

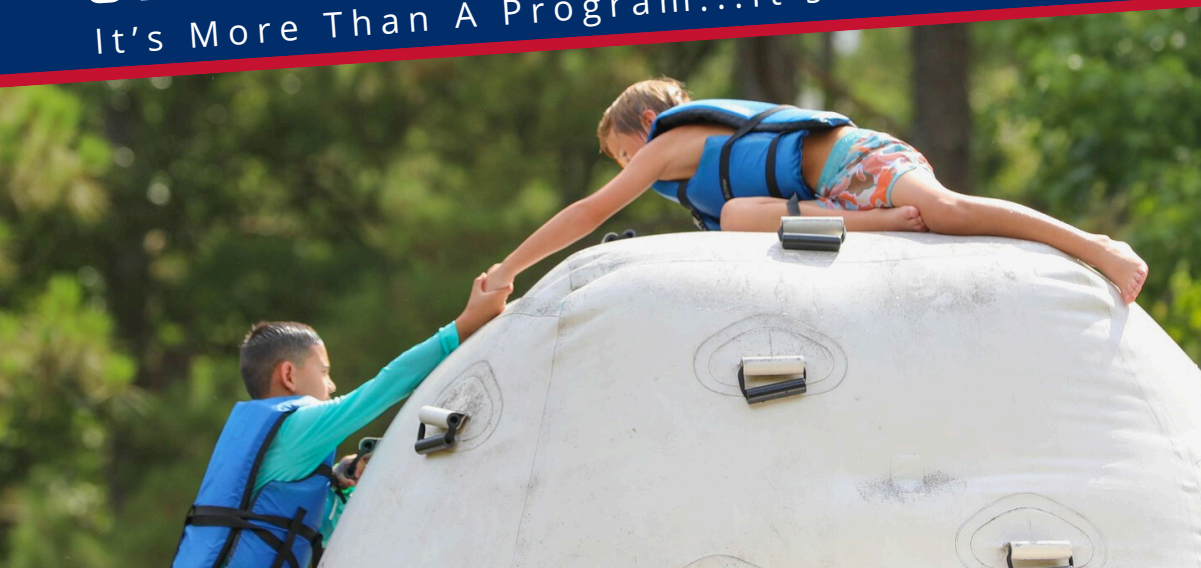
# ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

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

## NEWS LETTER

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## SUMMER CAMP SEASON COMES TO A CLOSE—BUT THE FUN DOESN'T STOP!

As summer winds down, we're wrapping up another incredible season of National Guard youth camps across the country. From outdoor adventures to hands-on learning, these camps offered more than just fun—they helped youth build teamwork, practice leadership, and form meaningful connections with their peers.

Camps like these are a powerful part of the Guard experience, creating space for military-connected youth to grow, explore, and thrive together. They also give Guard families peace of mind, knowing their children are in a safe, supportive environment while building life skills that last long after summer ends.

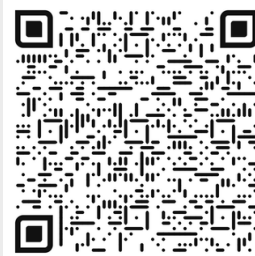
We're so proud of the campers, staff, and volunteers who made this summer a success—and we're already looking ahead to what's next! Just because summer is ending doesn't mean the opportunities are. Be sure to check in with your local Child and Youth Services (CYS) team to learn more about fall events, programs, and activities happening near you.

## NEED HELP WITH CHILD CARE COSTS?

Check out the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) program and the Army or Air Fee Assistance program! If you're an eligible Army or Air National Guard Family and can't access on-base care due to distance or waitlists, you may qualify for help paying for approved community-based childcare. These programs are here to support you—because every family deserves quality care they can afford. Learn more and apply today!



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# STRONGER TOGETHER: REGION 7 TEENS UNITE IN OMAHA

From July 14–18, military-connected youth from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri came together in Omaha for the Region 7 Teen Symposium. Centered on the theme “Stronger Together,” the event gave teens a powerful space to build leadership skills, strengthen regional connections, and serve their communities.

