

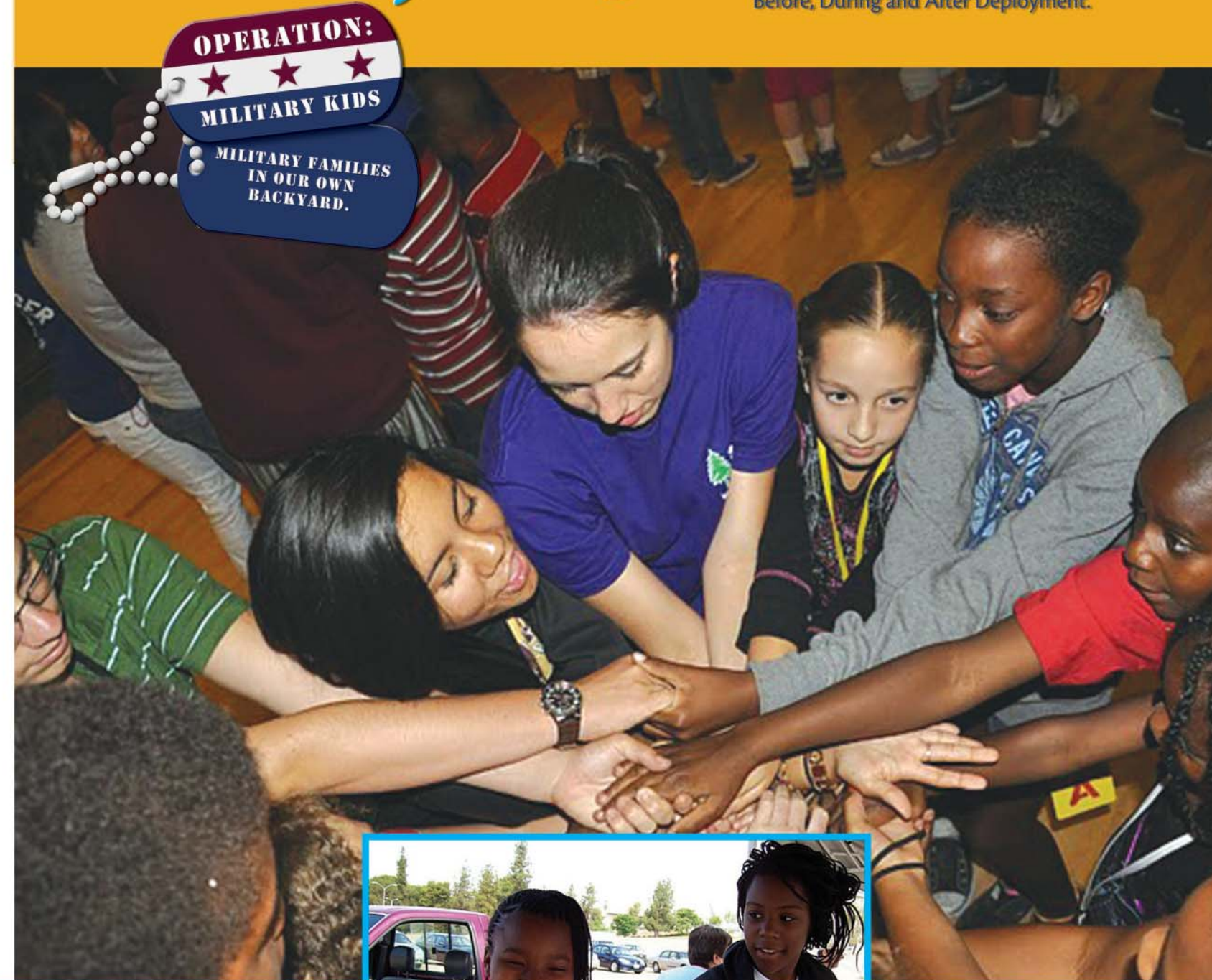
California OPERATION: Military Kids

2010 Annual Report

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Creating Community Connections and Touching Lives...
Before, During and After Deployment.



--> Major Community Partners



The American Legion
www.calegion.org



California National Guard
Child and Youth Programs
www.calguard.ca.gov



U.S. Army Recruiting
Soldier & Family Assistance
Program
www.udsrec.army.mil



The American Legion
Auxiliary
www.calegionaux.org



Boys & Girls Club
of America
www.bgca.org



Military One Source
www.militaryonesource.com



The American Red Cross
www.redcross.org



California Air National Guard
www.calguard.ca.gov



Navy Region Southwest
School Liaison Office
www.schoolliaisonsw.com



U.S. Army Child, Youth
& School Services
www.armymwr.com



California Joint Family
Assistance Program Team
www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil



National Association of
Childcare Resources and
Referral Agencies
www.naccrra.org



Army Reserve Child,
Youth & School Services
www.arfp.org



Army One Source
www.armyonesource.com



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regional Family
Readiness Coordinator
SPD.Family.Readiness@usace.army.mil



California 4-H Youth
Development Program
www.ca4h.org



Marine Corps School Liaison Program
www.mciwestsl.heroesandhealthyfamilies.com

Military 4-H Partnerships are supported by 4-H National Headquarters/NIFA/USDA; Army Child, Youth and School Services; Air Force Airman and Family Services; Navy Child and Youth Programs; and the UC Davis Cooperative Extension 4-H Program through grant funding at Kansas State University.

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California has the largest number of military youth in the nation. Many of these youth are affected by the deployment cycle of a family member. Building local support networks to meet the needs of children, who are geographically dispersed throughout the state, is the principle mission of California Operation: Military Kids.

