**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 in Ohio***

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>6-12 years</th>
<th>13-18 years</th>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

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

**Events in FY2015**
- Yellow Ribbon events— 2
- Camaraderie events— 4
- Trainings and Outreach— 72
- Hero/Day Camps— 7
- Family Camps— 7
- Residential Camps— 8
Event Parent Facebook Group

Parents are always looking for a way to connect their children with other military youth, over the past several years we have been using Facebook to our advantage marketing and communicating with our families. This year we created a separate group page for our parents!

Our parent group page for CKI has offered our parents the ability to request to join a page dedicated to a specific event. The access to this page is monitored by our staff so that only the parents of our campers can view and post. This page enables us to inform our parents about what is going on at the event and share pictures with only those who are invited into the group.

The security of the closed group enables parents to talk to and discuss happenings of their child with others beyond the event itself. We have discovered that many use the page to reconnect with cabin members, camp counselors and other friends their child has made during their time at CKI. Parents and campers are able to reach out for help with issues about school, military, social and educational struggles safely within that group environment or request personal messages or emails with those they need directly.

Family Camps

Ohio has found a definite win with family camps. These camps are able to accommodate the entire family for a weekend of relaxed fun. Many times families arrive with some apprehension about what to expect which is easily overcome by creating a laidback 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 have fun and bond with other families.

During the welcome to camp meeting it is stressed that family camp is what you, as a family, want it to be. Families are told to enjoy the activities that are offered with the option of taking an afternoon nap if that is what is needed. We as a staff have come to discover one of the biggest things we do at these camps is give them “permission” to relax and not have to worry about normal life stresses. 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.

These camps are also low impact in the way of staffing needs by using venues where the venue staff handles the majority of programing and through the use of volunteers.

“Thank you to all that works hard all year to set all the many other camps up through every year. My daughter was a counselor this year and had a blast like usual. She of course mentioned all of the cool things that all you did all week. One was riding on the water with the Navy Seal unit and them making her fall out of the boat. Pretty cool. THANK YOU again for all you guys and gals so for these kids. It’s awesome.”

-Ron, Army National Guard, Facebook Comment
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 can benefit our Military Families.

Maintaining relationships with our state legislative body keeps the needs of Ohio’s Military Families on the forefront. This is simply accomplished by offering invitations to State Representatives and Senators, welcoming them to attend our events and see the great things that Military Families are doing. As seen in the photo above the interaction between a State Senator and campers happens at the most basic level.

As a program, our strongest partner 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 since, as a governmental agency, we cannot accept donations. This money is then in turn used to support programs and events for Ohio’s military youth and families.
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. This year Ohio was a part of the pilot program for the Teen Resilience curriculum as adapted from the Master Resilience Trainer program.

The benefit of this curriculum is that it focuses on skills that teens already have and helps them see how to use the skills better. By creating a physically and emotionally safe environment teens can build these skills while being supported by their peers.

“I wanted to thank you both for proving a great camp for Connor & Caroline. I know from your point of view, you may have felt nothing went as planned. HOWEVER, what a great opportunity to show the teens TRUE leadership when faced with the challenges of programming, weather and staffing. The entire way home they talked about how they learned the true meaning of improvise, adapt & overcome. They had a blast, never had a boring moment and would do it again in a heartbeat. Additionally, it was the first time they have been at camp together, so they got to see a different side of each other.”

- Andrea Marines Reservist spouse, after event email

Feed back from our teens and their families has been extremely positive celebrating the skills strengthened during 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.

Teen Panel

After a kick off of recruiting members at our annual Wildlights at the Zoo Volunteer Recognition the Ohio Teen Council (OTC) was up and running this year!

Four of our Army National Guard OTC teens were chosen to attend the Region 5 Teen Council Summit in Springfield Illinois in June. After what seemed to be a short jaunt over just a few states the members were excited to meet their counterparts from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The Illinois Teen Panel was spot on with their assistance in checking us in and had planned a variety of get to know you activities and a scavenger hunt to acquaint us with the Illinois Military Academy.

The next three days were jam packed with learning and fun! We had classes based upon teambuilding, resilience, communication, deployment, delayed gratification, positive thinking, stress management, public speaking, and the meaning of GTP. There were even field trips to the National Guard Military Museum & Hero Wall, The Lincoln Museum and a just for the fun of it Bowling trip.

Due to all of the bonding the teens began to “cut up” with each other creating bonds and completing the goal of the Region 5 Summit so we thought we’d continue the cutting with a service learning project. As a team we made approximately twenty no sew tassel blankets to be given out to the local area.
Volunteers & Education Outreach

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.

- Over 260 adults and teens volunteered for more than 31 different programs to support military youth and families during FY’15
- The cost savings provided by volunteer support is invaluable. The bureau of Labor and Statistics estimate the value of a volunteer hour as $22.55. In 2015 volunteers provided over 11703 hours of service, totaling over $263,902.65.

Education Outreach
Education Outreach continues to make headway in the 2015 fiscal year with 93 school visits in 46 counties! During visits with Education Service Coordinators, Teachers, Counselors, Administrators, School Board Members, and all of the Ohio Family & Children Agencies from each county; we have given out a total of 490 toolkits to support our military youth.

We are currently working on a new way to boost our outreach for next year by connecting with the Five Minutes for Life Program run by Ohio State Highway Patrol and Ohio National Guard Recruiters in order to reach out to the schools they speak in. A new assistance for Military Families began in January this year! The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and MIC3 teamed up to offer educator license, permit or certificate fees have been eliminated for Veterans and Active Duty Service Members and their Spouses! This is a huge statement from ODE recognizing the contributions of the military families.

Find the Ohio National Guard Youth Program on the world wide web!

“Like” 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

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