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Army National Guard Child & Youth Services Newsletter

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



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Weekend Drill Child Care Now Available Nationwide

Finding care during a drill weekend can be a challenge for Guard families. Weekend Drill Child Care helps make those weekends easier by connecting eligible Army National Guard families with no-cost care for children from 6 weeks through age 12.

The program is now available in all 54 states and territories, including the District of Columbia, giving more families access to care near home or their drill location. Eligible families can request care for drill weekends when their usual caregiver is unavailable because of work, school commitments.

Learn more about eligibility and how to book at **Upwards Military Childcare** or contact your local Child and Youth Services coordinator.



Honoring Our Veterans

THANK YOU!!

This Veterans Day, we thank all who have served and continue to serve our country. We're especially grateful to the veterans who volunteer with Child and Youth Services and share their time and care with military-connected children and families. Your continued service strengthens the community we're proud to serve. Thank you for all you've given and all you continue to do.

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ACROSS THE GUARD: PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

From leadership development and resilience activities to summer camps and family events, Child and Youth teams across the Guard helped youth learn, connect and make lasting memories.

Oregon youth had a summer filled with learning and adventure. Two Military Teen Panel members represented military youth at the OSU 4-H Summer Conference, where they explored university-led classes and connected with peers from across the state. At Spy Camp on the Move, younger participants practiced fingerprinting, invisible ink and code-making before putting their new skills to work on spy missions. The camp also featured guests from the Oregon State Police K9 unit and a local library.



Two more teen panel members attended the National Keystone Conference in Orlando, joining youth from across the country for leadership development and community service. Back home, Oregon's new Teen Panel year began with a retreat focused on teamwork, resilience and planning. The summer wrapped up with a Back-to-School Bash at the Oregon Military Museum, where families picked up school supplies, explored community resources and connected with one another.



Alaska hosted seven camps for youth ages 6–18. A teen leadership camp at the JBER High Ropes Course, held with the Counterdrug Support Team, gave participants the chance to practice communication, problem-solving and teamwork. As they took on low and high ropes elements, teens challenged themselves and built trust in their teammates. The camp also inspired five first-time participants to join the Youth Council for the coming year.

At North **Idaho** Day Camp, 13 youth reconnected with peers and took on a high ropes course that called for communication, decision-making and problem-solving. Campers also set goals and made a plan to reach them on the climbing wall. A 4-H session on nutritious foods offered another opportunity to learn, collaborate and build leadership skills.

Washington's summer camps brought youth ages 9 and up together for leadership activities, resilience lessons, STEM, arts and crafts, physical fitness and challenge courses. Campers embraced each new experience, supported by teen leaders and adult volunteers who helped make the summer memorable.

A Year of Connection, Growth and Impact

Army National Guard Child and Youth Services made a difference for military-connected families throughout FY26. with monthly reports reflecting **73,525 military-connected youth served**. CYS teams also hosted **3,093 events, activities, and community building opportunties.** Coordinators provided more than **11,300 hours of programming**, with help from nearly **4,800 volunteers** who contributed more than **109,000 hours**. Along the way, teams made **45,694 resource and referral connections** and worked with more than **2,000 community partners**.

Families who participated shared how much these opportunities meant to them. Among participating families who responded to the feedback form, the average satisfaction rating was **4.49 out of 5**, and nearly **87%** rated their experience very or extremely satisfying. Families especially valued the life skills and resilience their children developed, as well as the emotional support and chance to connect with other Guard families.

Military leaders also recognized the program's value. In the Leadership Insight form, **91%** agreed or strongly agreed that CYS resources and programs help increase Soldiers' mission readiness. **Nine in ten** said CYS plays an important role in helping families build resilience and cope with military life, while **84%** said CYS services positively affect Soldier retention. Leaders also praised the dedication of program staff and the opportunities CYS creates for youth to connect with peers who understand the National Guard experience.

The feedback offers a helpful reminder, too: there are families who have yet to learn about CYS. Among respondents whose children had not participated, 39% said they were unaware of the programs. Sharing information and building connections will help more families discover the opportunities available to them.

Thank you to the families, Soldiers, leaders, volunteers, community partners and CYS staff who made this year possible. Together, you helped create meaningful experiences for youth and strengthen support for Guard families.

> The [CYS] program provides a framework for kids to network, grow, and develop in ways that traditional schools or camps don't do. My daughter gets to do this all with a sense of care and giving back to the community. Throughout the year, numerous moments have highlighted the significance of the work conducted by the Child & Youth program.
>
> CPT Guerrero, AZARNG





HELPING MILITARY KIDS KEEP DOING WHAT THEY LOVE

Our Military Kids helps eligible military children stay involved in activities they enjoy during a parent's deployment or recovery from a combat-related injury or illness. The organization offers grants of up to $300 per eligible child for extracurricular activities such as sports, music and performing arts, camps, tutoring, driver's education and STEM programs. Grant funding goes toward the activity provider, helping families cover costs while children build skills, explore interests and stay connected to their communities.

The program serves children ages 1–18, or those who have not yet graduated from high school. Eligible families include those with a National Guard or Reserve parent who is deployed or activated for a qualifying mission, as well as families of service members and veterans receiving care for combat-related injuries or illnesses. Eligibility details and application requirements vary by program, so families should review the information before applying.

Learn more and apply at **ourmilitarykids.org/apply**

Disclaimer: Sharing of resources in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by NGB, any contract vendor or the PM Team.

BRING MILITARY FAMILY APPRECIATION MONTH TO YOUR CLASSROOM

November is a great time to help students learn about and celebrate the military families in their communities. Since 1996, November has been recognized as Military Family Appreciation Month. This year, the Army National Guard Child and Youth Program invites educators and classrooms across the country to take part, with a special focus on military-connected youth.

Our classroom activity packet makes it easy to get started. It includes background information, activities and ideas educators can use to spark conversation and recognize the experiences and contributions of military families.

Know an educator who might enjoy sharing these activities with their class? Families and community partners are encouraged to pass the packet along to schools in their area.

Download it from the **Army National Guard Child and Youth Services website.**



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