



2007 North Carolina OMK Corporate Report

North Carolina's Operation: Military Kids



North Carolina has a proud tradition of supporting military personnel and their families. The state is home to Fort Bragg Army Installation, Pope and Seymour Johnson Air Force Installations, Camp LeJeune Marine Base, Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station and multiple Coast Guard Air and Boat Stations. Additionally, North Carolina hosts many National Guard, Army Reserve and Air Reserve units. With the advent of the global war on terror, North Carolina rates of deployment from active duty and from guard and reserve units have been significantly greater than in many other states. With additional surges in troop deployments, military families in all 100 counties reach out for services. Extended deployments also increase family support needs. North Carolina's Operation: Military Kids initiative provides mechanism for coordinated efforts to support military families by:

- 1) conducting community education and awareness sessions;
- 2) participating as partners in deployment briefings and family support functions;
- 3) identifying appropriate opportunities for military youth actively participate in community education and outreach events;
- 4) assisting with family communication via mobile technology and internet resources; and
- 5) developing programs to support and expand networks to address the needs of geographically isolated military.



Development of the Program

- Operation: Military Kids (OMK) represents as a unique collaborative effort between the U.S. Army and local communities across the U.S.
- An official, nationwide program launch on April 6, 2005, was led by Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley. Over **39** states actively participate in Operation: Military Kids.
- The program positively affects youth from families of all branches of the military. Due to the global war on terrorism, over **96,000 North Carolina** youth are directly impacted by parent deployment.
- Operation: Military Kids provides support to military youth impacted by deployment of a loved one. OMK recognizes that these youth have significantly different needs than those of active military-based families, as they are members of civilian communities.
- The National OMK Team is supported by National 4-H Headquarters, U.S. Army Child and Youth Services, Army National Guard, U.S. Army Reserves, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, American Legion, Military Child Education Coalition, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and youth from military and non-military families.

Mission and Goals of Operation: Military Kids

Goals:

Mission:

OMK builds partnerships to increase capacity for youth, families and communities to support youth and military families.



- Create community support networks for military youth “in our own backyard” when Soldier parents are deployed.
- Deliver recreational, social, and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities.
- Support military kids coping with the stress of knowing their deployed parents may be in harms way.
- Collaborate with schools to ensure that staff are attuned to the unique needs of military students.
- Educate the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on Soldiers, families, kids, and the community as a whole.
- Become part of the ongoing deployment support service for children and youth where there are military families.

Ready, Set, Go! (RSG!)

Two Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) trainings using curricula designed to educate participants on all phases of deployment, community involvement/awareness and resources for military families in 2007. Participants from the North Carolina National Guard, NC 4-H Agents, NC 4-H Program Assistants and public schools educators were trained and additional RSG! Trainings have been scheduled for 2008.

Speak Out For Military Kids

North Carolina OMK held the first of three levels of SOMK training in 2007. The three levels are Basic, Technical and Specialist. Each level trains youth to better understand SOMK, to provide effective trainings through specific educational practices and to help them engage, increase awareness, and educate their communities about military culture. The individual teams stretch from one end of the state to another, and are located at both traditionally military locations and more geographically isolated locations.



“During presentations you have the chance to reach out in the community and spread awareness of what Operation: Military Kids is doing in your community and state.”

- Cody, Randolph County

Mobile Technology Lab



The MTL has been effectively used more in 2007 by county 4-H programs and OMK partners in workshops, Kids On Guard events and at county fairs. Trained MTL staff helped participants use the cameras to take and print photos as well as share photos. A total of 687 youth and adults had hands-on experience with the MTL. The MTL was also showcased during the 12th Annual NC 4-H Achievement Gala. Four youth (collaborating with National Guard and Reserves in providing two youths from each branch) provided hands-on activities and interacted with more than

400 guests. The youth explained the importance and the multiple uses of the MTL to stay connected with their deployed soldiers.

