**Mission:**

To empower and support the social, emotional, and academic needs of all Ohio National Guard and Reserve Component Youth.

**Goals:**

- Create community support networks for military youth "in our own backyard" during deployment and steady state to maintain family resilience.
- Deliver recreational, social, and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities.
- Support military youth coping with the stress of knowing their deployed family members may be in harm's way.
- Collaborate with schools to ensure that staff are attuned to the unique needs of military students.
- Educate the public on the impact of deployment cycles on service members’ families, kids, and the community.
- Become a part of the ongoing deployment support services for children and youth where there are military families.

**Military Youth Served**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Army National Guard</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Army Reserve</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Air National Guard</th>
<th>Air Force Reserve</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Navy Reserve</th>
<th>Marine</th>
<th>Marine Reserve</th>
<th>Coast Guard</th>
<th>Coast Guard Reserve</th>
<th>Other**</th>
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<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
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<td>118</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>13-18</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>305</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1295</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers may include repeat participants
**represents participants attending events where branch and component data was not collected

The opportunities provided to our family are amazing. It helps knowing that my family is so well taken care of when I have to be away.

~Steve participant parent, Army National Guard
Education Outreach

In 2018, our Education Outreach team continued its mission of raising awareness about military families in the community and the simple steps that can be taken to support them. With the inception of the Purple Star award, which recognizes schools that show a major commitment to serving students and families connected to our nation’s armed forces; more and more schools and districts are taking a closer look at how they can better serve this often overlooked population within their communities.

The Education Outreach team conducted 230 presentations in 57 counties throughout the state. Typically, these meetings were with school guidance counselors and administrators; but also included:

- 22 presentations at Family and Children First Council meetings
- 16 presentations for Educational Service Centers
- 1 webinar with State Support Team consultants

During these meetings and presentations, 742 toolkits of resources were given out to support our military youth. 2018 also saw the publication of the “Educational Resources for Military Connected Youth” booklet. This booklet, available in a hard copy and on-line format, goes a long way towards ensuring that military connected youth of Ohio are supported socially, emotionally and academically.

Volunteers

The Ohio National Guard Youth Program organizes a full calendar of events for military youth and families, these events would not be possible without the generous support of our volunteers. Volunteers fill a variety of roles including, but not limited to, administrative, social media, marketing, hands on support at youth events and logistical support.

- 174 adults and teens volunteered for more than 25 different programs to support military youth and families during FY’18
- The cost savings provided by volunteer support is invaluable. According to the Independent Sector\(^1\), the Value of Volunteer Time of $24.69 Per Hour. In 2018 volunteers provided over 11,630 hours of service, totaling over $287,144 of value. (1. https://www.independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time, accessed 5 October 2018)
Family Camps

Ohio has found a definite win with family camps. These camps are able to accommodate the entire family for a weekend of engaging programs. Many times families arrive with some apprehension about what to expect which is easily overcome by creating a welcoming environment and a few goofy games help. At the typical family camp by about noon on Saturday you can see the families relax and allow themselves to bond with other families while sharing experiences and lessons learned.

The weekend is structured such that all activities contain lessons that the family can use to include Hunt the Good Stuff from the resilience curriculum. Other programs offered during the weekend are designed to strengthen the families by fostering communication and life skill development. This weekend also allows the families to learn more about the resources that are available through the Family Readiness Program.

Feedback from parents includes comments about how they are able to see their kids and family as a whole in a different way that is hard to see while wrapped-up in everyday life. Overall it is a weekend of family growth that served over 250 family members in 2018.

Ohio Family and Children First

In an effort to expand the awareness of Ohio’s Military Families, we have conducted 22 presentations to Ohio Family and Children First Councils (OFCF). These councils, which are represented in all 88 counties, are a partnership of state and local government, communities and families that enhance the well-being of Ohio’s families.

The Mission of County FCFCs is to increase the access, capacity and effectiveness of services for the most vulnerable youth and families within their counties, whose needs extend beyond any one youth-serving program.