Nine teen delegates were selected to officially represent their states and led by example throughout the week—facilitating sessions, guiding conversations, and supporting their peers. A highlight of the week was a service project with the Food Bank for the Heartland, where teens packed over 1,200 pounds of granola to help families facing food insecurity.

The week also featured inspiring guest speakers, including Nebraska wrestling champ Bettie Chambers and former news reporter Kimberly Arms Shirk, who shared personal stories of resilience and determination. Teens also engaged in mental health discussions, Master Resilience Training, and Army Family Action Plan sessions—building confidence, advocacy skills, and lasting friendships.

As one participant shared, *“The symposium brought me out of my comfort zone and helped me speak up.”*

Region 7 teens returned home with stronger voices, bigger goals, and a renewed commitment to leading with purpose. Events like this are shaping the next generation of military-connected leaders—and Region 7 is clearly up for the challenge.



## BEYOND THE SYMPOSIUM – BONUS REGION 7 STORY: IOWA YOUTH RIDE TOWARD RESILIENCE



This summer, our team in Iowa had the opportunity to host their very first Horse Camp for military-connected youth in partnership with Jester Park Equestrian Center—and the timing couldn’t have been more meaningful. Just weeks after nearly 1,800 Iowa National Guard service members deployed, 48 children came together June 2–5 for a powerful, healing experience.

Thanks to Jester Park’s generous support, the camp was offered at no cost to families. Youth learned to groom, saddle, and ride horses—many for the first time—while stepping out of their comfort zones, building confidence, and connecting with others who understand military life. The joyful atmosphere reflected the deep bonds that unite Guard families and demonstrated how programs like this strengthen both resilience and readiness.



## GUARD TEEN PANEL

## GRADUATES

## JUSTUS SPAULDING

## REGION 10 DELEGATE

From growing up immersed in Alaska's Child and Youth Program (CYP) to serving as Region 10's Guard Teen Panel (GTP) Representative, Justus Spaulding's journey is a powerful example of what leadership, service, and connection can look like in action.

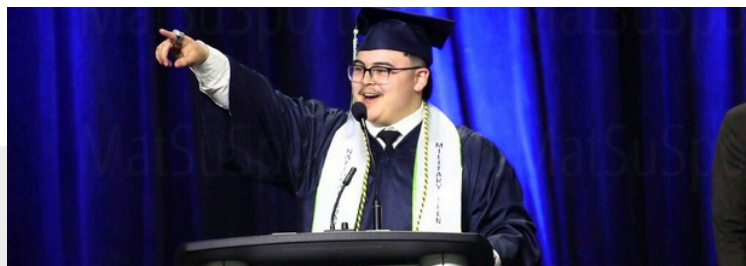
Justus' involvement began early—first as a Junior Ambassador in middle school, then as an Ambassador during his Freshman and Sophomore years. By Junior year, he was elected Co-President of the AKARNG Youth Council, a role he proudly held through graduation. For the past three years, he has also represented Region 10 on the national Guard Teen Panel, lending his voice to advocate for military youth across the country.

Through his time in GTP, Justus developed a toolkit of skills that will continue to serve him well in college and beyond. He's led community service projects, spoken at Yellow Ribbon events, briefed military leadership, and supported the planning and execution of camps and major events. In doing so, he's strengthened his public speaking, learned how to organize and delegate effectively, and gained confidence in his ability to lead and connect with others.

More than anything, GTP gave Justus a space to grow into himself—to learn the value of service, to build meaningful friendships, and to understand that even small efforts can create real change.

As Justus steps into the next phase of his life, there's no doubt he'll carry these lessons forward, ready to make a difference wherever he goes. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

Congratulations, Justus! We're proud of you and can't wait to see what comes next.



