

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

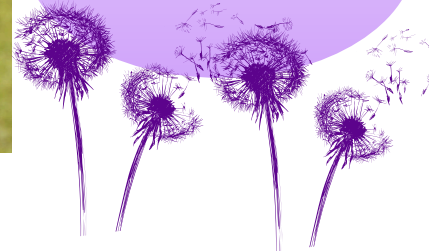
It's More Than A Program...It's A Promise!

NEWS LETTER



IN THIS ISSUE:

- MOMC & Purple Up!
- Volunteer Appreciation
- Teens on the Move
- GTP Spotlight
- Spring Garden Tips
- Resource Spotlight



APRIL IS THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Month of the Military Child (MOMC), is a special time to celebrate and honor the resilience, strength, and contributions of military-connected youth. Throughout the month, [our local programs](#) will be hosting a variety of events and activities to recognize these amazing young people. From hands-on experiences to special celebrations, there are plenty of opportunities for military youth to connect, have fun, and be recognized for their unique role in the military community.

As part of our MOMC celebration, we're excited to offer three creative contests:

- **Recipe Contest** – Share a favorite family dish and its significance for a chance to be featured in an upcoming publication.
- **Photo Contest** – Capture a moment that represents military life, adventure, or resilience.
- **Backpack Design Contest** – Show off your creativity by designing a backpack that reflects what being a National Guard kid means to you.

We are excited to see our National Guard youth embrace this year's theme and take part in the many opportunities MOMC has to offer. [Check out our MOMC page](#), and get ready to celebrate—your adventure starts here!

NATIONAL GUARD CELEBRATES PURPLE UP DAY ON APRIL 11TH

Get ready to Purple Up on April 11 as we celebrate the strength and resilience of military children! Wearing purple is a simple but powerful way to show appreciation for their sacrifices and recognize that military kids serve, too. Join us by sporting your best purple, spreading the word, and making sure our military youth feel celebrated!



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CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS: THE HEART OF CYS

April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month, a time to recognize the incredible individuals who dedicate their time and talents to making a difference. Volunteers are the backbone of our program, providing invaluable support, mentorship, and encouragement to military youth across the nation.

In FY24 alone, 5,710 volunteers contributed more than 143,400 hours of service across 2,655 programs. Their dedication ensures that military-connected youth have access to enriching opportunities, meaningful connections, and a strong sense of community.

We are deeply grateful for the impact our volunteers make every day. Thank you for your service, your passion, and your commitment to empowering the next generation!

HONORING OUR NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to the FY24 National Guard Youth Volunteer Award winner for Region 4, Santiago Quiroz! Santi's dedication to the Child and Youth Program goes beyond the camp experience—he actively supports military youth year-round, ensuring they have positive and meaningful experiences just as he did when he was younger. Always the first to step up and help, Santi contributed 96 hours of service in FY24, participating in events such as the Teen Leadership Retreat, Youth Camp, Youth Hunts, Soldier for a Day, and more. His positive attitude, reliability, and welcoming nature make him a true leader and role model. The South Carolina Child and Youth Program looks forward to celebrating this well-earned recognition with Santi and his peers at camp!



We also extend our congratulations to the other outstanding Youth Volunteer Award winners for FY24:

- Isaiah Morgan – Region 1
- Malaika Wande – Region 3
- Dakota Duke – Region 6
- Sofia Schwartze – Region 7
- Kamryn Stauffacher – Region 8
- Cyrus Sapien – Region 9
- Jasmine Detweiler – Region 10



Thank you to all of our dedicated youth volunteers for their service and commitment to making a difference!

A HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN VOLUNTEERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary from Dane County, Wisconsin, for their incredible support of Month of the Military Child. These dedicated volunteers packed 500 kits for military youth, ensuring they feel celebrated and appreciated during this special month. Lead Coordinator JD Engelhardt also brought smiles by reading Brownie the War Dog to the Auxiliary members, adding a special touch to the day.



