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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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APRIL IS ALMOST HERE... LET'S CELEBRATE OUR NATIONAL GUARD KIDS!

The Month of the Military Child is right around the corner, and we are looking forward to an entire month dedicated to recognizing the strength, resilience, and heart of National Guard youth.

National Guard children serve in their own way. While they may not move frequently, they often experience extended separations during state activations, national responses, and global missions. They adapt to changing routines, take on added responsibilities at home, and continue to grow, lead, and thrive in their schools and communities. April is our time to pause and celebrate them for all they do.

Be sure to mark your calendar for **Purple Up Day on Friday, April 10**. Wear purple to show your support for military children and help us flood schools, workplaces, and communities with appreciation. Share your photos, encourage others to participate, and proudly stand behind our National Guard kids.

Nationally, we have exciting activities and opportunities in the works, including ways for youth and teens to engage throughout the month. Check back on our website in the coming weeks for details, resources, and ways to join the celebration: **https://arngcys.com/momc-2026**

Across the country, states and territories are also planning meaningful local activities, special recognitions, and community events to honor military children. Connect with your **local Child and Youth Program Coordinator** to learn what is happening near you and how you can support or participate in their efforts.

Let's make this April a powerful celebration of our National Guard kids and remind them that their role in the mission truly matters.

REGION 3 SPOTLIGHT: BUILDING SKILLS, SHAPING FUTURES

This winter, the **Delaware** Guard Teen Panel focused on financial literacy and smart money habits. With support from Dover Federal Credit Union, teens learned how to budget, explored different types of banking accounts, and discovered practical ways to make their money work for them. The hands-on session helped equip them with tools they can use now and in the future.

Maryland youth wrapped up the year with meaningful, skill-based experiences. Teens and youth prepared meals using ingredients harvested from a local garden, reinforcing both healthy living and self-sufficiency. They earned First Aid and CPR/AED recertification and practiced open water navigation using maps, terrain, and even the stars. To top it off, they continued developing culinary skills while learning food preparation techniques from renowned chef Robert Irvine.

Virginia teens helped shape the future by coming together to begin planning next year's summer camp. Through open conversations, they shared what they loved, what could improve, and new ideas they would like to see. To close out the season, they chose to serve others by volunteering with younger children in the community. From leading arts and crafts to assisting with projects, they created a welcoming and fun environment while modeling leadership and responsibility.

The **West Virginia** National Guard Child and Youth Program wrapped up the year with two favorite holiday events, Evening with Santa and Cookies in Whoville. Families enjoyed writing letters to Santa, making reindeer food, creating ornaments with the Chiefs Council, and participating in hands-on STEM projects led by STARBASE educators. These festive events were supported by strong partnerships with local Family Readiness Groups, Civil Air Patrol, and Joining Community Forces members, bringing military families together for fun and connection.

In October, **Pennsylvania** partnered with Family Programs to host a Trunk or Treat event that welcomed 126 participants, with support from community partners including United Service Organizations, Costco, Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy, Milton Hershey School, Fort Indiantown Gap Police Department, and Fort Indiantown Gap Fire Department. Pennsylvania also distributed 80 STEAM Camp in a Box kits to Army National Guard youth ages 6 to 12.

During November, the **District of Columbia** National Guard hosted a Military Appreciation Event distributing Thanksgiving baskets provided by Operation Homefront and Harris Teeter to Service Members and their families. The event supported 300 Army National Guard and 100 Air National Guard families, with Teen Council members volunteering their time to help make the event a success.

Our Military Kids

Our Military Kids provides grants to children of deployed or stateside activated National Guard and Reserve service members. Eligible youth may receive up to two $300 grants to participate in the extracurricular activity of their choice while their parent is away.

These activities help children manage stress, stay engaged, and feel connected during periods of separation. The program is funded entirely through generous donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals who want to honor the sacrifices military children make.

Children ages 1 to 18, or those who have not yet graduated high school, may qualify. For deployments or activations lasting 90 to 179 cumulative days within a 12 month period, each child is eligible for one $300 grant. For missions of 180 or more cumulative days within 12 months, each child may apply for two separate $300 grants for the same or different activities.

Visit the **Our Military Kids website** to learn more about eligibility and how to apply.

March is National Nutrition Month ®

March is National Nutrition Month®, an annual campaign led by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It is a time to reflect on how the foods and drinks we choose each day fuel our bodies, sharpen our focus, and support our overall well-being.

For National Guard youth and families, balancing school, activities, work, and mission demands can make healthy habits feel challenging. This year's theme, "Discover the Power of Nutrition," reminds us that small, consistent choices matter. Adding more fruits and vegetables, choosing water more often, planning balanced meals, and staying active can help power your day and build lifelong healthy routines.

Let's use this month to encourage one another, share simple tips, and strengthen habits that support the health and resilience of our National Guard community.