## MALAIKA WANDE

## REGION 3 DELEGATE

As she graduates, Malaika Wandé leaves behind an inspiring legacy of leadership and resilience. Serving as Region 3's Guard Teen Panel Representative, she used her voice to advocate for military youth, promote mental wellness, and create safe, open spaces for honest conversations. She believed in building connections and showing others that military teens are strong, capable, and worthy of support.

Malaika's time on the Guard Teen Panel wasn't without challenges—but instead of letting setbacks define her, she leaned into the values the ARNG Child and Youth Program taught her: adaptability, leadership, and perseverance. With the help of her peers and mentors, she learned to advocate for herself, manage time and responsibilities effectively, and lead with integrity—even when things didn't go as planned.

Through it all, she grew into a confident, determined young leader, ready for what's next. Malaika graduated from High School with a 4.3 GPA, completed the Foundation of Architecture program at Thomas Edison High School of Technology, and took college courses through dual enrollment. This fall, she heads to Penn State University as a Bunton Waller Merit Fellow Scholar, majoring in Architecture and minoring in Civil Engineering.



Congratulations, Malaika! Your voice, vision, and strength will continue to make an impact wherever you go.

As Camille Welch graduates and steps into the next chapter of her life, she leaves behind a lasting legacy within the Army National Guard Child and Youth Program—one rooted in leadership, empathy, and connection. Camille's journey with the program began in elementary school as a camper. She grew into a counselor-in-training during middle school, became a high school counselor, and eventually served as Co-President of her state's teen council. Since her sophomore year, Camille has also served two impactful terms as one of two national Directorate Teen Panel Representatives, representing military youth at the highest levels.

Through it all, Camille has carried a deep sense of purpose: showing military-connected youth that they matter. Whether facilitating resilience workshops, helping at camps, or supporting holiday events, she has worked to ensure that no military kid feels alone. At the same time, she found strength in the very message she shared—discovering a powerful support network and learning that with the right people around you, anything is possible.

Camille's work on the Guard Teen Panel sharpened her public speaking, broadened her worldview, and deepened her ability to lead with compassion. From attending national youth forums and briefings to participating in multi-component conferences, she has been a true voice for military youth—confident, capable, and committed.

The Child and Youth Program has become more than a leadership opportunity for Camille—it's become a second family. One she will continue to support as an adult volunteer, mentoring future leaders and ensuring the same meaningful experiences are available for the next generation of military youth.

As Camille moves forward, her passion, self-confidence, and belief in the power of connection will no doubt carry her far. And wherever she goes, she'll bring the spirit of this program with her.



**CAMILLE WELCH**  
ARMY'S DIRECTOR'S TEEN PANEL

## GEARING UP FOR GUARD TEEN PANEL APPLICATIONS!

Is your teen ready to lead, advocate, and make a difference? The Guard Teen Panel (GTP) is getting ready to welcome a new class of youth leaders—and we want your teen to be part of it!

Applications will open September 8, 2025 for current, active members of State Teen Panels. We'll be filling positions in Regions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10. Not sure which region you're in? Find your region here: <https://arngcys.com/teens-on-the-move>

Being part of the GTP is a unique chance for teens to:

- ✓ Represent military youth nationwide
- ✓ Share ideas and concerns with leadership
- ✓ Build lifelong skills in advocacy, public speaking, and teamwork
- ✓ Connect with peers from across the country
- ✓ Boost college and scholarship applications with standout leadership experience

If your teen is passionate about making an impact, now's the time to start getting ready. Talk to your local Child & Youth staff to learn more—and stay tuned for application updates!





# LAUNCHING LEADERS: FIRST EVER KEYSTONE CLUB PILOT FOR ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TEENS

In a major step toward expanding leadership opportunities for military-connected youth, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), in collaboration with the Army National Guard, launched a first-of-its-kind pilot Keystone Club in both Georgia and Arizona. This innovative initiative gives geographically dispersed Guard teens access to BGCA's premier leadership development programs, regardless of their proximity to a brick-and-mortar Club.

