



ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

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

NEWS LETTER



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A YEAR OF APPRECIATION AND IMPACT

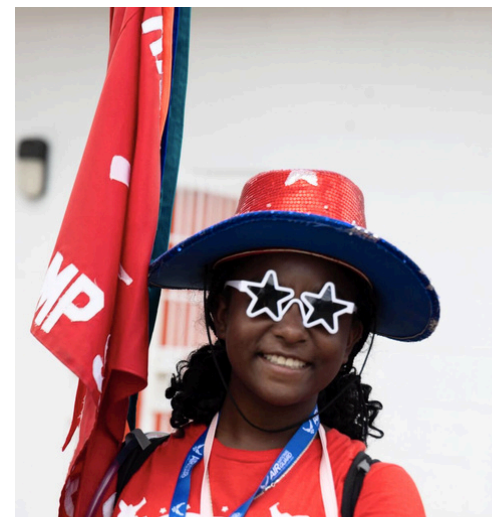
As we look back on an incredible year, we want to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who made it possible. Through the hard work and dedication of countless individuals, we served **63,411 military-connected youth** and reached over **74,800 National Guard Soldiers and their families**. Together, we provided **2,655 events and programs**, totaling **12,751 program hours** filled with learning, growth, and community connection.

Our success this year wouldn't have been possible without our **5,710 dedicated volunteers**, who contributed an astounding **143,427 hours of service**. Your commitment to supporting military families has made a lasting impact, creating memories and building resilience in the lives of young people.

Thank you to all the youth who participated, the families who support them, our partner organizations, and military personnel who work tirelessly behind the scenes. We are incredibly grateful to each of you for your role in making this year a success.

To learn more about the impact we've made together, we invite you to review our **full annual report and recap videos**. You can also access your state's specific annual report to see local achievements and highlights, scroll to your state and click on the flag at: <https://arngcys.com/my-local-cys-program>.

Wishing you happy holidays and a wonderful New Year! We look forward to more growth, connection, and community in 2025!



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TEENS ON THE MOVE!

Celebrating Leadership and Service: PFC Anamaris Irizarry Torres Joins the Puerto Rico Army National Guard

We are thrilled to celebrate an inspiring milestone for Puerto Rico State Teen Council member, Anamaris Irizarry Torres, who has taken her leadership skills to new heights by joining the Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG). Now serving as Private First Class (PFC) Irizarry Torres, she enlisted as a Human Resources Specialist (42A) while completing her senior year of high school.

Service and dedication to the nation run deep in her family. Her father, Major Cesar Irizarry, the Commander of the PRARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion, shared his pride in her decision: "I couldn't be prouder of her choice to join our organization and make a difference. With both of my children now serving, I feel an even greater sense of pride in our family's dedication to this nation."

We congratulate PFC Irizarry Torres on this exciting chapter and thank her and her family for their dedication and service. She is an inspiration to us all, and we look forward to seeing her continued success!

Spotlight on the Oregon Teen Panel

On October 19, several members of the Oregon Military Teen Panel made a big impact at the Pre-Deployment Yellow Ribbon event in Medford, Oregon! Madi, Serena, Kendra, Tori, and Kenzi shared powerful stories about their own deployment experiences and introduced families to the Child and Youth Program. They even led the group in an exciting round of "Rock, Paper, Scissors Train," one of our favorite icebreakers, to get everyone engaged and connected.

We're so proud of the Oregon Teen Panel members for their leadership and for supporting fellow military families. Great job, Madi, Serena, Kendra, Tori, and Kenzi!

CONNECT WITH US

If your teen is interested in joining their state or territory Teen Panel, please connect with your local Child and Youth Coordinator to learn more about this rewarding opportunity.



GUARD TEEN PANEL

SPOTLIGHT



KAMRYN STAUFFACHER

REGION 8 DELEGATE

Growing up, I was a very active and happy child, always on the go with dancing and running. My family has played a big role in shaping who I am, and their support has been invaluable, especially during my dad's deployments, which taught me the importance of family and resilience.

I'm currently a junior in high school, set to graduate in 2026. My favorite subject is English because it challenges me to think critically and explore different perspectives. This year, I'm taking a CNA capstone class, and I aim to pass my board exam to start my journey toward a healthcare career.

I stay busy with many activities, including serving as Junior Class President in student council, competing in cheer and dance, running track and field, and participating in orchestra and HOSA (Future Health Professionals). Outside school, I work in my church's nursery, volunteer for military kids' day events, and enjoy outdoor adventures like hiking, rock climbing, and camping.

