MASSACHUSETTS
OPERATION:
MILITARY KIDS

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS EXTENSION

Massachusetts 2013 Annual Report
As part of an Army Child, Youth and School Services initiative, the University of Massachusetts Extension 4-H Youth Development Program coordinates Operation: Military Kids (OMK) in Massachusetts. OMK’s mission is to support the approximately 13,000 military children and youth who live scattered throughout the Commonwealth. Any one of these children could experience the deployment and reintegration of a loved one at any time.

This work is done through collaboration with the Massachusetts National Guard Family Program, the Air National Guard Family Program, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Westover Airman & Family Readiness Center, the Army Reserve Child, Youth and School Services, the Greater Westfield and Cape Cod Boys and Girls Clubs, The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, Massachusetts 4-H Youth Development, Barnstable County Extension, the Joint Family Support Assistance Program, local schools, and many community organizations and individuals. By working together to achieve our mission, we touch the lives of thousands of military children living throughout the Commonwealth. We hope you find our report informative!

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OMK WEBSITE
WWW.OPERATIONMILITARYKIDS.ORG/MA

Massachusetts OMK Touches over 2,000 Military Youth!
From October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013, Massachusetts Operation Military Kids supported 126 youth events. From Cape Cod to Westfield to Danvers, 2162 youth from all branches of the military and Coast Guard participated in activities such as Military Kids Klub days, ropes courses, rock wall climbing lessons and leadership trainings. Massachusetts OMK also supported youth activities at Guard and Reserve family events and Yellow Ribbon pre and post deployment seminars.

Number of Youth Contacts by Military Branch in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>Army Reserve</td>
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<td>Air Force</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td>142</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A SPECIAL COLLABORATION SUCCESS

The Cape Cod OMK team built on the success of our 2012 “Stars, Stripes, and Saddles” camp, during which campers learned about, and worked with horses, as well as shared their experiences of being military youth. This year, the team was able to secure funding to offer two Stars, Stripes, and Saddles sessions to military youth and another to military families! OMK and the Air National Guard funded the youth camps and a special collaboration with Heroes in Transition (www.heroesintransition.org) funded the family camp. It was called “Families in Transition” and focused on the process of reunification for military families after deployments. Smithfield Farms, the camp location, went above and beyond by providing whatever else was needed to ensure every participant had a successful experience.

 MASSACHUSETTS OMK EDUCATES OVER 3,000 ADULTS

During the past year, Massachusetts Operation Military Kids delivered eight Ready, Set, Go! (RSG!) workshops reaching 256 community members. Clinicians, summer camp staff, school personnel, child care providers, 4-H volunteers, and other community members learned about military culture, the deployment cycle, its effects on children, and what resources are available to help military children.

OMK staffed an additional 42 informational briefings and 25 planning meetings around the Commonwealth reaching 3006 people with the OMK message of supporting military children.

“’We heard you last year and took action! We have added a question to our school enrollment form asking if they are in a military family.’” —School nurse

 MASSACHUSETTS OMK DELIVERS ALMOST 400 HERO AND FAMILY PACKS!

From October 1, 2012, through September 30, 2013, Massachusetts OMK distributed 299 Hero Packs to military children experiencing the deployment of a loved one. These presentations were done at deployment events, schools, and homes, depending on the military or family request. Hero Packs contain stationery, pens, toys, etc., and are a tangible way of honoring children for the sacrifices they are making while their loved one is deployed in support of Overseas Contingencies Operations.

In addition, OMK began distributing Family Packs to returning service members. Ninety packs containing items meant to help rebuild the bonds between service members and their
The Massachusetts Operation: Military Kids partnership is a shared initiative of the U S Army Child, Youth & School (CYS) Services and is funded by the Army National Guard and Army Reserve in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Amherst Extension 4-H Youth Development Program.

Quick Fact:
412 community volunteers donated 1611 hours of service to Massachusetts OMK.

I took away more than I thought I was going to.”
—Participant at RSG! workshop

I think this made me more confident about babysitting and I learned a lot of stuff about what to do and what not to do.
—Military teen at babysitting training

The best parts of working with groups are making new friends and accomplishing our goals and creating something new. I’m gonna come back next year!
—Military youth at Air Guard Stars, Stripes, and Saddles Camp

Our kids have stress in the home for a number of reasons and this gave them all a chance to not have to deal with that this week. I had no idea it was going to be so wonderful!
—Parent in the Stars, Stripes, and Saddles Families in Transition Camp

Most beneficial part of the program was being on the same level as my child in regards to overcoming fear together. Fear is no more!
—Parent in the Stars, Stripes, and Saddles Families in Transition Camp

No nightmares all week! Less anxiety for them.
—Parent in the Stars, Stripes, and Saddles Families in Transition Camp

4-H Youth Development Program
UMass Extension

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If you would like further information or to get involved with Operation Military Kids, please contact the Massachusetts OMK state coordinator or visit the website www.operationmilitarykids.org/MA.