

# ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

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

## NEWS LETTER



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## JANUARY: A NEW YEAR OF EXCITEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY!

Happy New Year! We're thrilled to kick off 2025 with big plans and exciting events for the months ahead. Can you believe it's only three months until April, our favorite time of year—Month of the Military Child? Stay tuned for updates as we prepare to celebrate our amazing military kids!

January is National Hobby Month, the perfect time to explore new interests or dive deeper into ones you love. For little ones, try crafting or simple gardening projects. Teens might enjoy photography, coding, or journaling, while families can explore hobbies together like hiking, cooking, or building puzzles.

It's also Healthy Habits Month. What healthy habits are you working on this year? Whether it's drinking more water, moving your body daily, or making time to rest and recharge, small steps can lead to big changes.

Let's make 2025 our best year yet!

## START THE YEAR STRONG: HEALTHY HABITS FOR KIDS

Every parent or guardian wants to raise a happy, healthy, and well-adjusted child, and military parents and guardians are no exception. Since most healthy behaviors are formed in childhood, you can guide your child in developing habits and choices that promote lifelong health and well-being.

For tips and resources on raising healthy, happy kids, check out Military OneSource. They offer valuable tools to support military families in building strong, healthy foundations for their children.

READ MORE →



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# REGION 1 UPDATES



The Region 1 programs recently showcased their commitment to education, training, and community-building through a series of engaging events that supported military families and youth. Through these programs, Region 1 demonstrated how adventure and learning come together to empower military youth and families. As we look to 2025, the Region 1 team is eager to continue fostering education, training, and leadership development, inspiring youth to reach new heights.

In **Rhode Island**, the RING Holiday for Heroes event brought education and joy to over 100 families. Activities included holiday crafts, cookie decorating, and face painting. United Through Reading offered books to encourage literacy, while the Hero Tree provided a meaningful way for families to honor their service members. Volunteers and teens played critical roles in organizing and running the event, demonstrating teamwork and leadership.

In **New Hampshire**, the National Guard Child and Youth Program collaborated with the Wellness Division for a family event at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center. Families explored interactive exhibits on space and weather, attended a planetarium show, and participated in educational activities like building paper straw rockets. This activity inspired youth to “shoot for the stars,” aligning with the event’s outer space theme.

**Vermont** delivered two unforgettable experiences, combining education and holiday magic. Families embarked on a Polar Express ride, complete with hot chocolate, cookies, and storytelling. The journey emphasized the importance of family connections and creating shared memories. Additionally, Operation Santa’s Convoy provided an opportunity for children to engage with VTARNG Soldiers and Santa, as military trucks traveled through the state in a festive display of appreciation and resilience.

In **Massachusetts**, military youth ages 8–12 participated in Green, Mean, and STEAM, a hands-on STEM-focused event hosted in partnership with 4-H. Activities included coding, slime-making, and a “Whoville” (Gingerbread House) contest, where participants brainstormed ways to make their towns inclusive and welcoming—tying the activity to themes from How the Grinch Stole Christmas. Teen Council members led the teambuilding exercises, reinforcing leadership and collaboration among youth.

**Maine’s** Teen Council took the lead during Milk and Cookies with Santa, a military appreciation event hosted at Governor Janet Mills’ historic Blaine House. The teens prepared for their roles by learning about the home’s history and worked as event volunteers, assisting Santa, reading stories, and engaging families. This event highlighted the value of community partnerships in building military pride and strengthening family resilience.

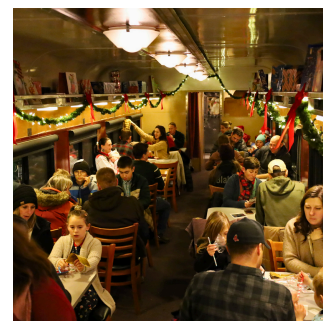
**Connecticut’s** Teen Youth Council embraced a focus on Character Strengths this year. Partnering with the Travis Manion Foundation, council members completed a survey to identify their strengths and began training on how to use them effectively. Through this collaboration, the teens are learning valuable leadership skills to better serve their communities.



RHODE ISLAND



NEW HAMPSHIRE



VERMONT



MASSACHUSETTS



MAINE





# CELEBRATE NATIONAL HOBBY MONTH

January is National Hobby Month, a perfect time to explore new interests and develop skills. Hobbies aren't just a fun way to pass the time—they promote creativity, reduce stress, and build confidence. Whether you're continuing a beloved tradition or starting something new, this month offers an opportunity for families and friends to grow together through shared or individual hobbies.

Hobbies bring numerous benefits, especially for children and teens. They:

- **Foster creativity:** Exploring interests like drawing or writing allows kids to express themselves.
- **Build resilience:** Learning a new skill teaches patience and perseverance.
- **Encourage quality time:** Shared activities strengthen family connections.
- **Boost self-esteem:** Mastering a skill can provide a great sense of accomplishment.

Here are some hobby suggestions tailored to different age groups to inspire you this January:

## For Younger Kids (Ages 5-10):

- **Arts and Crafts:** Painting, scrapbooking, or making homemade cards.
- **Nature Exploration:** Collecting rocks, leaves, or seashells.
- **Cooking or Baking:** Easy recipes like cookies or pizza-making kits.
- **Music and Dance:** Learning simple instruments like a ukulele or creating choreographed dances.
- **Gardening:** Planting flowers or vegetables in pots or small garden beds.



## For Preteens (Ages 11-13):

- **Photography:** Using a phone or camera to capture creative angles and themes.
- **Model Building:** Assembling kits like cars, airplanes, or dollhouses.
- **Reading Challenges:** Exploring different genres or authors.
- **Science Experiments:** Simple, hands-on projects like making slime or building a volcano.
- **Sports:** Trying out individual sports like tennis or martial arts.



## For Teens (Ages 14-18):

- **Writing:** Journaling, blogging, or working on poetry or short stories.
- **Fitness:** Exploring yoga, dance, or workout routines.
- **Volunteering:** Turning passions into community service, like animal care or tutoring.
- **Coding or Robotics:** Learning programming languages or building small robots.
- **Creative Arts:** Digital design, pottery, or learning a musical instrument.



## Tips for Finding the Right Hobby

1. **Experiment Together:** Try different activities to see what sparks interest.
2. **Start Small:** Avoid overwhelming beginners; simple tools and resources are best.
3. **Make It Social:** Find clubs or groups in your area for shared hobbies.
4. **Encourage, Don't Pressure:** Let kids and teens explore at their own pace.

We'd love to see what hobbies your family takes on this month! Share your photos or stories with your [local Child and Youth Program](#).



## CYS CONNECT



Would you like to share how the CYS program has made an impact on you and your family? Tell us more at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ShareYourCYSstory](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ShareYourCYSstory).



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>



## HOLIDAY HIDDEN OBJECT SEARCH

Submitted by: Malaika Wande, Region 3 Delegate

## MILITARY ONE SOURCE

### RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Military OneSource is your 24/7 connection to information, answers and support to help you reach your goals, overcome challenges and thrive. As a member of our military family, you are eligible to use this Department of Defense-funded program anytime, anywhere. Turn to Military OneSource for tax services, spouse employment help, webinars and online training, relocation and deployment tools, and much more.

**For More Information:**

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil>

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### Holiday Hidden Objects

Find all the items from the list that are hidden within the scene!