Fun Fact: My favorite colors are light blue and soft pink, and I love preparing and savoring sushi.

My goals include graduating in the top 20 of my class, pursuing a spot on a college track and field team, and eventually becoming a sports medicine physician while staying connected to the military community.

MALAIKA WANDE

REGION 3 DELEGATE

Fun Fact: My first name means "Angel" in Swahili.

I was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Maryland in a family of Cameroonian descent. Growing up, I developed a wide range of interests, including STEM, sustainability, advocacy, leadership, arts and crafts, acting, singing, dancing, and debate.

As a senior, I've created an abbreviated schedule that allows me to focus on dual enrollment courses and explore my passion for architecture through vocational school. I'm actively involved in several clubs and organizations, including Girl Scouts, Science National Honor Society, Blair Theatre Productions, 4H, and the Boys and Girls Club. My activities also extend to groups like Delta G.E.M.S., Girls Security, SkillsUSA, and Arts On The Block, where I develop leadership and technical skills.

I enjoy playing pickleball, soccer, and field hockey, as well as pursuing creative and academic passions like acting, debate, and STEM. I aspire to become a licensed architect through the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and the Pathway to Architecture Licensure (IPAL) program. My goal is to focus on sustainability and affordable housing, ensuring that cost-effective solutions integrate environmentally conscious practices.

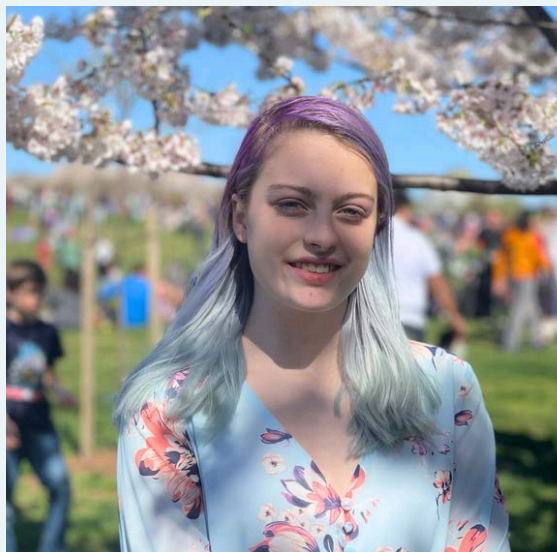


I've moved frequently throughout my life, living in places like Wisconsin, Kansas, Alaska, Mongolia, and now Virginia. My travels have given me a broad perspective on different cultures and ways of life, particularly during my time in Mongolia, where the language and customs were very different from the United States.

Academically, I've always sought challenges, excelling in advanced math and science courses and taking honors and AP classes throughout high school. My favorite subjects include history, science, and family and consumer sciences, and I've earned honors awards every year of high school for academic achievement.

I'm involved in volleyball, varsity cheer, and soccer and have held leadership roles in youth councils both in Alaska and D.C. I enjoy volunteering with kids, participating in youth events, listening to music, watching movies, and hanging out with my friends. I also love staying active, through sports like volleyball, soccer and cheer.

My future plans include earning a bachelor's degree in secondary education and biological sciences to become a high school biology teacher. I also hope to achieve personal goals like homeownership, financial stability, and a strong retirement plan.



CAMILLE WELCH
ARMY'S DIRECTOR'S TEEN PANEL

Fun Fact: I love experimenting with hair dye, it's never the same color for more than two months, and ziplining



JUSTUS SPAULDING

REGION 10 DELEGATE

Born into a military family, I have always been immersed in the values of service and connection. With my dad serving in the Army National Guard for 22 years and my mom working in the Guard's Family Program for 16 years, I grew up participating in unit events, trainings, and family days. These experiences inspired me to join the Teen Council and instilled in me the importance of community and giving back.

In school, I started at a Career Technical High School focusing on Culinary Arts but later transitioned to my neighborhood school, where I've thrived academically, maintaining a 3.5 GPA and honor roll status. My favorite subjects are science and weight training.

Athletics have been a cornerstone of my life. I've competed in football, wrestling, and baseball, with football being my passion. I've earned two championship rings, served as team captain for football and wrestling, and was named 1st Team All-State on offense and 2nd Team on defense at my football banquet.

Outside of sports, I enjoy volunteering, especially with my family, assisting disabled veterans with home repairs and other tasks. I'm honored to have been recognized as the National Guard Bureau Youth Volunteer of the Year for my efforts.

