

Fundraising for the new United States Air Force Academy **Preparatory School Fitness Center**

The Preparatory School is an essential component of USAFA admissions and athletic recruiting programs by attracting, preparing and aiding prospective USAFA candidates' transition into the cadet wing. The Prep School's most critical function is to enhance the diversity of the USAFA Cadet Wing by providing the rigorous academic preparation necessary for students to earn a USAFA appointment.

The Prep School Athletic Director, Brian Watkins highlights the importance of having on-campus access to an athletic training facility with the capacity to accommodate all Prep School Cadet Candidates, commenting, "Having a designated first-class Prep School fitness facility will be crucial in preparing our athletes to excel at Division I competition at the Academy as well as make their overall experience at the Prep School better."

In recognition of the importance of physical fitness to the military lifestyle, and in an attempt to elevate its athletics programs, the Prep School and the Academy have embarked on a new initiative to establish a world-class Cadet Candidate Fitness Center inside an existing structure on the Prep School campus. In March of 2013, the Prep School took possession of the former enlisted club, a 10,000+ square foot facility that will be renovated to become the USAFA Prep School Athletic Annex. The development concept is to renovate the Milazzo Club, and construct a fully-equipped Fitness Center capable of accommodating all athletic development needs.

Currently, the Prep School does not own its own athletic facilities, so the Cadet Candidates and permanent party alike use the USAFA Community Center Gymnasium along with the base populace, which is often overcrowded, especially during intercollegiate sports teams' peak practice times. Student-athletes



at the Prep School share the weight room, locker rooms, basketball/volleyball courts, and other training facilities with all base patrons, which causes conflict with scheduling, hygiene, safety and the availability of practice time.

USAF Head Football Coach Troy Calhoun has also emphasized the importance of the facility. "This project is at least fifty years overdue. Strength and fitness training are vital parts of the conditioning and stamina our Airmen must have in abundance. A full weight room will help develop the physical strength, mental toughness, and overall self-discipline that are crucial to healthy and honorable active duty service. This is an investment that upon completion will immediately benefit our individual personnel and our Air Force as a whole."

A new fitness center will provide much-needed additional space and since it will occupy an existing structure, minimal renovation work is required. A \$2 million dollar contract to accomplish the renovation was awarded at the end of FY13 with fall-out appropriated funds. However, the project still requires a \$500,000 fundraising effort to equip the athletic facility.

The Preparatory School Fitness Center project will create state of the art facilities, which include:

- 4400 sq/ft weight room
- 3000 sq/ft wrestling room
- Locker rooms for over 90 student-athletes
- First class athletic training room
- Rehabilitation center
- Doctor's exam room
- Athletic Hall of Fame