Your generosity and commitment make a lasting impact on Wisconsin's military families—thank you for your dedication to those who serve!

TEENS ON THE MOVE

CALIFORNIA TEEN PANEL LEADS THE WAY IN MARKETING AND OUTREACH

Being a military teen comes with unique experiences, challenges, and opportunities. In California, the Teen Panel is working hard to highlight these experiences while also promoting the benefits of participating in the program. Through an innovative marketing initiative, these teens are using social media to connect, inform, and inspire their peers.

Currently, the California Teen Council and CYP staff are collaborating with the CAARNG Marketing Team to create engaging content that showcases the program. Their goal is to grow their digital presence, enhance engagement, and build a strong online community of CAARNG teens, families, and service members. The teens take the lead in identifying trends they want to replicate to market the program, while CYP staff and marketing professionals help film and edit the content. In some cases, videos are even produced by the Teen Council's own Public Affairs Officer, Maleigh Gomez.

This social media push has quickly become the panel's most effective marketing tool. With over 20,000 monthly views on Instagram, their content is reaching a wide audience and creating a sense of camaraderie among their members. By working closely with Public Affairs, Marketing, Recruiting, and Retention offices, they have built a strong network that supports their mission.

Beyond marketing, the initiative is providing valuable life skills and career development for the teens involved. They are gaining hands-on experience in digital media, communications, and public relations—skills that are highly valuable in today's job market. Additionally, their teamwork, leadership, and networking efforts are setting them up for future success.

The California Teen Panel's dedication to this initiative highlights the power of youth-led engagement. Their efforts not only spread awareness of available programs and resources but also create a supportive and informed community for military teens across the state.

Through their creativity, leadership, and teamwork, Cyrus, Abbi, Maile, Ophelia, Maleigh, Laurel, David, Charlotte, Nathan, Maya, Jacey, Natalie, and Anarely are proving that military youth have a powerful voice—and they're making sure it's heard! Keep an eye on their social media efforts, and if you're a California military teen, consider joining the Teen Panel to be part of this exciting movement.



TEEN COUNCIL PRESIDENT
Cyrus Sapien

"Being a military child means embracing change and carrying resilience in my heart. It's growing up with a deep sense of adaptability, knowing that home is not just a place, but the people that stand beside me.

Through the Child and Youth Program, I have found not just support, but a family that has propelled my leadership, empowered my voice, and shown me that no matter where I go, I am never alone."



MAYA

JACEY

ABBI

LAUREL

NATALIE



**Interested in
Joining Teen
Panel?**

**Connect with your
local CYS Program.**

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Page 3

GUARD TEEN PANEL

SPOTLIGHT



THE GUARD TEEN PANEL: EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

For over twenty years, the Army National Guard Child and Youth Services (CYS) Program has connected thousands of Guard youth across the country, fostering leadership, resilience, and community impact. At the heart of this effort is the Guard Teen Panel (GTP)—a dedicated group of military-connected teens who serve as advocates, role models, and voices for their peers.

GTP members play a crucial role in shaping programs and initiatives that support military youth. They work closely with their State Teen Panels to identify challenges and opportunities within their communities, then collaborate to develop solutions that they present to National Guard leadership and stakeholders at the national level. These young leaders help ensure that the unique experiences of Guard teens are recognized, leading to meaningful changes that benefit youth across the country.

Beyond advocacy, GTP members develop valuable leadership skills that prepare them for future success. Through their participation, they engage in problem-solving, teamwork, and public speaking, all while forming strong connections with other military youth. They also serve as mentors, helping younger Guard teens navigate the challenges of military life and encouraging them to get involved.

We are excited to welcome our newest Guard Teen Panel members! Their voices and experiences are essential in strengthening the support available to military youth nationwide. As they step into their roles, we look forward to seeing their impact grow and their leadership shine.

Welcome to the team, GTP delegates—we can't wait to see all you accomplish!