The ability to present to County FCFC’s has afforded us the opportunity to increase knowledge about the programs and resources for Army National Guard youth and families on a large scale.

Equestrian Programs

Connections with equestrian facilities continue to grow across the state. Through these connections we are able to provide our families a unique and sometimes healing experience while working with the horses. All facilities that we utilize are accredited equine therapy centers with veterans programs. While this may not be a requirement it helps ensure that the staff is aware of the stresses facing our families. In 2018 we hosted 2 programs serving 57 family members.

Our children have embraced G.R.I.T. After attending events this year I hear them discuss growth, resilience, initiative, and tenacity when talking to each other. I am so happy to have this positive influence for our kids.

~Monica, participant parent, Army National Guard
Ohio Military Teen Council

The Ohio Military Teen Council (OMTC) was created so teens could have a say in what they need and want from our programs. Through the OMTC, teens gain confidence in leadership skills, mentoring others and becoming role models in their schools, families and communities. OMTC not only gives teens a way to give back to the Ohio Military Kids (OMK) program, but also provides experience for college applications, resumes and social services in a fun and inspiring environment.

3 Army National Guard teens and 1 Army teen served on the OMTC this past year. Each member brought their own unique qualities to the council and keen insight on growing up as a military child within a military family. They participated in Leadership Camps, sought out ways to get involved within their communities, provided direct support for various OMK camps and programs, and served as counselors at Camp Kelleys Island. The teens were in regular contact with one another, and often made trips throughout the state to visit former OMTC members and camp counselors at their respective colleges.

Ohio is looking forward to hosting the Region 5 Teen Summit in 2019, the teens are eager to assist in the planning and facilitation of the Summit, while also showcasing the great work being done throughout Ohio for ARNG youth and families.

The teens continue identifying ways to boost our membership and are looking in to hosting an OMTC Open House, while also continuing to market the council to eligible teens they encounter while working with our program. As 2019 approaches, Family Readiness and Warrior Support is preparing to create a Programs and Resources Guide to be mailed all OARNG service member’s home of record. This is an opportunity to raise greater awareness about Youth Programs and the OMTC due to the dedicated space within the guide.

Teen Resilience Training

Providing tools and skills that enhance the ability of teens to cope with the world around them is an important part of what the program does. The benefit of this curriculum is that it focuses on skills that teens already have and helps them see how to better use the skills. By creating a physically and emotionally safe environment teens can hone these skills while being supported by their peers.

In 2018 Ohio executed four resilience trainings with 23 teens receiving the full curriculum and 21 teens receiving the 2 hour curriculum. Feed back from our teens and their families has been extremely positive celebrating the skills strengthened as a result of the program. During interactions with parents at other events parents share how they have seen a difference in their children since taking part in the programs. In 2019 there are plans to further increase the reach of this valuable program through more opportunities for teens to participate current ideas include resilience drills. Teens come to drill with their solider and spend the day learning resilience.
State and National Partners

Partners make the difference

Through state and national partners military families have increased access to events and resources. Partners are involved in a variety of ways including: access to resources, volunteer groups, educational programs and funding support with many partners supporting in more than one way.

Partnering with organizations such as the Ohio Department of Education has positively impacted our Education Outreach initiative by providing a direct link to the latest information through the education system that has benefited our Military Families. Through this collaboration over 100 youth have been identified by their schools and resources given to the families. Nationally it is only required to capture the active component however, in Ohio due to the awareness brought by the National Guard, the schools will include all components.

As a program, our strongest collaborators continues to be Ohio Military Kids, Ohio 4-H and the USO of Central and Southern Ohio. Through this partnership persons and organizations that wish to support with funding can make the donation to The Ohio State University marked for Ohio Military Kids and those funds go directly to programs for youth and families. This partner funding is what allows all program in Ohio to be open to any branch of service.

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Find us on Facebook:
Search: Ohio National Guard Strong Families or
Ohio Operation: Military Kids

You can also access program information at:
ong.ohio.gov/frg/FRG_youthprograms.html