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.

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

Military Youth Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Branch</th>
<th>age 6-12</th>
<th>age 13-18</th>
<th>Adults</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2496</td>
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</table>

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

“I also believe that programs like yours and specifically the attention to detail, organization and just vibe is and was a key player in Connor being confident and prepared to compete for his academy appointments. He received appointments to all the service academies (6 mos early) as well as all 3 ROTC programs at top universities.”

~Joe participant parent, Air National Guard
**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 FY19.
- The cost savings provided by volunteer support is invaluable. According to the Independent Sector[^1], the Value of Volunteer Time of $25.43 Per Hour. In 2019 volunteers provided **over 11,618 hours of service, totaling over $295,445 of value.**

Ohio Family and Children First

Ohio’s Educational Service Centers (ESCs) are dedicated to providing school districts with professional development, technology, support, planning, and administrative services that help improve student learning, enhance the quality of instruction, expand equitable access to resources and maximize operating and fiscal efficiencies.

Developing relationships with county ESC’s has afforded our Education Outreach team the opportunity to present information to a larger, more diverse population of educators. The Education Outreach team conducted 15 presentations at ESC’s in 2019, during professional development workshops, reaching 191 educators. Those in attendance at these workshops included teachers, administrators, and school support personnel from elementary, middle and high schools. Due to these presentations, numerous other opportunities to meet with individual schools and present at district wide meetings and professional development workshops, presented themselves.

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 2019 we hosted 2 programs serving 84 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

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 270 family members in 2019.
**Ohio Military Teen Council**

In June, Ohio was honored to host the Region 5 Teen Summit. 11 teen council members from Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin joined 5 members from the Ohio Military Teen Council (OMTC) in Columbus. The theme for the Summit, “The Future’s So Bright…” signified the tremendous impact that Youth Programs across the country are having on ARNG Youth and Families.

During the Summit, teen council members led and participated in a variety of ice breakers, energizers, and best practice sessions designed to bolster camaraderie among the group. They engaged in a community service project at a local therapeutic equestrian farm, a high ropes/team building adventure, healthy living exercises, STEM and career assessment activities, and were given the opportunity to explore the world famous Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

Throughout the Summit, the teens completed work involving the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) to identify issues and concerns related to military youth and families, while also making recommendations to help alleviate these struggles. Through group brainstorming and discussions, the teens were able to highlight these areas of need: resources for family coping, better communication with military families and children regarding the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the opportunity to speak with an MFLC during school if needed, the ability to call a deployed parent(s) during school hours to compensate for time zone differences, and hosting military family understanding seminars for school personnel and families. Each council vowed to continue working on these areas at their individual meetings upon returning to their home state.

The OMTC lost several active members this past year, but are excited to welcome five new additions to the council. The combination of veteran and new council members will enable the OMTC to continue thriving for years to come. The future is definitely bright for ARNG Youth and Families throughout Ohio, thanks in part to the hard work and dedication of these dynamic ladies and gentlemen.

**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 2019 Ohio executed four resilience trainings with 37 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 though the education system that has benefited our Military Families. Through this collaboration over 200 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