

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

It's More Than A Program...It's A Promise!

NEWS LETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Looking Back: MOMC
- Summer Camps
- Region 4 Symposium
- GTP Spotlight
- Mental Health Awareness
- Teacher Appreciation
- Resource Spotlight
- CYS Connect



LOOKING BACK ON APRIL — MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

What a month! April was packed with fun, connection, and celebration as we came together to recognize the strength and resilience of military children. From wearing purple on Purple Up! Day to participating in special events, activities, and community shout-outs, it was inspiring to see so many come together to show their appreciation and support.

The participation and enthusiasm from families, schools, and communities made this year's Month of the Military Child truly special. Thank you to everyone who helped celebrate and honor the unique experiences and sacrifices of our military kids. Your support reminds them — and us — that they are seen, valued, and never alone!



SUMMER CAMPS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER!



The countdown to summer has begun — and so has the excitement for camp season! Summer camps are more than just a way to fill the long days; they create valuable opportunities for military youth to build lasting friendships, develop leadership skills, explore new interests, and strengthen their resilience in a fun and supportive environment.

Camps are designed specifically for military-connected kids, providing a much-needed break from the challenges of military life. Whether it's an overnight camp in the great outdoors, a day camp packed with hands-on activities, or a leadership experience that builds confidence, there's something for everyone.

Now is the perfect time to reach out to your local Child and Youth Program to see what camp opportunities are available in your state or territory. Spaces can fill up quickly, so don't miss the chance to give your military child a summer they won't forget!

WWW.ARNGCYS.COM

#GUARDFAMILIES

#ARNGCYS



REGION 4 YOUTH SYMPOSIUM: BUILDING LEADERS, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

From February 20-23, the Army National Guard Child and Youth Program hosted the Region 4 Youth Symposium, bringing together 34 military teens from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi. These symposiums are a powerful way to empower military youth, giving them a platform for leadership development, resilience training, and peer collaboration.



Leadership, Growth, and Hands-On Learning

Throughout the symposium, teens engaged in interactive sessions and team challenges designed to strengthen their skills and knowledge. Partnering with the Counterdrug Program, facilitators introduced the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) standards, leading the teens through a series of exercises to test their limits.

Financial literacy was also a major focus, with a facilitator from Well-Trained Mind leading a session on budgeting. Teens learned about student loans, debt, and financial planning, gaining eye-opening insights into the impact of financial decisions post-college. Using SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound), they worked through real-world scenarios to develop financial strategies—an experience many found invaluable.

Sharing Best Practices & Overcoming Challenges

One of the highlights of the symposium was the state-led presentations, where council members from each state shared their programs' best practices and engaged in Q&A discussions. This allowed teens to strengthen public speaking skills while also exchanging ideas on how to enhance youth programs across the region.

The event also challenged participants to step outside their comfort zones—including a thrilling nighttime zip-lining experience! Many teens faced their fear of heights head-on, showing incredible courage and team support.

The Region 4 Youth Symposium was a true success, helping military teens grow as leaders, build connections, and develop skills that will serve them well in their communities and beyond. This group worked hard, supported one another, and left stronger than they arrived—a testament to the power of youth leadership within the Guard.



GUARD TEEN PANEL

SPOTLIGHT



THE GUARD TEEN PANEL: MILITARY KIDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In April, we celebrated the strength, resilience, and dedication of military-connected youth during Month of the Military Child. But the truth is — their impact doesn't stop when April ends! Across the country, military kids are stepping up, using their voices, and making real change in their communities year-round.

One powerful example of this is the Guard Teen Panel (GTP), a group of young leaders representing their states and peers at the national level. These teens work hard to share the experiences and perspectives of military youth, help shape programs, and create meaningful connections with other Guard families.

Through the year, we'll be spotlighting Guard Teen Panel delegates, highlighting the amazing work they're doing — both behind the scenes and out in their communities. These young leaders remind us that military kids are more than just resilient — they're engaged, passionate, and driven to make a difference.



KAMRYN STAUFFACHER

REGION 8 DELEGATE

Since joining the Guard Teen Panel (GTP) in 2023, Kamryn Stauffacher has dedicated her time and talent to making an impact both in her state and across the country. Over the past year, Kamryn has played an active role in shaping the CYS Monthly Newsletter, connecting with fellow Guard youth from other states, and supporting her State Teen Panel in South Dakota. She also contributed to the recent redesign of the GTP logo and completed two elevator speech training sessions — helping her strengthen her communication and advocacy skills.

For the past six months, Kamryn has served as the Panel's Archivist, where she takes the lead in documenting meeting notes, providing briefings, keeping fellow delegates updated, and working directly with the National Guard Bureau's point of contact to ensure smooth communication.

In November 2024, Kamryn was recognized as the National Guard Youth Volunteer of the Year — an honor that highlights her commitment and passion for service.

"Being selected as the National Guard Youth Volunteer of the Year (Region 8) has shown me that my efforts have not gone unnoticed and that I am making a difference," Kamryn shared. "I'm involved in many activities both in and out of school, and I always strive to give my best. Sacrificing some of my free time is worth it in the end."

Kamryn's leadership and dedication continue to inspire others in her community and beyond. We're proud to celebrate her achievements and can't wait to see what she accomplishes next!

For Camille Welch, being part of the Child and Youth Program has been more than just an activity — it’s been a lifelong journey of growth, connection, and leadership. Over the past 12 years, Camille has moved through every stage of the program: from camper to counselor-in-training, to state panel delegate, and now, serving on the national Guard Teen Panel.

Camille’s early years in the program were spent attending day camps like Boots Off Boots On and overnight adventures in places like Cooper Landing. Those experiences not only helped her feel connected to the military youth community but also allowed her to break out of her shell and grow more confident.