SADIE FOOTE
REGION 6 DELEGATE

Sadie Foote, a sophomore from Oklahoma, was born into a military family and values faith, family, and service to her country. She is actively involved in her school community, participating in Key Club, Beautification Club, and Sophomore Class Council. A dedicated Girl Scout for 10 years, she has earned her Bronze and Silver Awards and is currently working toward her Gold Award.

Academically driven, Sadie takes all honors classes and is a member of the National Honor Society. While she has enjoyed playing basketball, soccer, volleyball, and track, she is currently focused on her studies. Looking ahead, she plans to earn a business degree to achieve her goal of owning a salon. She is also awaiting acceptance into her local VOTech's Cosmetology program, where she hopes to earn her certification before graduating in 2027.

Fun Fact: My favorite color is purple, which makes April - Month of the Military Child - even more special

Lucy Toe, an 11th grader from North Carolina, has always dreamed of becoming a doctor. With aspirations of becoming an anesthesiologist and opening her own clinic, she draws inspiration from her parents—especially her mother, who held her family together during her father’s deployments. Seeing their strength and dedication has motivated her to work hard toward her goals and give back to others.

Passionate about service, Lucy hopes to inspire and support other military-connected youth facing similar challenges. Her dedication to leadership and community involvement led her to join the Guard Teen Panel, where she looks forward to making a positive impact.

Outside of school, Lucy enjoys reading, writing, drawing, and painting. She is also actively involved in her school and community, serving as Junior Class President of her school’s Student Council, a member of HOSA, and a Junior Usher at her church. Through these roles, she has built strong friendships and gained valuable mentorship that continues to shape her leadership journey.



LUCY TOE
REGION 4 DELEGATE

Fun Fact: My native name is Yude. It comes from the Grebo Tribe in Liberia, West Africa.



KENDRA BORJA

REGION 9 DELEGATE

Kendra Borja, a sophomore from Nevada, has been involved with Child and Youth Program events from a young age, sparking her passion for community service and leadership. Surrounded by inspiring leaders in her family and friends, she developed a strong desire to give back and stay engaged.

She is currently studying in the Veterinary Science Program at a Career and Technical Academy, with a particular love for animal science, chemistry, and math. In addition to academics, Kendra is actively involved in student council, where she enjoys planning events and creating posters, and she serves as the Sophomore Class Vice President. She is also a member of the National Honor Society.

An avid athlete, Kendra has played competitive soccer, swim, basketball, cheer, volleyball, and dance. Her main sport is volleyball, which she has played for four years. She currently competes as a libero on a club volleyball travel team. She also enjoys watching sports and is a big fan of volleyball and football, frequently attending Vegas Thrill and UNLV football games.

As a Guard Teen Panel representative, Kendra is eager to connect with youth, encourage leadership development, and help others feel more confident in their abilities. She is excited to serve her region and make a meaningful impact!





RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Looking for ways to connect, grow, and thrive in your community? Blue Star Neighborhood by Blue Star Families offers access to local resources, career opportunities, exclusive perks, and exciting events. Whether you're looking for volunteer opportunities, discounts, or a supportive digital community, there's something for everyone. If you're an active duty service member, Veteran, or military family member, you belong here! Sign up today and start exploring all The Neighborhood has to offer.

For more information:
<https://neighborhood.bluestarfamily.com.org/>

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

SPRING GARDENING TIPS: GROW SAFELY AND SUCCESSFULLY

Spring is the perfect time to get your hands in the dirt and start planting! Whether you're growing flowers, vegetables, or fresh herbs, gardening is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, reduce stress, and bring beauty to your space.

Before planting, plan your layout, choose plants suited to your climate, and enrich your soil with compost. Water wisely—early morning or late evening—and use mulch to retain moisture and prevent weeds.

Always call 811 before you dig to check for underground utilities, especially for deep planting or fence posts.

Gardening is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, reduce stress, and grow fresh produce. Follow these tips for a thriving garden and a safe, successful season!



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