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.

We can’t thank everyone involved in making this camp [Camp Kelleys Island] possible enough! Such special memories, experience and bonds the girls have made. Since we left active duty, this is typically the only interaction our kids get with other military kids annually. Year 6 in the books!
~Barb participant parent, Army Reserve

### Military Youth Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>age 6-12</th>
<th>age 13-18</th>
<th>Adults</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
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*Numbers may include repeat participants
**represents participants attending events where branch and component data was not collected
Education Outreach

During FY2017, our Education Outreach team presented to 285 schools in 66 counties. The audience for these presentations consisted of counselors, administrators, teachers, school board members, education service coordinators, and various Ohio family support agencies. A total of 909 toolkits of information were given out to support our military youth. Education Outreach has now met with (and presented to) over 85% of the public school districts in Ohio, since its inception back in 2014.

During these Education Outreach meetings, it was apparent that most school counselors and administrators were not only unaware of the variety of educational resources and programs available to military connected youth; but also unaware of the existence of these students within their school/district.

Knowledge empowers educators to look for red flags during times of separation as well as ensuring they have an understanding of the programs and resources available to support their students.

Ohio has recently begun adding Military Family statistics to the state’s student identifier system. This initiative, as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will go a long way towards identifying the over 30,000 military connected youth throughout the state. Through these efforts there will be greater coordination in in the support networks for Ohio Army National Guard Families and youth.

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.

- 150 adults and teens volunteered for more than 25 different programs to support military youth and families during FY’17
- The cost savings provided by volunteer support is invaluable. According to the Independent Sector, the Value of Volunteer Time of $24.14 Per Hour. In 2017 volunteers provided over 8500 hours of service, totaling over $205,190. (1. https://www.independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time, accessed 3 October 2017)

FY17 Highlights

- Yellow Ribbon events— 9
- Family Days and Military Appreciation Events— 5
- Education Outreach— 207
- Day Camps— 4
- Family Camps— 6
- Residential Camps— 4
- Family Overnight—3
- Teen Resilience Weekend-1
- Teen Council Meeting-3
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 300 family members in 2017.

Ohio Family and Children First

In an effort to expand the awareness of Ohio’s Military Families, we have conducted a number of 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 2017 we hosted 2 programs serving 62 family members.
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 2017 Ohio executed four resilience trainings with 11 teens receiving the full curriculum and 30 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 2018 there are plans to further increase the reach of this valuable program through more opportunities for teens to participate.

Ohio Military Teen Council

The Ohio Military Teen Council (OMTC) lost several experienced members as they transitioned into their collegiate lives. The impact these young ladies had on the OMTC was tremendous, and our current council members are eager to build upon the solid foundation these dynamic individuals helped build.

Recruiting and marketing have always been a top priority for our council, and this continued during FY17. The teens are currently engaged in revamping some of our marketing tools and identifying opportunities to bring awareness of our council to Ohio’s military youth. Our council members are also working on updating the application process for joining OMTC, seeking out additional opportunities for leadership development in the state, and participating in event coordination for Ohio Military Kids programming.

Two of our council members gained some valuable experience and made long lasting memories from their participation in the Region 5 Teen Summit in Michigan. During the Summit, the teens were treated to a nationally renowned youth motivational speaker, participated in a community service project, learned about college resources and resume writing, created and taped teen council videos (with a Guard Teen Panel representative), and were given the opportunity to brief the other councils about the amazing work being done in Ohio. There were also a number of other fun activities to engage in; such as a virtual range course, paintball, survival training, obstacle courses, scavenger hunts, team building activities, and a variety of state lead icebreaker activities.

Upon returning to Ohio, the teens were eager to share the tremendous work being done by the other Region 5 Teen Councils, as well as ideas for implementing some of their best practices within the OMTC. The opportunity to learn from ones peers is invaluable, and our highly motivated teens have a wealth of knowledge to draw upon as we move into the future!

Teens gain valuable experience and make long lasting memories from their participation in the Region 5 Teen Summit.

Participation in these events has been such a great thing for my kids. I have seen them grow in ways I never thought possible. It also gives me peace of mind knowing that my family is so supported when I have to be away.

~Justin, participant parent, Army National Guard
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 100 youth have been identified by their schools and resources given to the families. This number will dramatically increase when Ohio adds the military identifier to all school registration forms in 2018. 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 partners continue 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.

For Additional Information

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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