After high school, I plan to attend college on a football scholarship and pursue a degree in sports medicine and physical therapy, with the long-term goal of working for a professional sports league.





LILY JOHNSON

REGION 5 DELEGATE

Fun Fact: One of my favorite places to be is on a plane, heading anywhere.

I'm a 16-year-old high school junior from rural northern Minnesota. Growing up, I faced adversity early on, including the loss of my father and adapting to life with a stepfather in the military. My stepfather, a Sergeant First Class in the Minnesota Army National Guard, has served for 20 years and completed three deployments. Life in a rural area as a military teen has given me a unique perspective on the challenges of accessing resources and opportunities.

I take Post-Secondary Enrollment Option courses through the University of Minnesota Duluth while staying active in high school activities like speech, student council, National Honor Society, and youth in action. I've organized highway clean-ups, volunteered locally, and participated in softball, volleyball, trap shooting, and club soccer. This year, I joined the Civil Air Patrol to deepen my interest in aerospace education.

I enjoy walking, reading, and studying in coffee shops, though my friends joke that I always need to stay busy. After high school, I plan to attend the University of Minnesota to pursue a degree in aerospace engineering, followed by a master's program in a city like Boston or Chicago.



GRANDMA SOPHIE'S SUGAR COOKIE RECIPE

SUBMITTED BY: LILY JOHNSON, REGION 5 GUARD TEEN PANEL DELEGATE

These soft, buttery sugar cookies are a timeless treat, perfect for any occasion.

Ingredients for the Cookies:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons milk (buttermilk recommended)
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups flour



Kids, remember to ask an adult for help when baking!

Make the Cookies:

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the sugar and butter until light and fluffy.
3. Add the milk, cream of tartar, baking soda, vanilla, and eggs. Mix until well combined.
4. Gradually add the flour, mixing until a soft dough forms.
5. Drop tablespoon-sized portions of dough onto an ungreased baking sheet, spacing them about 2 inches apart.
6. Bake for 8–10 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden. Remove from the oven and let cool completely on a wire rack.

Ingredients for the Butter Icing:

- 2 ½ tablespoons softened butter
- 1 ½ cups sifted confectioners' sugar
- 1 ½ tablespoons cream
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract

Make the Butter Icing:

1. In a medium bowl, cream the butter and confectioners' sugar together until smooth.
2. Add the cream and vanilla, stirring until the mixture reaches a smooth, spreadable consistency.

Decorate the Cookies:

- Once the cookies are completely cooled, spread or pipe the icing on top.
- Decorate as desired with sprinkles or other toppings.

Makes approximately 4 dozen cookies.

DECEMBER SPECIAL DAYS

December 1: National Pie Day
 December 4: National Cookie Day
 December 5: International Volunteer Day
 December 7: National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
 December 13: National Cocoa Day
 December 15: International Tea Day
 December 17: National Maple Syrup Day
 December 20: Go Caroling Day
 December 21: Winter Solstice
 December 25: Hanukkah Begins
 December 25: Christmas Day
 December 26: Kwanzaa Begins
 December 27: National Fruitcake Day
 December 28: National Card Playing Day
 December 30: Bacon Day
 December 31: New Years Eve



STAY CONNECTED WITH THE NEW ARNG CYP MOBILE APP!

We're excited to announce a powerful new way for military families, educators, and coordinators to stay connected with the Child and Youth Program! The ARNG CYP mobile app is now available for download on both the Apple Store and Google Play, bringing valuable resources and support right to your fingertips.

With the ARNG CYP app, you can:

- **Access Valuable Resources** – Find guides and tools specifically designed for military families, helping you navigate everything from deployments to day-to-day support.
- **Connect with Your Local Coordinator** – Stay in touch with your Child and Youth Program Coordinator for up-to-date information on programs, events, and local resources.
- **Support for Educators** – Educators can access specialized tools and materials to help them better support military-connected students in their classrooms.

Don't miss out on this convenient resource! Download the app today by searching ARNG CYP on the Apple Store or Google Play, and stay in the loop with all things CYP.



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Sesame Street for Military Families is a free, bilingual (English and Spanish) resource offering valuable information and multimedia tools designed to support military families through unique challenges like deployments, multiple separations, homecomings, injuries, grief, and self-expression. Dedicated to creating an inclusive experience, Sesame Street for Military Families offers accessibility information—feel free to reach out to MilitaryFamilies@sesame.org with any specific questions.

For More Information:

<https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/>

DOWNLOAD OUR APP!



Search "ARNG CYP"