As a member of her State Teen Panel, Camille’s opportunities expanded even further. She traveled to different states, met with fellow teens to brainstorm solutions for real-world challenges, and even briefed senior leaders about the issues facing Guard youth in her state.

But Camille’s journey didn’t stop there. Joining the Guard Teen Panel took her leadership to a national level. Through the panel, she’s participated in conferences representing all 54 states and territories — and even connected with military youth from other countries. One of her proudest moments came when she and her partner Jordan briefed a general on mental health concerns facing military teens. That conversation sparked real change, bringing two of the Guard Teen Panel’s top three concerns to the National Guard’s annual meeting, where they were added to the national priority list. Today, those issues are in the pilot phase and moving forward. “While my state panel helped me create a base for myself,” Camille reflects, “the national panel has helped me soar.”

Her journey is a powerful reminder of the impact young leaders can have — not only in their own growth but in shaping a stronger, more supportive future for military youth across the nation.

CAMILLE WELCH

ARMY’S DIRECTOR’S TEEN PANEL



ISAIAH MORGAN

REGION 1 DELEGATE



Isaiah is a 17-year-old junior from Maine who isn’t afraid to take on new challenges — both in and out of the classroom. Whether it’s honors and college-level courses, competing on his school’s math team, or diving into diverse interests like law, medicine, lighting design, event management, leadership, and engineering, Isaiah is always pushing himself to grow.

His leadership experience already runs deep: from serving as a student representative on a school committee and leading his class as an executive officer, to presiding over Maine’s National Guard Teen Council. When he’s not studying or playing sports as a three-season athlete, Isaiah finds time to volunteer, advise on nonprofit grant reviews, and participate in advanced projects like the CAPE-Twigg’s CubeSat, blending his passions for policy and engineering.

Looking ahead, Isaiah has his sights set on attending one of the U.S. service academies — and he’s equally focused on making an impact as a Guard Teen Panel delegate. His goals are to sharpen his leadership skills, advocate for military youth, and help strengthen connections for Guard families across the country.



STARTING THE CONVERSATION: TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Kids are naturally curious — they notice when something feels “off,” even if they can’t always put it into words. That’s why it’s so important to talk openly and honestly with them about mental health. Whether it’s a family member, friend, or even themselves, kids are often more aware of emotional struggles than adults realize. Having thoughtful conversations can help reduce fear, break down stigma, and build understanding.

Mental illnesses are medical conditions, just like asthma or diabetes. But for many families, talking about mental health can feel uncomfortable — especially if no one talked to them about it growing up. The good news is: it’s never too early or too late to start.

How to Talk to Your Child About Mental Health

- **Keep it age-appropriate.** Young children need simple explanations, like comparing mental health to physical health: just like someone with a bad cold might need medicine and rest, a person with a mental health condition may need treatment and support. Older kids and teens can handle more detail and may even bring their own questions and ideas to the conversation.
- **Be open, honest, and calm.** Children look to adults to model how to handle emotions. When you talk openly and respectfully about mental health, you’re teaching them it’s okay to do the same.
- **Create a safe space for questions.** Whether your child is worried about a family member, a friend, or something they’ve seen online, encourage them to ask questions. Let them know that no topic is off-limits and it’s okay not to have all the answers.
- **Watch their reactions.** If your child seems confused or upset, slow down or pause the conversation. Let them process in their own time and be ready to revisit the topic later.
- **Focus on hope and help.** It’s important for kids to understand that mental health challenges are treatable, and with support, people can and do feel better.

Being open about mental health helps children develop compassion for others, as well as the confidence to ask for help if they need it. It also helps break the silence that often surrounds mental illness, especially in families or cultures where these topics are considered taboo.

Mental Health Awareness Month is the perfect time to check in with the young people in your life. Start small, speak from the heart, and remember: listening is just as powerful as talking.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Talking-To-Kids-About-Mental-Illnesses-084.aspx

Resources

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)
 - www.aacap.org/
- American Psychiatric Association (APA)
 - www.psychiatry.org/patients-families
- National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
 - www.ffcmh.org/
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
 - www.nami.org
- National Mental Health Association (NMHA)
 - www.nmha.org/





RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is dedicated to ensuring every military-connected child is prepared for college, work, and life. Through advocacy, collaboration, and hands-on support, MCEC helps students and their families navigate the unique academic, social, and emotional challenges of military life.

Whether it's transitioning to a new school, transferring credits, finding extracurricular opportunities, or offering resources to ease the emotional impact of frequent moves, MCEC stands ready to support military families every step of the way.

For more information:
<https://militarychild.org/>

Disclaimer: Sharing of resources in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by NGB, any contract vendor or the PM Team.

CELEBRATING THE HEART OF EDUCATION: TEACHER APPRECIATION

Every May, we take a moment to shine a well-deserved spotlight on the people who shape our futures — our teachers. Whether it's in a classroom, virtual setting, or out in the community, teachers play an incredible role in inspiring curiosity, building confidence, and helping students reach their full potential.

For military-connected youth, teachers often become more than educators. They become trusted mentors, sources of stability, and supporters through every transition and challenge. Their patience, creativity, and commitment don't just teach lessons — they help shape lives.

This Teacher Appreciation Month, let's celebrate the teachers who go above and beyond, who encourage us to ask questions, who notice when we need a little extra help, and who cheer us on as we grow. A simple "thank you" can go a long way in showing how much they mean to us.

To all the teachers — past and present — thank you for everything you do!

CYS CONNECT



Do you want to stay up-to-date with the latest info? Be sure to subscribe **HERE** on our website



Lets us know how we are doing. Provide feedback on your experience with your local program over the last year at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Soldier-Parent25>

DOWNLOAD OUR APP!



Search "ARNG CYP"