

# OHIO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FY21





# Mission and Goals



## Military Youth Served

	<u>age 6-12</u>	<u>age 13-18</u>	<u>Adults</u>
Army National Guard	617	419	46
Army	127	88	9
Army Reserve	115	53	2
Air Force	310	117	21
Air National Guard	453	312	16
Air Force Reserve	47	21	4
Navy	36	8	0
Navy Reserve	47	39	0
Marine	13	0	2
Marine Reserve	2	6	0
Coast Guard	26	11	2
Coast Guard Reserve	0	2	0
Other**	0	0	1017
Total	1793	1076	1119

\*Numbers may include repeat participants

\*\*represents participants attending events where branch and component data was not collected

## Mission:

To empower and support the social, emotional, and academic needs of all Ohio National Guard and Reserve Component Youth.

## Goals:

- Create community support networks for military youth "in our own backyard" during deployment and steady state to maintain family resilience.
- Deliver recreational, social, and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities.
- Support military youth coping with the stress of knowing their deployed family members may be in harm's way.
- Collaborate with schools to ensure that staff are attuned to the unique needs of military students.
- Educate the public on the impact of deployment cycles on service members' families, kids, and the community.
- Become a part of the ongoing deployment support services for children and youth where there are military families.

Participating in the family weekend is one of the best experiences for us. This has provided us the opportunity to see our kids try new things and watch them grow. Also, thank you for the chance to meet other military families and confirm that we are not in this alone.

~Emily Croft, OHARNG Spouse

# Outreach and Volunteers

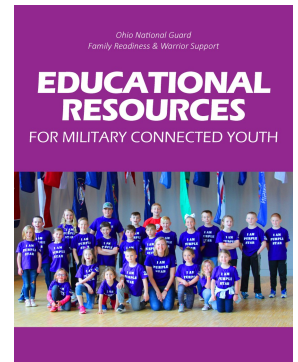
## Education Outreach

Covid-19 continued making it difficult to conduct in-person meetings and presentations, but that did not stop our Education Outreach team from remaining active in our efforts to support military youth throughout the state. In 2020/2021, Education Outreach conducted 17 virtual presentations with County Educational Service Centers, along with several presentations for individual schools/districts and Family and Children First Councils. These presentations afforded our team the opportunity to share information and resources for military youth and families with over 400 teachers, school counselors and administrators. In an effort to bring greater awareness to the Purple Star award throughout the state, a number of virtual events were held during the year, which included:

**3 Round Tables:** The purpose of these round tables was to bring together Purple Star POC's to share best practices and challenges they have in supporting military youth and their families within their school and districts. 33 people in total attended these round tables.

**4 National Town Halls:** These town halls engaged 81 people from 13 states and dealt with topics such as supporting different levels of education, community outreach, family engagement and the state of the Purple Star Award nationally.

**Webinars:** 82 people across 8 states participated in these webinars to share resources available for military youth and families. The topics of some of these webinars included MIC 3, Ohio Military Kids, Family Readiness, Survivor Outreach and Military OneSource...among others.



## Volunteers

The Ohio National Guard Youth Program organized a full calendar of both in-person and virtual events for military youth and families. These events would not have been possible without the generous support of our volunteers. Volunteers fill a variety of roles including, but not limited to, administrative, social media, marketing, hands on support at youth events and logistical support.

- 16 adults and teens volunteered for 5 different events and programs to support military youth and families during FY21.

- The cost savings provided by volunteer support is invaluable. According to the *Independent Sector* (1), the value of volunteer time is currently sitting at \$28.54 per hour. In 2021, volunteers provided over 154 hours of service, totaling almost \$4,400 of value. (1. <https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2021/>, accessed 27 September 2021)

### FY21 Highlights

Youth Symposium— 1  
Family Days and Military Appreciation Events— 1  
Education Outreach— 87  
Day Camps— 13  
Partnered Event—16  
Teen Council Meeting—7  
Community and Partner Trainings—5  
Volunteer Training—15  
Residential Family Camp – 3  
MOMC—2

The support received from these programs and outreach is tremendous. Knowing that our families have a voice and someone watching out for them is a relief.

~MSgt Hurley, OHANG

# Best Practices

## Newsletter – Activities and Resources for Family Resilience

As the state of Ohio began opening back up, the weekly newsletter shifted to a bi-weekly and monthly (currently) publication. The goal of these newsletters remained the same as when it first began during the initial stages of the pandemic: to help keep everyone engaged and growing through a collection of ideas and resources.

14 newsletters were published through the Ohio Military Kid's (OMK) Facebook page in FY '21. A total of 127 planning hours were spent producing high quality editions. These newsletters reached over 16,000 people and included almost 850 direct engagements. Due to this success, the newsletter will remain a fixture for the foreseeable future.

In addition to publishing the newsletter, numerous activities and resources were marketed on the OMK Facebook pages as well. These endeavors took over 80 hours of planning and reached almost 85,000 people with over 6,000 engagements.

