

Operation: Military Kids Massachusetts

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Operation: Military Kids (OMK) is a national effort to support children of service members during deployment. In Massachusetts this effort is coordinated by the University of Massachusetts Extension 4-H Program as part of UMass Outreach. It was developed to build a statewide network which educates citizens on the impact of deployment on communities, families and youth as well as provide educational, recreational and social programs for children and youth of service members. When National Guard, Army Reserve and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children face a wide variety of experiences and challenges.

Many of their usual support systems may no longer be adequate. Military children and youth need to connect with other youth in similar situations. They need friends and adults who can empathize and can help them cope. Operation Military Kids helps!



Specifics include:

Ready, Set, Go! Workshops (RSG) are led by trained facilitators and designed for youth workers, educators, counselors and community members to offer insight into military culture, the deployment cycle and ways to best provide for, understand the needs of, and support military children and their families. Scheduling is based on request and there is no cost.

Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) is an educational program designed by and for teens – both military and civilian - to raise the awareness of issues facing military families. SOMK trains teens in leadership, research, organization, technology, and public speaking skills. SOMK participants become members of speakers' bureaus and present posters, lectures, public service announcements, videos, and other materials to share their knowledge and experiences with others in the community.

Hero Packs are backpacks or tote bags for military youth who have a deployed parent. Along with a disposable camera, stationery, and other small gifts, each pack contains a personal letter from a young person to the military child, thanking him or her for being a “hero too”. Service organizations, community and youth groups are invited to create Hero Packs. Donations are welcome from all.

Regional OMK Teams are groups of community members and organizations dedicated to supporting young people in military families.

The Mobile Technology Lab (MTL) is a set of laptops, printers, cameras and supplies in portable containers. Its purpose is to allow children of military families to create and print cards, pictures, etc. to send to their deployed loved ones. It is staffed by volunteers at events throughout the state where military families are in attendance.

If you would like to get involved in any of these efforts, please contact MA OMK. Details are on the back of this flyer.

M i l i t a r y F a m i l i e s i n o u r o w n B a c k y a r d

Ways to Support OMK

Attend an RSG workshop
Become part of SOMK
Donate to Hero Packs
Provide a youth membership to a Boys
& Girls Club, YMCA or 4-H
Host an RSG or SOMK presentation
Connect with military families
Volunteer with the MTL
Offer services to military families
Join a Regional OMK team!

For more information

contact:

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Massachusetts OMK Partners

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Kelly Cummins	Army Reserve Chaplain Corps
Jill Fahey	FRG-Army Reserve
Judy Gagnon	UMass Military Community Resource Center
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Rachael Lastoff	U.S. Army Reserve
Pam Lefave	UMass Extension 4-H
John Lenotte	The American Legion
Robert Lesley	Camp Marshall
Gretchen May	UMass Extension 4-H
Shirley Mietlicki	UMass School Public Health & Health Sciences
Tammy Mosher	Army One Source
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Ruth Provost	Cape Cod Boys & Girls Club
Margaret Sullivan	Air Force Reserve
Sandra Winkler	FRG – Army Reserve
Maura Yanosick	Homes for Our Troops

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www.operationmilitarykids.org/MA



Reaching Out to Military Youth in Massachusetts



UMassAmherst Outreach **UMass
Extension**

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