



Photo/SUBMITTED

Dawson's Chrissy Callahan delivers a Hero Pack to local families. Callahan was one of many volunteers to deliver the packs to deployed military members' children as a part of Operation Military Kids.

4-H'ers distribute Hero Packs in area

Recently, local members of the Dawson County 4-H Club delivered Hero Packs to family members of deployed military members as a part of Operation Military Kids.

Operation Military Kids (OMK), a partnership including Georgia 4-H, the Boys' and Girls' Club, Army Child and Youth Services, and the Military Child Education Coalition, builds a network of support in Georgia to educate citizens on the impact of deployments on communities, families and youth as well as provides educational and support program for children and youth of soldiers in our own backyard.

Senior 4-H'er Chrissy Callahan, from Dawson County, delivered Hero Packs to local families.

"It was very rewarding to see their excitement," Callahan said about the experience.

When the defense department mobilizes the National Guard and Reserves, the youth in these families often appear the same as non-military families. However, these youth deal with new pressures and stresses often unnoticed by teachers, 4-H agents and staff, friends and other community members, causing them to need additional support and contact with others in similar situations. OMK also raises awareness for supporting these

youth and families among business leaders, teachers, 4-H staff and other community members.

One way OMK provides this support is through the packing and distribution of Hero Packs. Since June, 4-H'ers at statewide events have packed more than 900 Hero Packs for youth in deployed families. These packs include a backpack with items to deal with the stress of missing a loved one, and to communicate with that loved one such as a disposable camera, an ink pen, a 4-H Liberty Bear, a 4-H bandana, a journal and Georgia Friendship Bracelet. The Hero Packs also contain hand-written letters to the youth thanking them for their service, and a 'Parent's Pouch' with information about support for spouses of deployed soldiers and opportunities available locally through 4-H and the other OMK partners.

Families of deployed military members may still request Hero Packs by visiting the Georgia 4-H website at www.georgia4h.org. For questions about the Operation Military Kids program, please contact the State 4-H Office at (706) 542-4H4H or oper4h@uga.edu.



MOTOROLA BLACK