the best and stay in Alaska and make this wing wonderful. And if they do decide to leave I want them to be better than anyone from anywhere else because they've had deliberate growth and development throughout their careers."

Air wing Mentoring Professional for Education and Development is an avenue for people in the wing to share their experiences with people who are seeking guidance and development.

Email 168ARW.amped@ang.af.mil to learn more and connect with a mentor.

###