

Virginia Army National
Guard Youth Program

ANNUAL REPORT FY21



"The [Youth Program] really cares about our kids here in Virginia and develops lifelong relationships!"
-Soldier-Parent Survey FY21

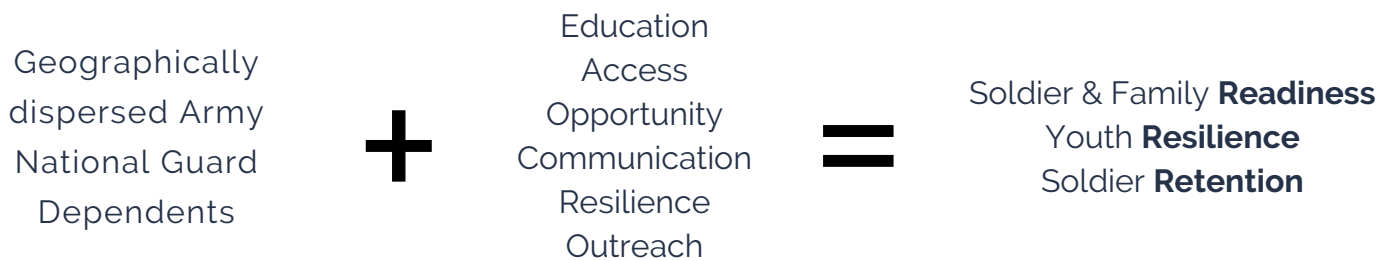
MISSION

The mission of the Army National Guard (ARNG) Child & Youth Services (CYS) is to promote and sustain the quality of life and resilience of Army National Guard dependent children and youth by providing secure, timely, flexible, high-quality support services and enrichment programs.

GOALS

- Education:** Provide developmentally-appropriate life skills.
- Access:** Provide information about benefits that support NG children and Families.
- Opportunity:** Participate in programs, events, and activities geared toward the behavioral and physical health and welfare of children and youth.
- Communication:** Build a sense of belonging within the ARNG community and network.
- Resilience:** Infuse resiliency and leadership skills and techniques into all ARNG children and youth programs.
- Outreach:** Build/sustain contact with families of the NG in order to create awareness of available support services.

IMPACT STRATEGY



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



- 7 Yellow Ribbon Events
- 1 Virtual Youth Camp
- 32 Virtual Events and Engagements
- 6 Day Camps
- 2 Education Outreach Events
- 9 State Teen Panel Trainings/Meetings
- 1 State Teen Panel Service Projects
- 2 Community Partnership Meetings
- 1 Virtual Region 3 Symposium



PARTICIPATION

158 Youth
Ages 6-12

141 Army National Guard
17 Air National Guard

47 Youth Ages 0-5

139 Youth
Ages 13-18

131 Army National Guard
8 Air National Guard

102 Programming Hours

1240 Adults Engaged

1,156 Army National Guard
1 Active Army
1 Active Air Force
2 Active Navy
1 Active Marine
79 Other Military

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

11 Volunteers
91 Hours Served

"I love volunteering because you will only get as much out of it as you put into it. The children of the guard are so special. And we have the ability to unite them all and show them they have a bigger community around them than they know of that can relate to them and help build them up in so many ways."

-Emma Ross (18), ARNG Youth Volunteer of the Year



Our volunteers are valued members of the VANG Youth Program and were appreciated more than ever during this past year, as many stepped up to help with the transition back to in-person events. Throughout the year, volunteers dedicated their time and talents to a variety of roles, including logistical support, virtual camp preparation, activity facilitation, and much more. Our volunteers also played a crucial role in the return to in-person events, by dedicating their time to help supervise our Youth. Without our committed volunteers, we wouldn't have been able to successfully execute our series of Day Camps this past summer. And our teen volunteers have been imperative this past year, as well. Our very own Emma Ross was awarded the 2020 Volunteer Youth of the Year by the NGB Service Member & Family Readiness Division! We're extremely grateful for our volunteers and their support.

MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINING



Due to the virtual nature of most of our programming, we were unable to facilitate any full modules of Master Resilience Training. MRT, however, did contribute to the successful programming of the Region 3 Virtual Youth Symposium in March, providing a source of reference for the discussion and games, as most of the teens had gone through the curriculum. Additionally, when programming was able to return to face to face training, Hunt The Good Stuff, from the MRT curriculum, was used as a debriefing strategy at the end of the youth events. We are excited to bring MRT back into the regular programming of the Youth Program next year.



STATE TEEN PANEL

The Virginia National Guard State Teen Panel is a statutory volunteer group of 12 teens from across the commonwealth who work with the child and youth coordinators in supporting the youth of the Virginia National Guard. The State Teen Panel participated in six meetings and several events in various capacities throughout the year. At the Region 3 Virtual Youth Symposium, members from Virginia's and the state's Panels presented to the other delegates on strategies their states had used to stay resilient and connected during the pandemic. The Region agreed to meet together virtually in the early fall for a follow up with hopes to return to face to face symposiums in 2022. Members of the VANG Teen Panel also played crucial roles in the planning and execution of much of the programming and educational content for the Virtual Camp. One of those teens, Emma Ross, was also awarded the National Guard 2020 Volunteer Youth of the Year for her continual and significant work throughout the year during COVID 19 to make our programs successful. She and other members of the State Teen Panel closed out the year volunteering at the Officer/Enlisted Conference Military Ball. Through their continual participation throughout the year during COVID-19 we have seen the development of our Panel's leadership, confidence, and creativity.



"Thank you so much for giving our children this opportunity. I know that [my daughter] had an amazing time. The pictures prove it was a lovely evening."
 - Kristy Price, SMSgt VANG and Parent

BEST PRACTICE: DAY CAMPS



We had a busy and fulfilling summer with National Guard youth, as we began to return to in-person, Day Camps! "Camp on the Move!" was a series of five, single-day events, hosted at 4-H centers across Virginia, throughout the summer. These camps focused on building connections and resilience among Virginia National Guard youth. At these events, youth engaged in activities such as archery, low-ropes courses, fishing, canoeing, wilderness survival trainings, and team building activities. They were given opportunities to build skills in mental toughness, leadership, and collaboration. These events were a great way for our National Guard youth to connect through common experiences, build lasting friendships, develop resilience, and just have some fun.

BEST PRACTICE: VIRTUAL YOUTH CAMP

Due to COVID-19, we hosted a week-long Virtual Camp for the second summer in a row. We had 39 campers and 3 National Guard Teens participate in the online experience. The virtual camp explored math, science and art through fun, interactive activities and games. We utilized a combination of private Facebook Group live streams, group video calls, and a mailed camp box full of camp supplies and materials for all the group projects they would be doing throughout the week. We were able to bring together campers from all around the state in the comfort and safety of their own home. We have a dedicated staff that hopes to grow the program and bring in even more youth to these events. We are certainly looking forward to get back to an in-person summer camp in 2022!



PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Our state and national partners expand our reach and impact to National Guard Families through the programs and services they provide. Many of these partners below continued to offer their services online. We worked with United Through Reading to support the virtual United Through Reading Campaign, where our Virginia National Guard Teens recorded themselves reading to promote the importance of early-literacy and to make children's books accessible for military families across the nation. The YMCA has also continued to open their doors to our National Guard youth, who have continued with virtual learning this school-year. And fortunately, many of our partners were able to safely offer in-person services again. Virginia 4H offered five, in-person day camps and The American Red Cross was able to attend and support these events, by providing personal hygiene kits for our youth. We are grateful for all their content and assistance to National Guard families throughout this unprecedented year.



MEET OUR YOUTH COORDINATORS



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