

## Learning to Say Goodbye

By Ingrid Murray

PCS time is in full swing along with its hellos and goodbyes. Moving vans fill the neighborhoods and boxes are everywhere. I recently learned one of the best lessons about PCSing and saying goodbye from my spunky seven year old neighbor, Mia Brown.

I was in the backyard watching my two-year-old son John Jr. playing in the sandbox with Mia. She was busy making another sand castle for my son to yet again destroy when I heard her say, "and we will be in Virginia." I looked up and asked her if she was going on vacation and she replied no that they were moving—time to PCS.

For most military spouses, we hear "PCS" and our minds automatically jump to packing up the house, changing addresses and switching schools.

But all I could think of at that moment was "how is John Jr. going to say goodbye?" You see, Mia is John Jr.'s first best friend. If Mia said jump, I have to admit, sadly, John Jr. would jump. In the evenings when John Jr. goes out to play, one of the first things he does is yell for Mia. This always brings a laugh to the neighborhood kids, as little John Jr. bellows



John Murray Jr. is the son of CSM John and Ingrid Murray, and Mia Brown is the daughter of LTC Bob and Dell Brown.

it long and loud: "Mmmmmiiiiiiiiiaaaaaa!" Like a faithful best friend, she comes running. Mia has introduced my son to hula hoops, eating popsicles, and, most recently, jumping like a frog.

I took a deep breath and told Mia that I didn't know if John Jr. would know how to say goodbye to her. Mia stood up, wiped off the sand, placed her hands on her hips and replied, "It's easy! You have to say goodbye to say hello."

I didn't think Mia quite understood what I was saying. I told Mia that I thought it was going to be a little harder than that. I explained that she was John Jr.'s "first best friend." Mia saved the day and told me she would explain it to John Jr.

Mia started building yet another castle for John Jr. to destroy and began to tell John Jr. goodbye. "John Jr., when you came here (Ft. Gordon) from the desert (Ft. Huachuca) you

had people [who] loved you a lot. They would give you hugs, kisses, tickle your toes and even change your stinky diaper that smelled really bad. Those people loved you. You had to tell them goodbye so you could come here to me and tell me hello. So you see you always have to say goodbye to say hello."

What a profound thought. John Jr.'s laughter broke the silence as he giggled in glee that he had destroyed another one of Mia's famous sand castles. Mia looked up at me and said, "John Jr. understands now that you have to say goodbye to say hello." See, it wasn't that hard.

I couldn't help but smile. Another lesson learned. ●

Ingrid Murray is married to Command Sergeant Major John Murray, who is assigned to Expeditionary Contracting Command, Ft Belvoir, Va. Their son, John Murray Jr., has plenty of PCS experience, boasting three PCS moves in his three years of life! Ingrid LOVES being a part of the great Army family

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