OMK State Team

The University of California Cooperative Extension administers the OMK program in California. The California 4-H Military Liaison, OMK State Coordinator, OMK staff members from the 4-H State Youth Development Program, Military Family Program Services and community service agencies collaborate on the project. The team's primary goals are educating the public about the needs of California military youth and recruiting volunteers to lead youth-focused opportunities across the state's 58 counties.

Core Projects

California OMK supported a variety of projects in 2010. This included Ready, Set, Go!, Hero Packs, the Mobile Technology Lab, Speak Out for Military Kids, 4-H/Army Babysitting as well as other projects like Month of the Military Child, the OMK/Joint Family Support Assistance Program Camping Initiative, Youth Leadership Conference and Yellow Ribbon events. These projects created community connections between military youth and support agencies during the deployment cycle.

Ready, Set, Go! Training

California OMK has significantly raised awareness of the issues military children face. Our American Legion Auxiliary partners increased awareness of the current needs of military families through their many local partnerships. Using Ready, Set, Go! toolkit resources, community partners received educational training on subjects such as military culture, the deployment cycle, fostering resilience and building community capacity.

Speak Out for Military Kids

Speak Out for Military Kids is a youth-led, adult-supported project that generates community awareness of issues and concerns that military youth face. During the 2010 4-H State Leadership Conference held at UC Davis, which drew 446 participants, military youth teamed with civilian club members to create and present a Power Point presentation about military life, as told from their perspective. In Southern California, teens joined together for a Speak Out for Military Kids project that gave youth the opportunity to express their pride as military children by creating Month of the Military Child posters.

"We now understand more of what the youth are going through because we see the kids speak their mind."
-- Angel, a Navy Youth Center staff member on the "Boots On" camp.

Mobile Technology Lab

Hundreds of youth throughout the state benefitted from the Mobile Technology Lab. They used the collection of laptops, printers and cameras to create postcards for deployed troops as well as videos, public service announcements and visual presentations to take back and share with their communities.

Hero Pack Initiative

This project is truly a community effort. This year dozens of OMK partners collected donations and filled more than 2,000 backpacks with stamps, stationery, disposable cameras, gift cards, stuffed animals, school supplies and other items. They then handed these Hero Packs to military children and youth along with a personal thank you for their service and sacrifice.

The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary in San Diego County have been particularly strong partners in the Hero Pack initiative. Teaming with military school liaison officers, family readiness volunteers and community organizations they prepared and delivered more than 250 Hero Packs in the San Diego area.

The Hero Pack initiative was also bolstered through a partnership with attendees at the 2010 American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Conference. The 486 attendees, from more than 400 high schools from throughout California, participated in a Hero Pack filling event. More importantly, they were inspired to return home and plan similar events in their local communities.

"(Putting together the Hero Packs) was a very moving deed for me, and I knew ever since I walked away from that experience, that I wanted to bring the organization to my high school"

-- Anna, age 16, a 2010 Girls State attendee.

4-H/Army Child & Youth Services Babysitting Training

This 14-hour course teaches teens to be capable, caring, responsible child caregivers. The course covers babysitting basics like how to care for children, what to do in an emergency and how to keep kids safe. The course stresses the importance of the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The youth are also CPR certified through a partnership with the American Red Cross. In 2010, 110 teens from throughout the state successfully completed the course. In addition, 26 adults completed the Train-the-Trainer course with the goal of providing babysitting training opportunities in their own communities.

2010 Graduates of 4-H/Army Child & Youth Services Babysitting Training Course

Teens: 110

Adult Trainers: 26

I thought I knew a lot about babysitting, but I still learned a lot more about keeping kids safe."

-- Desi, on the 4-H/Army Child & Youth Services Babysitting Course

Camps

The goal of Operation: Military Kids and the Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) Initiative is to bring together military youth who have experienced some phase of the deployment cycle. The OMK/JFSAP Supplemental Camping Initiative provides these youth with camp opportunities for experiences that last a lifetime. Camp activities include team building exercises, arts and crafts, theatre arts, popular science education and technology lessons. Activities are conducted in a safe, fun environment designed to build life skills and foster friendships.

This year's OMK/JFSAP camps included:

- A "Boots On" mock deployment overnight camp at Naval Base Ventura, which gave 15 military youth a glimpse of what life is like for their deployed loved ones;
- 4-H Camp in Riverside County, where 55 military youth joined together for a traditional summer camp experience; and,
- The California 4-H State Leadership Conference, held at the UC Davis campus, which brought together hundreds of teens from across the state.

In addition, California OMK supported the Army Reserve Enrichment Camp at YMCA Camp Marston in the beautiful San Diego mountains, which brought together 65 Army Reserve youth.

2010 Military Camps

Youth Participants: 135

"I really like the activities and learning about the environment."

-- Ginger, a 9-year-old Air Force youth, on 4-H Camp

Other projects

Yellow Ribbon Events:

The Yellow Ribbon program provides information, services, referral and proactive outreach opportunities for military families. Operation: Military Kids and its community partners participated in several of these events, providing hands-on learning activities for children.

Month of the Military Child:

Operation: Military Kids supported our partners by publicizing several Month of the Military Child events in April including picnics, community festivals and Speak Out for Military Kids events.

Joint Family Support Assistance Program:

California Operation: Military Kids works closely with the Joint Family Support Assistance Program, funded by the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project, to support geographically dispersed youth from all military branches of service throughout the state.

