The work, as you can probably tell, is personal to me.”

As part of her “Joining Forces” campaign to support military families, Dr. Jill Biden said last week during a roundtable forum held on the USC campus.

“Spreading Holiday Cheer”

As project director, Israel serves as an educational administrator, trainer and manager for district administrative, credentialed and certificated staff, and is also the liaison between the district and a number of community agencies and partners.

“My goal to do this was to bring together the expertise of the district’s social services department with the unique skills and talents of the military families we serve,” said Israel, who along with First Lady Michelle Obama is leading the national family readiness effort, “Building Capacity—Partnerships and Outreach.”

One primary goal of the project is to improve access to mental health services for military families. To that end, the project has established a social work internship program that now includes 15 full time positions and eight school social work interns.

The goal is that these students are not just part of the district social work force, they are an integral part of our district,” Israel said.

Another key objective is to enhance the capacity of district staff to serve military families. As part of seeing the social work staff grow to 15 full time positions and eight school social work interns, “The work is significant,” she noted.

“We have created new linkages, and we have increased our capacity to serve military families,” said Israel.

“Our ability to identify, respond to and serve these families is enhanced because of the services we have now,” she said.

One measure of the project’s success is how it is being received by the school and community, increased our knowledge of best practices in school social work and how to implement them, increased our ability to identify and address the needs of military families, and has raised our staff’s awareness of the unique needs of the military families,” the principal investigator for the project, told Bi-...