

Georgia 4-H Military Partnerships

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



**LEARN
BY DOING**

HELICOPTERS, HUMVEES, HOO-AHS & HEROES

Joe 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.”



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

“It gives some people that extra little push they need to realize they can succeed despite life’s obstacles. It is an amazing experience.” —Joe, military teen



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 resilient 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

4-H MILITARY YOUTH

8.6K
military connected youth in Georgia 4-H

of all military 4-H'ers reside in Georgia

4-H'ers from 5 different service branches

158 of 159
Georgia counties have programming

1,004
participated in 4-H Project Achievement

994 military youth and parent 4-H Camping Participants

Programs like 4-H assist youth in building resiliency skills with transition, such as deployment and frequent relocation.

18.4K
programming contacts were made through 4-H staff and volunteers in 55 of 159 counties in Georgia

70%
of military teen said 4-H camps increased their ability to make decisions by themselves

BY THE NUMBERS

Building Capacity

| | |
|---|------------------|
| In Kind Support for Events Activities in which Military 4-H'ers attended: | \$25,725 |
| Donated Funds for Events and Activities in which Military 4-H'ers attended: | \$23,341 |
| Adult Volunteers | 2,031 |
| Youth Volunteers | 856 |
| Total Volunteer Hours: | 12,740.25 |

4-H Military Programs By the Numbers

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

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

Military Partnership Impact: 62,343



U.S. Army Child, Youth
& School Services



U.S. AIR FORCE



NAVY CYP



4-H Military Partnerships are supported by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 4-H National Headquarters; U.S. Army Child, Youth and School Services; U. S. Air Force Child and Youth Programs; U.S. Navy Child and Youth Programs; and University of Georgia Cooperation Extension 4-H Program through grant funding at Kansas State University.