## Virtual Programming

Through our continued partnerships over the years with numerous venues and organizations within the state, the Ohio National Guard Youth Program was able to offer a full slate of virtual activities, when in-person programming was not available due to the pandemic. Over 350 youth and teens engaged in 40 hours' worth of programming covering a wide variety of topics and themes, which included:

**Animal Encounters** (9 sessions) – Participants learned about adaptations, animal behavior and care, conservation efforts, and resilience while engaging in programming with Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center, The Wilds, and the Toledo Zoo. They were even able to enjoy virtual Whale Watching with a Marine Life organization located in San Francisco!

**Athletics** (25 sessions) – During the cold winter months, youth and teens were up and moving in the comfort of their own homes with an organization called Amazing Athletes. Each week, activities were focused around practicing a specific sport utilizing household objects and materials. These sessions culminated with a meet and greet opportunity with Columbus Blue Jacket Cam Atkinson.

**History and Science** (3 sessions) – Exploration of ancient cultures and scientific discovery/experimentation were on full display during three programs with Dayton's Boonshoft Museum of Discovery and the Toledo Imagination Station. Topics that were examined included Native American cultures, animal habitats and homes, polymers, water tension, termite reactions, states of matter and laws of motion.



# Teen Programs

## Ohio Military Teen Council

For the majority of FY21, the Ohio Military Teen Council (OMTC) conducted business virtually. 6 Air and 3 Army National Guard teens served on the OMTC in 2021. 5 virtual meetings were conducted, in addition to regular communications via email and phone, as well as a trip to the Region 5 Teen Summit in Wisconsin. The OMTC were involved in outreach efforts by contributing activities and resources for the monthly newsletter, recording educational videos to be shared through the OMK YouTube channel, and by establishing a Pen Pal program with younger military youth throughout the state.

The virtual meetings revolved around issues and topics (chosen by the OMTC) to help them navigate the difficult times as military teens, but to also prepare them for what lies ahead in their future endeavors. The OMTC met with a Personal Financial Counselor to discuss financial literacy and to identify ways to practice money management now so they are better equipped to deal with the financial aspects of life in the future. Another meeting centered on mental health topics including signs of mental health, anxiety, depression and stress, the importance of self-care, common mental health misconceptions, and access to support. Finally, a 3-part series of weekly meetings were conducted with members of the Buckeyes for OMK; a group of college students at The Ohio State University that support the efforts of National Guard Youth Programs and Ohio Military Kids. During these meetings, the OMTC engaged in conversations and training with the Buckeyes about leadership, high school preparations for college, goal setting for the future, collegiate life and involvement, and time management. Four members of the OMTC attended the Region 5 Teen Summit in Wisconsin. The theme of the Summit was “Bounce Back Better: Overcoming the Pandemic and New Normal with Leadership and Resilience. The teens developed an action plan that focused on assisting mental health related issues with military youth and teens. While at the Summit, the teens practiced their resilience skills through energy management, hunting the good stuff, identifying their character strengths, goal setting, real time resilience, and putting things in perspective. They also engaged in (and led) team building activities, ice breakers, energizers, group games, recreational activities, and shared best practices. The teens returned from Wisconsin with new renewed enthusiasm and outstanding ideas to continue helping them serve as the voice for military teens throughout the state of Ohio.

## Teen Resilience Training

Providing tools and skills that enhance the ability of teens to cope with the world around them is an important part of what the program does. The benefit of this curriculum is that it focuses on skills that teens already have and helps them see how to better use the skills. By creating a physically and emotionally safe environment teens can hone these skills while being supported by their peers.

In 2021 Ohio was not successful in having any teens register for resilience trainings as stand alone events. In 2022 we will be embedding the resilience lessons in other events to broaden the reach of the lessons. Past feedback from our teens and their families has been extremely positive celebrating the skills strengthened as a result of the program. In 2022 there are plans to further increase the reach of this valuable program through more opportunities for teens to participate current ideas include resilience drills. Teens come to drill with their soldier and spend the day learning resilience. Through these efforts our goal is maximize reach and impact of the trainings.





# Partners and Contact

## State and National Partners

### Partners make the difference

Through state and national partners military families have increased access to events and resources. Partners are involved in a variety of ways including; access to resources, volunteer groups, educational programs and funding support with many partners supporting in more than one way.

Partnering with organizations such as the Ohio Department of Education has positively impacted our Education Outreach initiative by providing a direct link to the latest information through the education system that has benefited our Military Families. Through this collaboration over 200 youth have been identified by their schools and resources given to the families. Nationally it is only required to capture the active component however, in Ohio due to the awareness brought by the National Guard, the schools will include all components.

As a program, our strongest collaborators continue to be Ohio Military Kids, Ohio 4-H and the USO of Central and Southern Ohio. Through this partnership persons and organizations that wish to support with funding can make the donation to The Ohio State University marked for Ohio Military Kids and those funds go directly to programs for youth and families. This partner funding is what allows all program in Ohio to be open to any branch of service.



## For Additional Information

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### Find us on Facebook:

Search: Ohio National Guard Strong Families or  
Ohio Operation: Military Kids

### You can also access program information at:

[ong.ohio.gov/frg/FRG\\_youthprograms.html](http://ong.ohio.gov/frg/FRG_youthprograms.html)