

Virgin Islands
Army National Guard
Child & Youth Program
FY21 Annual Report



Virgin Islands National Guard, JFHQ
RR1 Box 9201
Kingshill, VI 00850-9731



Mission

The mission of the Virgin Islands Army National Guard (ARNG) CYSS Program is to promote and sustain the quality of life and resilience of all VIARNG dependent children and youth by providing secure, timely, flexible, high-quality support services and enrichment programs that support readiness and resilience

Goals

In order to meet the mission and continue to promote resilience, healthy development, and ease transition into adulthood the Virgin Islands CYSS goals are:



Education: Program based hands on life skills education to VIANG youth.



Access: Gain and secure access to Federal and Territory benefits that support VIANG dependents and youth.



Opportunity: Align government, community, and private sector partnerships for opportunities VIARNG dependents and youth to participate in programs, events, and activities.



Communication: Connect VIARNG community by creating secure opportunities to network with other youth, parents/legal guardians, and youth program facilitators in the territory, and across the nation.



Resilience: Infuse resiliency and leadership skills and techniques into all VIARNG children and youth programs.



Outreach: Create awareness and sustain contact with parents/legal guardians, and children of the VIANG

Volunteers... Our Hearts

The VIARNG Child & Youth volunteers are the cornerstones of every program, activity, and outreach project hosted by CYSS. During FY21, our 36 volunteers stepped in as drivers, assisted with family recruitment, teen panel projects, updating records, and soldiers recognition. The CYSS team also ensured territory volunteers participated in updated Covid-19 safety training. The CYSS team is preparing for an increase in in-person activities during FY22. Therefore, in the last quarter, it was a high priority to ensure our volunteers' safety by training them in best practices and VI Dept. of Health protocols. The CYSS program is also striving to increase the number of volunteers by targeting specific areas of interest expressed by unit leadership and FRG representatives.

"You represent illustrative examples of our core values such as, "loyalty, duty, personal courage, and self-less service. You also represent inspiring leader characteristics like "care" and "trust" to our organization and our community. For these and many more reasons, I personally appreciate, respect, and salute you."

-COL. Cassiano

FY21 Highlights

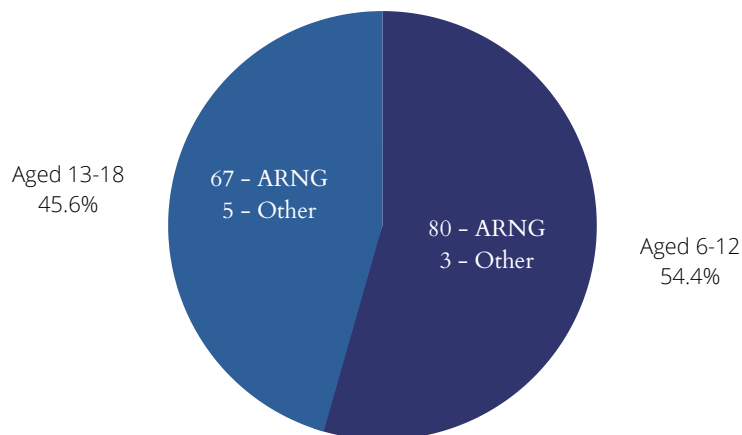
- 3 - TERRITORIAL DAY CAMPS
- 6 - COMMUNITY AND PARTNER MEETINGS/TRAININGS
- 4 - TEEN COUNCIL MEETINGS
- 4 - YELLOW RIBBON VIRTUAL PROGRAM
- 6 - VOLUNTEER TRAININGS
- 3- MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD ACTIVITIES
- 16 - UNIT/SOLIDER SUPPORT BRIEFINGS



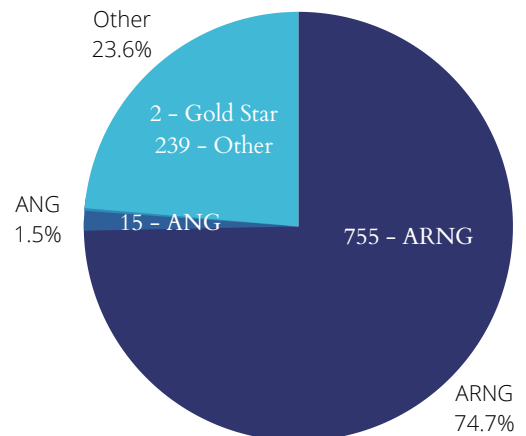
*"Khleid enjoyed himself very much with the activities, presenters, field trips, meeting friends, and the leaders; he's looking forward to next year. He wished the camp was longer."
-CW4 Atasha Randolph*

