

RHODE ISLAND ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

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Annual Report
2021





Mission

Our mission is to ensure that military children and youth have the tools and resources they need to be resilient while supporting their social, emotional, educational, and recreational needs.

Goals

- Identify and support military youth and families throughout the deployment cycle by providing resources, opportunities, referrals, and support services
- Develop and facilitate meaningful trainings, programming, and activities that support the social, emotional, educational, and recreational needs of military youth while building resiliency skills and community
- Gather military youth from around the state to learn, grow, explore, and have fun, while cultivating a support network of peers
- Educate and provide resources to the community, especially schools and professionals working with military youth, on the impact of the deployment cycle on youth, families, and the community
- Create, nurture, and encourage community support networks for military youth

Participants Served

| Branch/Component | Adults | Ages 6-12 | Ages 13-18 |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Army National Guard | 3,074 | 1,126 | 375 |
| Air National Guard | 1,120 | 550 | 357 |
| Army Active | 204 | 58 | 68 |
| Army Reserve | 263 | 185 | 22 |
| Air Force Active | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Air Force Reserve | 46 | 6 | 16 |
| Navy Active | 395 | 213 | 158 |
| Navy Reserve | 96 | 90 | 44 |
| Marine Active | 38 | 25 | 16 |
| Marine Reserve | 10 | 9 | 4 |
| Coast Guard Active | 162 | 60 | 50 |
| Other | 546 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL: | 5,958 | 2,326 | 1,112 |

Programming Hours
 146.25

Resources & Referrals
 1,472

Ages 0-5 Served
 1,187

Total Youth Served
 4,625



Program Highlights

- 24 Virtual Day Camps • 6 Family Days/Appreciation Events
- 2 Military Family Program Events • 19 Community & Partner Trainings/Briefings
- 8 Month of the Military Child Events • 1 Virtual Master Resiliency 2-Hour Training
- 4 Teen Council Meetings/Trainings • 1 Volunteer Training
- 4 Yellow Ribbon Events Supported • 16 Virtual Activity Packets
- 2 Red Cross Virtual Youth Preparedness Classes

Volunteers

- 84 adult and youth volunteers logged 242 hours
- Volunteers supported our in-person and drive-thru events
- Volunteers assisted with sorting and packaging Camp-in-a Bags and Month of the Military Child Appreciation Swag Bags
- Volunteers are our force multipliers and help us to increase our capacity. Without them, we would not be able to safely, efficiently, and effectively hold large events and reach such a broad audience.



Teen Council

This summer we started a new initiative to support military teens, while recruiting and sustaining Teen Council membership. 11 military dependent teens joined us for a Virtual 2-Hour Teen Resilience Training class, and then took part in our Military Teen Leadership Summer Series. We met in-person once a month over the summer to connect, participate in teambuilding activities, and put our resiliency and leadership skills into practice. Teens went rock climbing, took on a challenge course at the University of Rhode Island, and learned photography skills during a workshop at the Wickford Art Association. The series of events enabled the teens to build strong relationships with one another and gave them something to look forward to during the summer months. Our Summer Series proved to be successful in training, engaging, and recruiting, and all 11 teens continue to engage with our Teen Council.

Teen Resilience Program

As a pre-requisite to our Military Teen Leadership Summer Series, the teens were required to go through the 2-Hour Teen Resilience Training before participating in the events. This gave everyone common language and skills to use, which made the discussions and learning during the Summer Series more meaningful.

11 Army National Guard teens, ages 11 and up, were trained on the Hunt the Good Stuff, Goal Setting, and Activating Event, Thoughts, and Consequences Master Resiliency Training modules.



Best Practices

Month of the Military Child- Making Connections

We filled April with so many events and opportunities to celebrate our military youth. We awarded certificates of appreciation, celebrated Purple Up! Day all over social media, and had two drive-thru events where families could pick up Appreciation Swag Bags and Museum-themed Camp-in-a-Bags to use during their school vacation week! But, at the end of the month, we tried something totally different! In an effort to connect with military youth from all over, we partnered with Patrick Perez to hold our virtual Rhythm of Resilience training and dance party! Military youth from RI, New England, and even a few from across the country, logged on, learned some resiliency skills, bonded, laughed, and even learned a few new break dancing moves while getting some exercise! It was fun and a great way to end our month-long celebration.



"[Participation with the Youth Program has prepared my family for deployment and frequent separations] by building their self confidence and letting them know that they are not alone in their struggles as Military Youth."

-Written Response from the 2021 Soldier-Parent Survey

Wild About Summer- Staying Engaged with Virtual Activity Packets

Although we offered a few in-person events this summer, not all families were ready to get back to our outdoor adventures, but we still wanted to keep them engaged. So, a collaborative team of Child & Youth Program Coordinators created an 8-week Virtual Activity Packet series called, Wild About Summer, where each issue taught about a different animal as well as provided programming in resilience skills, fitness, social-emotional learning, connection to family and the national guard community, healthy living, life-skills, history, and science. Nationwide, thousands of packets were sent through email, traditional mail, and shared on social media, in efforts to connect with military youth and to provide valuable programming and resilience skills. In Rhode Island alone, 872 packets were sent out this summer.



Community Partnerships

Together with youth, adults, schools, civic groups, military and private organizations, we have created a support network that is growing larger and stronger! This collaboration has provided much needed support for our amazing military kids and families.



Hasbro donated over 900 toys to military children during the holidays.



The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association donated kayak trips for 40 people



The Rhode Island Parent Information Network has a military liaison to help meet the needs of military youth in the public school system.



Operation Homefront's Backpack Brigade program supplied RI military youth with over 600 backpacks filled with school supplies donated by our community.



Our national partners, Child Care Aware, Our Military Kids, and Tutor.com, have supported countless Rhode Island military families, especially during deployments and the Covid-19 pandemic.



Naval Station Newport supported our "purple" programs, promoting them to the families of their Naval War College and Child Development Center.



Stop & Shop donated refreshments to our Halloween Bash and Resource Fair and provided food for our two family events.



CVS donated candy and prizes for our Halloween Bash and Resource Fair.



The Elks Lodge #1899 donated funding for our family event, Carnival for Heroes.



The American Legion Auxiliary Post 85 held a month-long fundraiser for the Month of the Military Child. They turned their entire space purple to honor military children. They donated all of the raised funds to support extra-curricular programs for military youth, to include 100 passes to a local trampoline park and face painters for our family event, Carnival for Heroes.



Connect with us!



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"Programs like this are so important...The pandemic has been difficult on my kids, especially [my teenagers]. Being able to participate this summer has given me a huge appreciation for what you do. Seeing how happy they are to participate and see their friends is amazing. It's a relief to know that whenever I am away from home for the military, my kids can lean on the other military kids they have met through the Youth Program. Thank you for what you do and keep it up!"

-Parent Response from Post-Event Survey, August 2021