North Carolina's OMK State Team

North Carolina's OMK State team has successfully expanded the network of informed, interested agencies in 2007. Involving the variety of team partners enables a more holistic look at the needs of families in all communities, and team meetings have provided a venue for sharing information, ideas, and resources to mobilize communities in support of North Carolina families affected by deployment. A positive reciprocal relationship has been formed with the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, NC Elks Lodge and Fonville Morisey Realty. The partners have become involved in creating opportunities in sending military youth to 4-H camp through charitable donations.

A total of **400** invited guests experienced the North Carolina Operation: Military Kids MTL showcased during the 12th Annual NC 4-H Achievement Gala. Four youth representing the National Guard and Reserves provided hands-on activities to the guest. The youth explained the importance and uses of the MTL in staying connected with their deployed parents.



A total of **39** military youth and **5** full-time employees attended a weeklong day camp using the 4-H Computer Curriculum as resource materials. The youth learned the basic parts of the computer, Cyber safety, explored robotics and incorporated writing camp in the program where they wrote stories.

Clubs in at least **15** of North Carolina's counties provided experiential learning, life skills development, and social/recreational activities to military families.



A total of **9** North Carolina counties provided summer youth programs in which military youth participated. These programs consisted of Summer Adventures where youth were taught: Newton's Laws of Motions; Biotechnology; Chef & the Child; Household Smarts; and Fair Fun to name a few. Each program included the use of hands-on projects based on the 4-H curriculum. Summer Adventures included field trips and guest speakers adding a more realistic feel to the youths learning process.

Camp Lejeune Marines (Onslow County), Coast Guard (Pasquotank County) and Navy (Currituck County) have military youth and families participating in county, district and state 4-H activities. These counties offer summer program, after-school enrichment projects, field trips, presentations, special events, etc., to these military youth. Although the Naval Base is located in Norfolk, VA, many of the military families reside in Currituck County and participate in NC 4-H activities. The total numbers of military youth participating from these three counties are **154**.



Accomplishments & Impacts

North Carolina Operation: Military Kids program experienced excellent opportunities promoting and developing community awareness about OMK this year. NC OMK were able to broadcast the mission of assisting and providing resources to military families while their soldier are deployed. An approximate total of **57,000** citizens in North Carolina have been reached through opportunities delivered from the OMK program. A few of the Operation: Military Kids programs presented this past year were: North Carolina 4-H Achievement Gala, North Carolina 4-H Congress, the National Guards' "Kids On Guard" program, US Army Special Operations Command Family Programs Conference, to NC State University's Military Appreciation Day during a NC State Football

NATIONAL HONORS

Three military youth (2 from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and 1 from Fort Bragg) were selected to participate at 3,2,1 Action! Videography Workshop in Chevy Chase, MD. The program was a youth-adult partnership to develop skills in videography to document the Operation Military Kids story. The youth and adults were encouraged to use the basic skills to incorporate their daily work with youth development. Participants learned to storyboard, film, edit and complete a PSA and mini-feature movie.



Four Cumberland County and two Wayne County military youth joined teens from across the state to develop the necessary skills to become a NC 4-H Ambassador. Teens participated in workshops such as Public Speaking, Parliamentary Procedures and professional Flag Etiquette. The 4-H Ambassador program empowers youth with skills and encourages youth to be a positive role model as well as an advocate for 4-H in their communities.

DISTRICT & STATE HONORS

Eight military youth (7 from Cumberland and 1 from Wayne) represented their respective counties and districts during their District Activity Days presentation competitions. Youth researched, prepared and presented topics of their own choosing. Youth must have presented and won on the county level in order to be eligible for district competition. Seven military youth (6 from Cumberland and 1 from Wayne) received honors and moved onto the state finals.



An "Evening Under the Stars" hosted by Nash County 4-H for **50** Guard members, spouses and children at the county extension office. The event focused on family night out before Guard members were deployed. Activities for the family, a cookout and a movie, were shown out in the gardens.

