Georgia 4-H

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The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension www.georgia4h.org

oe shares, "This program gives teens an amazing opportunity to do things they would otherwise never do in their lifetimes. It levels the playing field, no matter what background you come from, you still get the same chance as everyone else."

Joe is a military teen from outside the state of Georgia but has found a home through Georgia 4-H programming; he is as comfortable at Wahsega 4-H Center as he is at Joint Base Andrews outside of Washington, D.C.

The 4-H Military Partnership continues to mature through the support of county Extension offices and military partners both on military installations and in the civilian community.

From what began as a camp serving 50 military youth in 2006, this past year Georgia 4-H served more than 500 military youth and teens in weeks of camp aimed at giving them an opportunity to be with others similar to themselves.

Camping is but one component of the 4-H Military Partnership. For more than ten years, 4-H has received a limited amount of grant funding to support 4-H clubs on military installations. Military youth programs staff members

serve as the 4-H volunteers, leading the club programming. County and district 4-H staff train these military civilians in the basics of 4-H



MORE HELICOPTERS, HUMVEES, HOO-AHS & HEROES

Chattooga County 4-H led a "Cupcakes for Military Kids" campaign designed to increase awareness of military families in Northwest Georgia. Community members were encouraged to write a letter of support to local service members and their families. In return, they received a cupcake with purple icing (as this color represents all branches of the military). Many local students were excited for the opportunity to say thank you. The letters were distributed by county 4-H youth to deployed service members and their families.



In Metro Atlanta, a pep rally was held to honor military kids during the Month of the Military Child in April. The event was a sea of purple, the color of all of the military service branches. Donations were received to help put together Hero Packs— backpacks for children of deployed military members. The guest speaker, a retired military commissioner, praised the kids for the sacrifices their families make. Donna Buzzard, 4-H program assistant: "It was a wonderful experience watching the community, kids and teachers come out in support of our military children."



HELICOPTERS, HUMVEES, HOO-AHS & HEROES

TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Providing training and staff development is a key component of the 4-H Military Partnership. Training and staff development includes technical assistance and formal training for county extension office staff to identify, target and serve more effectively military dependents in 4-H programming.

A second component is increasing the quality of youth programming on military installations facilitated by military youth programs professionals. During the year, installation staff members participated in online and face to face opportunities. Three installations represented the military at the 4-H Volunteer Conference of Southern States in 2013.



programming such as 4-H Project Achievement.

"It was a positive experience, which gave him exposure to public speaking and for him to interact with other children outside of his usual realm," stated Mrs. Clayton, a staff member at Fort Stewart who supported youth in 4-H Project Achievement.

Approximately 9,000 military children and youth enrolled in Georgia 4-H this past year, making Georgia the largest military 4-H population in the country. While the impact through direct 4-H programming with these 4-H'ers is important, the partnership indirectly supports hundreds of thousands.

For the military, the partnership strengthens military youth programs. 4-H brings its research base, its curriculum, and its training to military service members. The partnership expands the network of support for military families; this support is especially important as more families choose to live in local communities instead of on military installations, thus also making it an economic development issue for Georgia. As happy families tend to lead to happy service members, these service members may remain longer in military service and return to Georgia after they retire from service.

For Georgia 4-H, the partnership supports an expanded volunteer base and an underserved audience. The partnership also provides an entryway for 4-H'ers to learn more accurately about the military in our country.

The Operation: Military Kids (OMK) initiative, a part of Georgia 4-H military programs, provides high quality youth programming to youth

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Military and civilian youth alike gain opportunities to appreciate the diversity of roles and jobs military members undertake.

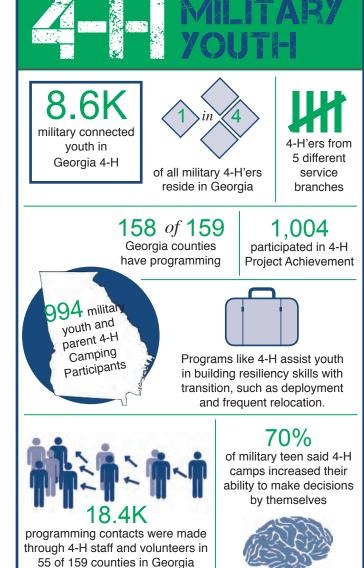


Sometimes sharing a laugh is the most important part of camp. At military camps, youth learn strategies to be restlient but also to relax and be themselves.

who lack access and availability to a military installation youth center. Led by Brian Stone, OMK Coordinator, the State OMK Team includes military and civilian partners who support thousands of youth through short-term activities, camps, and activities with the goal that youth find a permanent home through 4-H or other state youth development organizations.

Georgia 4-H military programs grew from a small, grant-funded project of \$30,000 yearly about a decade ago to today's \$900,000 investment through grants and donations to support military audiences. The funding, however, is insignificant in the impact on the program participants. Just like all 4-H'ers, military youth experience the same qualities in their experience.

As Joe concludes, "It gives some people that extra little push they need to realize they can succeed despite life's obstacles. It is an amazing experience." — Casey Mull



BY THE NUMBERS

Building Capacity



4-H Military Programs By the Numbers

(As reported in Georgia Counts, Operation: Military Kids and 4-H Enrollment)

Military Partnership Impact:		62,343
	Operation: Military Kids Impact:	4,844
	Other 4-H Extension Activities:	24,993
	Specialty Club Meetings:	924
	Club Meeting Participation:	21,530
	District Project Achievement:	1,041
	Camps and Conferences:	1,378
	Georgia 4-H Military Enrollment:	7,633



U.S. Army Child, Youth & School Services

U.S. AIR FORCE

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