Visit: **https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month**

5 Ways to Enjoy More Fruits & Vegetables

Building a healthy plate is easy when you make half your plate fruits and vegetables. It's also a great way to add color, favor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and dietary fber. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal.

1. Variety abounds when using vegetables as pizza topping. Try broccoli, spinach, green peppers, tomatoes, mushrooms and zucchini.
2. Mix up a breakfast smoothie made with lowfat milk, and frozen fruit - try strawberries and banana, or mango with pineapple or peach.
3. Make a veggie wrap with roasted vegetables and low-fat cheese rolled in a whole-wheat tortilla.
4. Try crunchy vegetables instead of chips with your favorite low-fat salad dressing for dipping.
5. Grill colorful vegetable kabobs packed with tomatoes, green and red peppers, mushrooms and onions

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Nutrition Month® Campaign Resources, "20 Ways to Enjoy More Fruits & Vegetables," https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month/resources

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: SUMMER CAMP OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH

Summer is a great time for National Guard kids and teens to build friendships, try new activities, and grow their confidence. Several organizations offer camp experiences designed specifically for military-connected youth.

National Military Family Association – Operation Purple Camp: ***Registration Open Now!***
Operation Purple Camp provides free summer camp experiences for military children, including those from National Guard and Reserve families. Camps focus on fun, connection, and building coping skills while a parent is deployed or has experienced deployment-related challenges. Youth participate in traditional camp activities such as swimming, ropes courses, and team-building adventures while connecting with other military kids who share similar experiences.
https://www.militaryfamily.org/state-of-the-military-family-programs/operation-purple/operation-purple-camp/

Camp Corral: ***Registration Open Now!***
Camp Corral offers free, week-long summer camps for children of wounded, ill, or fallen military service members. Designed for ages 8 to 15, Camp Corral combines high-energy activities with mentorship and structured programs that support emotional well-being. Campers may enjoy horseback riding, archery, climbing walls, and outdoor challenges in a supportive environment.
https://www.campcorral.org/camps/

Military Teen Adventure Camps: ***Registration Opens in March***
Teens ages 13 to 18 from Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, and Retired families can take part in high energy, high adventure camps offered across the United States at little to no cost. Imagine whitewater rafting, hiking, rock climbing, winter camping, backpacking, exploring the environment, running ropes courses, and practicing wilderness skills alongside other military teens who understand your life. Each camp provides a unique outdoor experience designed to strengthen leadership, build self-confidence, and develop teamwork skills. Funding is often available to assist with transportation, making these opportunities accessible to more families. There is truly something for everyone, from first-time adventurers to experienced outdoor enthusiasts.
https://extension.purdue.edu/4-H/get-involved/military-teen-adventure-camps/index.html

In addition, ARNG Child and Youth Services programs may offer state-led summer camps or other seasonal opportunities in your area. These programs are designed specifically for National Guard youth and may include leadership experiences, recreational camps, teen events, or specialty programs.Reach out to your local Child and Youth Program Coordinator to learn what options are available in your state and how to get involved.
https://arngcys.com/my-local-cys-program

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

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MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

APRIL 2026

NATIONAL GUARD KIDS 2025 2026

child & youth program army national guard

MISSION POSSIBLE

What is Month of the Military Child?

Every April, the Army National Guard Child and Youth Program proudly celebrates the Month of the Military Child (MOMC), a time to recognize and honor the resilience, sacrifices, and contributions of military-connected children. While military children may not wear a uniform, they serve in their own way, adapting to the challenges and triumphs that come with being part of a military family.

For National Guard families, children may remain in the same schools and communities for many years. Even without frequent moves, Guard-connected youth still experience the impacts of military service, including separations during deployments, changes in family routines, and increased responsibilities at home. Month of the Military Child is a time to acknowledge these experiences and recognize the resilience, adaptability, and strength of military-connected children.

Purple Up Day

The Army National Guard Child and Youth Program will celebrate Purple Up Day on April 10th. On this special day, we wear purple, a color that represents all branches of the military, to recognize the strength, resilience, and sacrifices of military-connected youth.

Ways to Participate Nationally

- Wear purple on April 10
- Share messages of appreciation for military children
- Participate in local or virtual MOMC activities
- Support schools and organizations serving military-connected youth

www.arngcys.com

National Events

Event Name: Top-Secret Youth Virtual Day Camp
Date: April 4, 2026 - 11:00 AM ET
How to Register: https://arngcys.com/momc-2026 or scan QR code below.

Event Name: Teen Task Force Virtual Day Camp
Date: April 4, 2026 - 2:00 PM ET
How to Register: https://arngcys.com/momc-2026 or scan QR code below.

YOUTH AGES 5-12 11:00 AM ET	TEENS AGES 13-17 2:00 PM ET	DOWNLOAD OUR PACKET FOR EDUCATORS