## Bringing Clubs to Where Military Teens Are

Many Army National Guard families do not live near traditional Club sites or military installations, leaving youth without consistent access to enriching, developmentally appropriate programs. This pilot was designed to close that gap, delivering BGCA's impactful programming to Guard youth directly through hybrid, event-based, and virtual experiences.

## Georgia Pilot: Leadership in Action

The Georgia Keystone Club made a strong debut at a recent Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event attended by over 500 soldiers and their families. Teens hosted a resource and recruitment table, promoted a new book club initiative, and invited fellow military-connected youth to join the Keystone experience. While soldiers attended workshops, the Keystone members volunteered in the children's rooms, leading fun activities and supporting post-deployment conversations with youth participants.



## Arizona Pilot: Event Leadership and Outreach

At the same time in Arizona, the new Keystone Club was making an equally impressive impact. During a Guard family event attended by more than 250 people, Keystone members managed the family registration table, emceed the day's activities, DJ'd the event, and photographed key moments. They also led a youth activity table in the Child & Youth area and actively promoted Keystone to younger teens, encouraging them to get involved and begin their leadership journey early.



## The Road Ahead: Torch Club and Youth of the Year

Keystone is just the beginning. In 2025, BGCA will expand the pilot to include Torch Club, a leadership program for pre-teens, and in 2026, a tailored version of Youth of the Year will launch to spotlight and celebrate outstanding Army National Guard tweens and teens across the nation. Additionally, eight new states will join this Keystone pilot in September 2025, followed by Torch Club in 2026 and a continuous cycle will unfold until all states are participating. These programs build long-term leadership pipelines within the Guard community, while fostering connectedness and resilience in youth who often live far from centralized resources.

*This article was contributed by Teri Rigali, National Director, Military Outreach at Boys & Girls Clubs of America.*

## COOKING WITH CYS

During Month of the Military Child, our talented youth participants submitted their favorite recipes—and now we're excited to spotlight what our young chefs came up with! From creative twists on classics to family favorites passed down through generations, these dishes reflect the heart, culture, and creativity of our military kids.



## RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

United Heroes League is dedicated to ensuring that children of military service members have every opportunity to participate in sports. We provide free sports equipment, camps, pro sports tickets, and financial assistance.

### Fall Grant Deadlines:

- August 1 – application open
- August 31 – applications due
- October 1 – notified of approval or denial
- October 15 – checks cut and mailed

For more information:

<https://unitedheroesleague.org/>

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



### Henry's Favorite Egg Sandwiches

Age 7, Delaware Army National Guard Family

#### Ingredients:

- Eggs
- American cheese slices
- Bread (your favorite kind)
- Butter

Hey young chefs—before you get started, make sure to ask an adult for help! Whether it's turning on the stove, using a knife, or handling hot pans, having a grown-up nearby keeps cooking safe and fun.

#### Instructions:

1. Toast the bread and spread a little butter on each slice.
2. Heat a frying pan over medium heat and add a small amount of butter.
3. Crack the eggs into the pan and cook them how you like—scrambled or fried both work great!
4. Once the eggs are cooked, place them on one slice of toast.
5. Add a slice of American cheese on top of the eggs.
6. Top with the second slice of toast to make a sandwich.
7. Serve warm and enjoy!

#### Why it's special:

"This recipe is special to my family because we all love eggs! We eat them for breakfast and dinner. It was one of the first foods I ate as a baby—and the first thing I learned to cook. My dad and I came up with this recipe one morning for breakfast, and now it's my favorite! I always ask for egg sandwiches on my birthday."

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# RESPITE CARE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The respite care reimbursement program is intended to reduce stress on sponsor families by providing temporary rest periods for family members who care for those with special needs.

Join us virtually to learn how to access the installation respite care program and explore additional respite care resources available to you.

**Open to ALL DOD Families**

**AUGUST 5TH  
11AM**

**REGISTER NOW**



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