Participants Served

Children and Teens



Adults



Program Highlights

MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD ACTIVITIES

MOMC activities honored the VIARNG children with a box full of activities. "Camp in Ah Box" Activities included social, physical, mental, and academic opportunities for youth to do with family and virtual friends. VI CYP highlighted the vital role children play in the Military through media blasts and social media posts filled with resources and celebrations of achievement.



TERRITORIAL DAY CAMPS

Summer of services opportunities offered during FY21 occurred territory-wide. These camps were designed to build community involvement skills in our military youth while promoting service above self connections with other military children and VIARNG community volunteers.



Stronger Together... Community Partners



The VIARNG Child & Youth Community Partnership during FY21 was limited to government and non-profit agencies; the VI dept. Of Education, the Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls VI, and 4-H. All the mentioned partnerships were limited to a shared common vision and leverage of resources between agencies. the goals of partnering with VI dept. Of Education strengthened the VING C&Y program by identifying the student population served in public elementary, middle, and high schools. This partnership began the groundwork for identifying national guard students and the schools that aids them in the territory. Continued partnerships with the youth development non-profit agencies during 2021 allowed for more efficient use of resources and better alignment post-Covid-19 for the Family readiness group goals and mission. The established partnership resulted in a virtual approach to programming that connects VING C&Y participants with other children in the community without exposing them to Covid-19. The 2022 prospected partnership vision is to build on the past year through evaluation & partnership. VI CYP 2022 priorities include connection with diverse national and local partners, exposing the VIARNG Child and Youth nationally through programs and competitions.

State Teen Panel Overview

The Territorial State Teen Panel maintains an active Territory Teen Panel (STP) composed of Virgin Island youth delegates from ARNG units within the St. Croix, St. Thomas and the St. John districts. VIARNG teens who participated on the State Teen Panel pushed through various challenges during FY21. The C&Y program's Vacancies and the Safer at home mandates established by the USVI dept of Health contributed to the STP's ability to connect with consistency and sustainability. The 2021 Panel set on September 24, 2021, intends to rebuild, recruit, and re energize VIARNG teens voice. The panel will access issues and concerns outreach during the next meeting in January of 2022. They will also provide feedback on core programs and communicate youth needs impacting their academic success. The Lead Coordinator will support the STP by developing and maintaining position descriptions for the STP and ensuring that all panel officers and members are registered as statutory volunteers. The US Virgin Islands active STP will closely mimic the National Guard Teen Panel, including officer position, orientation training, and convene at a minimum quarterly either face-to-face or via conference call during 2022.

FY21 Covid-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted the way the VI CYP developed and delivered programming. Like most programs, the VI CYP attempted to move directly into the virtual youth development world. By the beginning of the first quarter of FY21, we quickly pulled back and returned to the drawing board. The team identified two main challenges that forced the program to develop best practices suitable for the population served. The realization that many youths in the VI have limited access to the internet and the VIARNG children's ability to access virtual programming were not widely considered initially within the Program. The team realized VIARNG families desired their children's need for more hands-on activities that require limited digital dependency. Therefore VI CYP began the camp in a box programming. The VIARNG CYS staff demonstrated a high degree of flexibility and adaptability by quickly creating safeguards procedures with opportunities for youth to meet in small in-person groups. By the end of FY21, through the utilization of outdoor spacing, targeted grouping, and hybrid programming, VIARNG youth and volunteers participated in online training platforms, activity boxes, and available online resources at higher rates.

"The location was ideal especially in this covid-related times, to keep the camp outdoors at alltimes under covering was much better than in an a/c building where germs quicker multiply. Being centrally located was a plus as well.." SFC Ruth Forrup, VIARNG



Emmanuella Perez-Cassius

Lead Child and Youth Coordinator

Dynamic Systems Technology Inc. - Contractor

Virgin Islands Army National Guard

O: 340-712-8017

C: 340-643-7431

Email: cycstx1@gmail.com



VING Child & Youth Services