

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

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

NEWS LETTER



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HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS ON A YEAR OF IMPACT

As we close out another meaningful year, we want to recognize the remarkable impact created by our Child and Youth Program community. FY25 brought growth, connection, and an impressive display of dedication from staff, volunteers, partners, and families across all states and territories.

This year, **CYS served 67,010 military connected youth** and reached more than **76,000 National Guard Soldiers and their families**. Together, we delivered **3,002 events and activities**, providing **12,214 program hours** filled with learning, leadership development, and supportive experiences for military youth.

Our volunteers continued to be a powerful force for good. **5,545 volunteers** contributed **152,451 hours of service**, helping families feel supported and creating positive moments that strengthen the lives of young people.

Partnerships also flourished. Throughout the year, CYS staff collaborated with more than **31,000 military and civilian organizations and individuals** to strengthen networks of support for Soldiers and families. These connections contributed to a **36.33 percent increase in community partnerships**. This growth reflects a shared commitment to building informed, resilient communities that support Soldier readiness and family well-being.

Thank you to every youth participant, family member, volunteer, staff member, and partner who played a part in making FY25 a success. Your hard work and heart continue to drive the mission forward, creating opportunities that matter for military children and teens.

To explore more highlights from the year, we invite you to view the full national annual report, recap videos, and your state's achievements at <https://arngcys.com/fy25-annual-report>.



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GUARD TEEN PANEL

SPOTLIGHT



A YEAR OF GROWTH AND WHAT COMES NEXT

Our applications for new Guard Teen Panel (GTP) members closed in September, and we were thrilled to see such strong interest from teens across the country. Due to the recent government shutdown, the selection panel experienced delays, but we are moving forward and expect to announce the new delegates in December 2025.

This month, we are featuring reflections from several current GTP members as they share the experiences that shaped them, the resilience they have built, and the goals they carry into the year ahead. Their dedication, leadership, and commitment to strengthening the youth voice continue to propel our programs forward.

We are grateful for everything the GTP is contributing and look forward to welcoming the next group of leaders who will join this important work.

ISAIAH MORGAN,

REGION 1 DELEGATE

For Isaiah, the most meaningful part of being involved in the program has been reconnecting with The Summit Project, a Maine based organization that honors post-9/11 fallen service members. He played a key role in bringing this partnership back to youth programs after several years away. Starting with introducing the project to his state teen council, then educating junior counselors at symposium, Isaiah helped make it possible for the oldest youth cabin to carry memorial stones and stories up a mountain during summer camp. Standing with campers as each person shared the story behind their stone was the moment he felt everything come full circle.

Isaiah says the program has strengthened his resilience by giving him training, tools, and a support system that feels like a second family. Through council meetings and activities, he has learned how to manage stress, adapt when plans change, and stay positive during challenging moments. The friendships he has built, especially with other teens who understand military life, help him navigate the harder days.



He believes the biggest benefits of the STP and GTP are the connections, opportunities, and sense of purpose they provide. Monthly meetings, guest speakers, and hands-on activities keep him learning and growing, and he values having a voice in shaping youth programming in his state. The only real challenge is the time commitment, but for him, it is more than worth it.

This year, Isaiah hopes to deepen his understanding of the issues faced by teens across his region and connect regularly with councils in each state. His goal is to bring those voices to the national table and help create changes that strengthen the program for youth nationwide.



LUCY TOE

REGION 4 DELEGATE

For Lucy, the most meaningful experiences in her Child and Youth Program have come from attending Teen Leadership Retreats. These retreats give her the chance to be surrounded by other military teens who understand the ups and downs of Guard life. She loves how quickly real connections form, even with people she barely knew before arriving. Workshops, team-building activities, and conversations with adults who serve in the military have pushed her out of her comfort zone and helped her grow as a communicator and leader. Each retreat strengthens her confidence and leaves her feeling more connected to the National Guard community.

Lucy shares that the program has played a major role in helping her build resilience during challenging times. With her father deployed twice in the last five years, she has faced stress, anxiety, and the weight of being the oldest of four. The Child and Youth Program gave her a safe space to talk openly with peers and mentors, something she says was not easy for her at first. Their support helped her develop healthier coping skills and grow into a confident young woman. Knowing she is not alone in her journey motivates her to keep going and turn each challenge into a chance to learn.

Lucy sees many positives in serving on the Guard Teen Panel. She values the leadership opportunities, the friendships she builds across states, and the chance to represent military teens nationwide. She enjoys the responsibility of communicating with teens from different places and using her voice to make a difference. The only challenge is balancing panel work with school, sports, and other commitments, especially with teens spread across different time zones. Even so, she believes the experience is worth the effort.

This year, Lucy hopes to strengthen her communication with states across her region and keep building on the ideas that have already supported military teens. She also wants to grow as a mentor, especially as her local teen council welcomes many younger members. As a senior, she hopes to support both older and younger teens, helping them feel confident, included, and prepared to lead. Her goal is to represent and uplift every military teen in her region.

SADIE FOOTE

REGION 6 DELEGATE



For Sadie, the most meaningful part of being involved with the Child and Youth Program has been the volunteer opportunities she has taken part in. She loves helping others and says these experiences have shaped her time on the teen panel in the best way.

