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

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

A BIG THANK YOU again to all of the staff that spend hours days and nights putting this camp and others together. My daughter has loved going every year since 2010. Now a counselor and all because the staff takes pride in making these events great. And THANK YOU to all of the counselors for being Leaders and Mentors to the campers. You are all awesome. We will see you next year.

~Ron, participant parent
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.

- **200 adults and teens volunteered** for more than 32 different programs to support military youth and families during FY’16

- 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 2016 volunteers provided over 10499 hours of service, totaling over $236,752.45.

Education Outreach
Education Outreach made strong gains towards achieving its goal of reaching every school in the state to raise awareness about military families in the community and the simple steps that can be taken to support them. During FY16, our Education Outreach team visited **192 schools in 70 counties**. During these visits with Education Service Coordinators, Teachers, Counselors, Administrators, School Board Members, and all of the Ohio Family & Children Agencies from each county; we gave out a total of **692 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.

FY16 Highlights

Yellow Ribbon events—9
Camaraderie events—5
Trainings and Outreach—199
Hero/Day Camps—4
Family Camps—6
Residential Camps—5
Family Overnight—3

I can't thank you all enough for everything you do for these kids in just 5 short days! The stories have been endless and the friends they are making will be forever! Seeing them hug and tear up as they say good bye to kids they just meet us incredible! This was only our kids 2nd year but the excitement of knowing they'll be back next year always encourages me that they are having a blast!

~Angie, 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 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.

Healthy Living

Through a strong partnership with Ohio’s 4-H program a great resource is available to Military Families. By including Healthy Living lessons into our events we provide participants access to mental and physical wellness. These lessons include information about sustainable exercise and diet practices. Many time for the Hands on portion we are able to utilize a fun and educational activity known as the “smoothie bike” where participants add a variety of ingredients and through their own power blend a healthy snack.

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.
Ohio Military Teen Council (OMTC)

The Ohio Military Teen Council (OMTC) entered its second year with a focus on the future. At our first meeting of FY16, the five council members were posed the following question: “What do we, as the OMTC, want to accomplish in the coming year?” The teens collectively identified the following areas to focus on: promoting Ohio Military Kids (OMK) throughout the state, recruiting new council members, engaging in service learning projects within the community, and establishing a “camp counselors only” leadership retreat.

In an effort to spread the word about OMK throughout the state, the teens worked with an individual from Public Relations and created an OMK promotional video to be shown at various military events and functions. The teens were actively involved in all aspects of the pre & post production process.

In July, four council members attended the Region 5 Teen Summit at Bradford Woods Camp in Martinsville, Indiana. During the four days at camp, the teens participated in a leadership presentation by a nationally renowned guest speaker, and attended workshops designed by the Indiana Teen Council. They engaged in team challenge activities, resiliency lessons, and a variety of games/icebreakers. For their community service, the teens worked on repairing one of the trails at Bradford Woods, and also cleaned up the beachfront area. They learned a great deal, while working with members from other states, about what it takes to run and maintain a successful teen

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.

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.
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 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 interact with our great Military Families.

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.

For Additional Information

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