

## NEWS RELEASE

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# Sgt. First-Class Dena Stephenson Speaks with USM Ancilla Center Students

## *Bronze Star Medalist Served 10-months in Middle-East*

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— When Sgt. First-Class Dena Stephenson returned home from a 10-month tour in the middle-east just days before Christmas, she was overjoyed to return home to her family and friends. Stephenson's joy turned to excitement when her five-year-old daughter's kindergarten teacher at the University of Saint Mary Ancilla Center for Children asked her to speak about her experiences to the class.

Stephenson, awarded the Bronze Star for humanitarian service by the United States Army, entertained Mrs. Connie Cook's kindergarten class Jan. 13 with pictures, discussion and even a few toys. Stephenson's daughter, Kristina Waun, was excited that her mother could stop in to see her, too. She and her classmates were wowed with pictures and descriptions, and then given a singing toy camel—sure to make their day cheerful.

Stephenson stopped by the University of Saint Mary Ancilla Center just weeks after returning home from a duty tour that stationed her in Baghdad, Iraq since February 2004. An Army Reservist with the 824<sup>th</sup> Quarter Master Detachment out of Lawrence, Kan., Stephenson traveled with her unit all across the middle-east—from Baghdad to Mosul, Iraq all the way to Kuwait as a Coordinator for Fuel Movement. She returned home on Dec. 23 and was ecstatic to reach her arms out to the Saint Mary community.

"I get excited about teaching the kids," Stephenson said. "There are a lot of good things we're doing out there. The American people don't always hear about that. I'm more than happy to help when I can."

Stephenson originally planned to stop by her daughter's class to bring the students the toys, but Cook urged her to enlighten the kindergarteners about the extreme differences between American and middle-eastern culture.

The University of Saint Mary Ancilla Center for Children is located on the lower level of Maria Hall, 4100 South Fourth Street, Leavenworth, Kan. The Ancilla Center for Children is a licensed facility providing families with dependable, safe and attentive care for their children, at a reasonable price. Morning preschool, five-day preschool extended care, kindergarten and summer child care sessions are available.

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