Sadie shares that the program has helped her become more resilient by giving her friends who understand what it is like to have a parent in the National Guard, teaching her skills through Master Resilience Training, and encouraging her to serve her community. Having people to talk to who truly relate makes hard moments feel lighter, and the tools she learns through MRT help her handle tough situations with more confidence. She also enjoys serving others because it gives her a better understanding of the pride her parent feels when giving back.

She sees many positives in being part of the STP and GTP, especially the leadership growth, the chance to volunteer, and meeting new people from different places. These opportunities help her learn, connect, and make a difference.

This year, Sadie's goal is to represent everyone in her region and bring forward ideas that can make the program even stronger. She wants every voice to be heard and hopes to keep helping the program grow for current and future Guard teens.

KENDRA BORJA

REGION 9 DELEGATE

For Kendra, the Region 9 Symposium in Guam stands out as the most meaningful experience she has had in the Child and Youth Program. It was the first time she spent real time with Guard teens from outside her state, and she loved learning how their programs worked and what made each one unique. Since her family is from Guam, the symposium also gave her the chance to connect with her own heritage and learn more about the island's culture and lifestyle. She says the memories, friendships, and lessons from that trip continue to influence how she serves her community today



The program has helped Kendra grow in resilience through training, workshops, and supportive friendships. She relies on skills she has learned during resilience sessions, including stress and time management, communication, and perseverance. When challenges come up in school, sports, or personal life, she uses what she has learned to stay grounded. She also appreciates having friends in the program who understand her experiences and are there for her during tough moments.

Kendra sees many positives in being part of the STP and GTP. She loves the chance to make a difference, connect with people, and gain life skills that will help her as she gets older. She says the only real downside is having to wait for the next event to see her friends. She also notes that being on a panel is a commitment, but one that is worth the responsibility.

This year, Kendra hopes to help more teens get active in their programs and feel excited about participating. She wants to reach more youth, encourage leadership growth, and help others build skills they will take with them into college and adulthood.

KAMRYN STAUFFACHER

ARMY'S DIRECTOR'S TEEN PANEL



For Kamryn, the heart of her Child and Youth Program experience has always been summer camp. She has spent the last four years as a junior counselor, leading games, guiding younger youth, and discovering how different each child's home life can be, even when they share similar challenges. Camp pushed her out of her comfort zone in the best way. With no internet, a full week together, and plenty of time outdoors, she learned to appreciate the small things, connect with others more easily, and understand the power of teamwork. She says the experience helped shape her into the leader she is today.

Kamryn feels the program has supported her through every part of growing up as a Guard teen. She shares that staff always treated her with the same care and importance as any other youth. When her father was deployed, the program even helped her and her sister participate in dance classes when it would have been financially difficult. Moments like that taught her that no challenge is too big and that helping others whenever you can matters.

Being on the GTP has brought her unforgettable opportunities, like traveling to Washington DC on her own for a leadership responsibility. She has met people from across the country and built friendships she hopes will last. She loves having a platform to speak up not only for herself, but for all military youth. The only drawback is that the team is spread out, so most of their work happens online instead of in person.

This year, Kamryn hopes to strengthen her voice and help create meaningful change for National Guard youth. She wants to open more doors for kids who may not have the same opportunities as other branches, get more involved in events, and help raise the visibility of the GTP so that more leaders truly understand the experiences of military teens.



BUDDY BARS

Submitted by Peter C., Age 5
Delaware Army National Guard Family

This fun and festive recipe was submitted for Month of the Military Child 2025 and has quickly become a favorite treat for the holidays. Buddy Bars are always yummy and simple to make. They combine the best parts of chocolate chip cookies and oatmeal cookies, and Peter likes to mix in extra goodies like raisins, M&Ms, or different kinds of chocolate chips. They make a perfect snack, travel treat, or dessert.

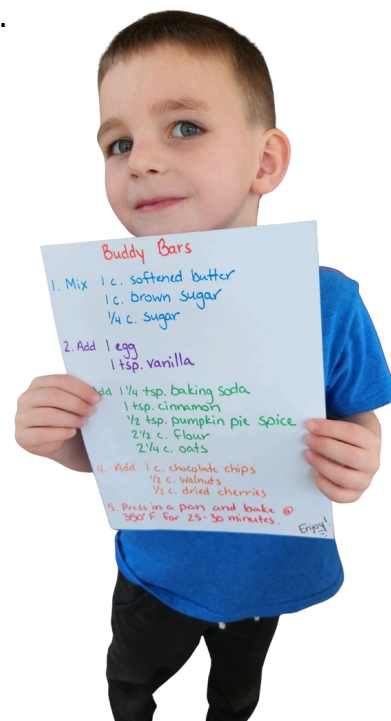
They are called Buddy Bars because Peter's nickname is "Buddy," and he loves baking with his mom. They are also the perfect treat to share with a buddy.

Ingredients

- 1 cup softened butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 2 1/4 cups oats
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/2 cup dried cherries

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix softened butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar until smooth.
3. Add the egg and vanilla and mix again.
4. Stir in baking soda, cinnamon, pumpkin pie spice, flour, and oats until blended.
5. Add chocolate chips, walnuts, and dried cherries.
6. Press the mixture into a greased baking pan.
7. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until golden.
8. Let cool, slice into bars, and enjoy with your favorite buddy.



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Since 2002, Operation Homefront has been building strong, stable, and secure military families by offering financial relief, family support programs, and resources that help overcome short-term challenges before they become long-term hardships.

Discover how Operation Homefront supports military families nationwide.

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

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

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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.