Three military youth (2 from Cumberland and 1 from Wayne) were invited to participate in the Interview process to attend National 4-H Congress. Youth previously submitted an Application and Resume for competition. The Application and Resume are two-thirds of the criteria in the selection process. Those with the highest combined score were selected to compete in the Interview process. Selection is based on their 4-H career to date. Those selected will be one of 20 4-H'ers who will represent North Carolina at National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, GA. One 4-H/military youth (Wayne County) was one of 20 selected to attend and one 4-H/Military youth from Cumberland County was selected as 1st alternate.



OMK's Four Core Program Tools

Ready, Set, Go! (RSG!) Training is a multi-faceted interactive program that is tailor-made to use with audiences in a variety of settings. The training provides hands-on practical information to assist participants in building community capacity and educating community members about the needs of 'suddenly military' children and youth. Training topics include: Exploring Military Culture; Impact of Grief, Loss, and Trauma; and Understanding the Influence of the Media.

Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) is a youth-driven community outreach initiative associated with OMK. SOMK is designed to raise awareness of issues facing military families and foster community activism to address the challenges faced by military youth and families. Both military and non-military youth are involved. Through youth-led simulations, interviews, and research, participants learn about the experiences of military peers and families.

Hero Packs represent a tangible way to hand-deliver a salute to military children for their strengths and sacrifices. A Hero Pack serves as an expression of community and OMK partner support for military children. As a community service program, Hero Packs build appreciation for geographically dispersed military children and youth. Hero Packs may include stationary, books, hero pins, teddy bears, and cameras.

Mobile Technology Labs (MTL) are used to facilitate connections between deployed soldiers and their kids. The labs are loaded with software and program materials that allow for children and youth to send personal messages to their deployed loved ones. OMK's partner organizations may request and use the laptop computers, digital cameras, video recorder, printer and scanner.



Hero Packs



The numbers of request for Hero Packs are increasing thanks to 4-H agents and OMK partners. North Carolina has an ample supply of Hero Packs, however, more items are needed to place in the packs. OMK State Team members and others are working to find vendors and resources to help with locating and donating items.

Forty youth and adults were given the chance to learn about OMK and Hero Packs during their "Hands To Service," an annual community service project opportunity during 4-H Congress. The delegates were introduced to OMK, the mission of the program and why Hero Packs are assembled and presented. In the process of assembling Hero Packs, delegates wrote thank you notes, which were placed inside each pack, to be given to military youth and his or her deployed soldier. At the conclusion of the project, a total of **150** Hero Packs were assembled. These packs were part of the **190** Hero Packs presented in 2007.

"The workshops I attended gave me a new found appreciation for military kids and the many sacrifices they make for us...I do believe these children are the ultimate patriots..."

- Irene, Scotland County

North Carolina OMK Partners

North Carolina OMK is proud to have the following organizations as partners: NC National Guard, Army Reserves, Air Force Reserves, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, NC Elks Lodge, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Boys & Girls Clubs, Citizen-Soldier Support Program, Communities In Schools NC, and educators. Operation: Military Kids is Sponsored by:



OPERATION:

Military

Kids

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North Carolina Operation: Military Kids Statistics 2007

- **All 100 counties** in North Carolina have been impacted by deployment of National Guard and/or Reserve units.
- **100,000** active duty personnel reside in North Carolina.
- **46,000** Guard, Reserve & Retirees call North Carolina.

"SOMK has taught me to not take my family for granted."

- Evelyn, Moore County

- As of December 2007, North Carolina had **4,121** National Guardsman on alert.
- **10th** largest National Guard in the United States is in North Carolina.
- **4th** largest military state in the United States is in North Carolina.

- **10** Extension, National Guard and school counselors were trained to facilitate Ready, Set, Go!(RSG!) educational programs.
- **285** military youth (on and off installations and bases) are currently enrolled in 4-H clubs.
- The Mobile Technology Lab was accessed by more than **687** military dependents.
- **13** Teens became Speak Out For Military Kids (SOMK) facilitators, making presentations to more than **775** youth and adults across the state.

- **116,587** youth and adults across North Carolina have experienced the Operation: Military Kids program through various county fairs, conferences, trainings, 4-H programming, National Guard and Reserve events, and after-school programs and activities.
- **190** Hero Packs were presented to military youth whose parent(s) are currently deployed.

